RURAL RESETTLEMENT IRELAND: an Example of Assisted Counterstream Migration, its Impact on Participants and Communities

By

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis has been composed by me and that all work presented in the thesis is my own unless specifically otherwise stated.

14 August, 2002 Jane Rosegrant

ABSTRACT

This study provides a comprehensive analysis of the work of Rural Resettlement Ireland (RRI), an organisation assisting urban dwellers to move to depopulating rural areas of Ireland. As such, it is a rare example of a programme of assisted counterurbanisation. Data on participants and local communities was gathered by means of in-depth semi-structured interviews and postal surveys. This data was examined in light of other studies of counterurbanisation and current population trends in rural Ireland.

Functioning and philosophy of the organisation are outlined. The experiences of participants and local communities are investigated in the following areas: participation motivation, community acceptance, housing and land use, children and education and employment. It is then discussed whether and why participants consider their moves to be successful or unsuccessful. RRI's work is also scrutinised to determine if this resettlement approach offers opportunities or threats to rural communities distinct from the unassisted counterurbanisation that has been taking place in many developed countries since the 1960s and 70s.

Overall, the programme is found to offer an effective means of addressing some aspects of rural decline, as well as a welcome opportunity for most participants.

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CHAPTER ONE

THE VISION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Early in 1990, Jim Connolly, a resident of Kilbaha, County Clare, Eire, issued an invitation on Irish radio. He offered to locate rural rental houses for families wanting to move from urban areas. The speed and strength of response he received inspired him to write his ideas down as a formal proposal.

> *In this booklet I have set out unashamedly and without apology to promote the idea of encouraging some families to leave overpopulated urban areas and resettle their families in the seriously under populated areas of the West....*
>
> *I suggest that it is time to view our island of Ireland as quiet [sic] a small area in reality and to accept the fact that it is no longer a 'big deal' to live in remote rural areas.*
>
> *(Connolly, 1990, pp. 2, 3)*

Entitled "Moving to the West: a report on the Resettlement Scheme for the West", this publication first outlined the undertaking which would become known as Rural Resettlement Ireland (RRI).

1.2 REASONING AND PROPOSAL

The reasoning behind the suggestion of assisted urban to rural migration encompassed what Connolly perceived to be the needs both of urban residents and of rural communities.

> *Today as increasing numbers of ordinary people seriously question the quality of their everyday lives under the fundamental headings of environment, work satisfaction and many aspects of the very materialistic set of values which form part of our cultural/educational system, many now look to the West of Ireland for a new way of life....*
>
> *A new family arriving in a depopulated area is like dropping a stone into a pool; the ripples spread out in all directions. The children add to the numbers in the local school; the local grocers; butchers, hardware shops etc., get immediate benefits and the new family will probably integrate with the social life of the community to everybodys benefit.*
> *(Connolly, 1990, pp. 2, 4)*

Connolly suggested that "craftworkers" were the people who should be invited and settled in rural communities. He defined "craftworkers" broadly, "as a general term to cover any person who can earn money with his hands either in his own workshop or by providing a service to others" (Connolly, 1990, p. 9). He believed these to be the people most likely to thrive in rural Ireland, both in terms of bringing their own employment with them, and in being resourceful enough to adapt to such new surroundings.

In order to make the idea feasible for families, Connolly put forward a list of financial support that he believed,

> *...should be offered to craftworker families willing to resettle;*
>
> *(1) Money to buy a house or site with an acre or so of land.*
> *(2) Guaranteed payment of dole for a number of years (say 10 years irrespective of any other money earned.*
> *(3) In the case of having to build his own house or workshop, a free grant should be available for building materials.*
> *(4) County Councils should waive all charges for an agreed period (say 10 years) and provide free connection to water and other services if required.*
> *(5) The E.S.B. should provide free connection to supply if necessary.*
> *(6) Income tax to be waived for the same 10 year period.*
> *(7) Guaranteed medical card for 10 years.*
> *(Connolly, 1990, p. 11)*

1.3 REALISATION

Although the above financial suggestions have never come to pass, the concept of rural resettlement has developed into an established charitable organisation receiving wide government and media attention in Ireland. In the ten years since these ideas were first made public, the following has been achieved:

- founding of Rural Resettlement Ireland;
- over 4,000 applicants to the programme;
- 312 families resettled in rural Ireland;[1]
- families moved to 16 different counties;
- four counties have their own Rural Resettlement Boards;
- increasing financial support for project infrastructure; and
- visits from organisations in two different European countries interested in founding their own versions of RRI.

During this time there has been no equivalent project taking place in Western Europe, the United States or Canada. As the only programme adopting this particular approach to combat rural depopulation, an issue that has been common to many developed countries, RRI merits closer investigation and understanding.

1.4 QUESTIONS RAISED

The development of RRI took place as individual families came forward, without pause for lengthy investigation or prediction. Likewise, no comprehensive academic study of this project has taken place. A thorough analysis of its work to date needs to address the following questions:

- How does the presence and work of the RRI organisation impact upon the choice participants make to move and their practical experience of rural life after the move?

[1] At the time this study was conducted, 211 families had been moved. Therefore, 211 is the total potential population for the fieldwork contained in this dissertation.

- Do RRI participants differ demographically or otherwise from migrants in other counterurbanisation studies?

- Are the goals and aspirations of RRI participants for the move different from those of migrants in other counterurbanisation studies?

- Do RRI participants experience their move differently from migrants in other counterurbanisation studies?

- Do the rural communities to which RRI participants move experience these newcomers differently from the communities in other studies of counterurbanisation?

Focusing around these questions, this research assesses how well RRI has, or has not, succeeded in meeting its initial main objectives: improving the quality of life for migrating families, and strengthening the future prospects of rural communities. The following chapter sets the context for this evaluation in terms of relevant historical and contemporary population movements away from rural areas, attitudes to rural repopulation, studies of spontaneous urban to rural migration, discussion of a body of theory to refer to in further analysing RRI participants, and an examination of the local population circumstances in rural Ireland.

CHAPTER TWO

THE CONTEXT

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Setting the context for analysing Rural Resettlement Ireland involves looking at processes of both depopulation and repopulation of rural areas, phenomena that have been shared by much of the developed world. It is not possible to discuss all the studies that have been written on these topics, so a choice has had to be made in terms of focusing the research. As a result, many of the sources utilised here are from Britain, where both depopulation and repopulation have been pronounced, and well-covered in the literature. However, within these processes, comparative studies cited support that it is themes shared beyond Britain, that are highlighted here (Dahms and McComb, 1999; Serow, 1991; Robinson, 1990; Perry et al, 1986; Fielding, 1982; Vining and Pallone, 1982).

Six British studies are especially relied upon for the comparative data they present on migrants' characteristics vs. local community members' characteristics. Through these studies and other more wide-ranging works a particular theme, that of socio-economic status of migrants vs. that of the local populations, emerges here as central to a discussion of RRI's potential distinctiveness. A means of taking this theme further, through the application of some work by sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, is discussed.

Finally, the local population circumstances in which RRI is constituted are also described in this chapter.

2.2 RURAL DEPOPULATION

The phenomenon of widespread rural depopulation is one that has been shared by most Western European nations, North America, Australia and New Zealand. Population drift towards urban conurbations has been occurring, to greater and lesser extents, with local variations as to immediate causes and effects, at least since industrialisation took hold. Vining and Pallone (1982) state that, "The tendency in industrial nations for populations to concentrate in large urban or core regions is one of human geography's most enduring paradigms" (p. 340).

As the home of the industrial revolution, Britain is an example of a country that experienced this movement early, and forcefully. The percentage of its total population that was rural declined from 65.2% in 1801, to less than 50% in 1851 and then to only 17.6% by 1939 (Phillips and Williams 1984, p. 74). Although this dramatic level of change has not been shared by all industrialised nations, the general pattern is shown to hold true by the following table.

	% Urban		Rural Population (millions)	
	1950	1985	1950	1985
Australia	75	86	3.5	2.3
Austria	46	55	3.5	3.4
Belgium	63	95	3.2	0.5
Canada	61	76	5.3	6.2
Denmark	68	86	1.4	0.8
Eire	41	56	1.8	1.6
Finland	32	60	2.7	2.0
France	56	73	18.4	14.6
Greece	37	58	4.8	4.1
Iceland	74	89	0.0	0.0
Italy	54	72	21.5	16.0
Luxembourg	59	78	0.1	0.1
Malta	61	88	0.1	0.1
Netherlands	74	88	2.6	1.7
New Zealand	73	83	0.5	0.5
Norway	32	71	2.2	1.2
Portugal	19	30	6.8	7.1
Spain	52	90	13.4	3.7
Sweden	66	89	2.4	0.9
Switzerland	44	57	2.6	2.7
United Kingdom	84	92	8.1	4.5
United States	64	74	54.8	62.9
West Germany	72	86	14.0	8.5

TABLE 2.1 Population change in industrialised nations (Robinson, 1990, p. 26)

2.2.1 Causes and consequences of rural depopulation

Such a fundamental change in population distribution, and one that has occurred world-wide, will be the outcome of a complex and inter-related set of causes. However, there is agreement that employment has played, and continues to play, a major role in rural depopulation (Hoggart, 1997; Simmons, 1997; Robinson, 1990; Phillips and Williams, 1984; Lumb, 1080a; Newby, 1979).

The basis of employment as a factor can be either the availability, actual or perceived, of jobs in urban areas, or the lack of opportunities in rural areas. Newby (1979) stresses the decreasing availability of agricultural employment as a main impetus for rural depopulation, particularly historically. Robinson (1990) emphasises the increased urban opportunities offered by industrialisation.

In some countries, declining numbers of agricultural jobs continues as a main force behind depopulation (Hoggart, 1997). Elsewhere, relative numbers involved in agriculture are already low, so continuing migration to urban areas is attributed more to changing aspirations of the young (Robinson, 1990).

If employment issues specifically are a major force behind catalysing and maintaining rural to urban migration, it is well documented that once depopulation of a rural area takes hold, "...depopulation becomes self-perpetuating--it results in a range of problems favouring further depopulation" (Baviskar et al, 1980, p. 122). These problems include the closing of rural schools (Martin, 1993; Robinson, 1990; Baviskar et al, 1980), declining quality and quantity of transportation services to the area (Baviskar et al, 1980), loss of health care services (Martin, 1993) and loss of shopping and recreational facilities (Blunden and Curry, 1985). These forces are on-going even where agricultural employment is already low.

Depopulation also becomes self-perpetuating through the demographics of who moves and who is left behind. This phenomenon is described by Forsythe (1982),

> *Long-term depopulation affected the age structure of the population. Since outmigration typically draws disproportionately on those in middle and younger age groups, one effect of prolonged net outmigration is to raise the average age of a population. This process is difficult to halt, because the outflow of children reduces the size of future cohorts of parents, who in turn produce fewer children. (p. 18)*

The ageing of rural populations through out-migration is noted in a variety of other studies (Corbett and Logie, 1997; McCleery, 1991; Robinson, 1990; Phillips and Williams, 1984; Cottam et al, 1981). Saraceno (1994) found that a "negative birth rate" can lead to continuing depopulation, even when there is a "positive migration rate" (p. 322). Falling rural birth rates are due, in part, to this type of demographic shift.

Beyond these tangible impacts of rural depopulation, the process is somewhat more subtly blamed for creating, "a lack of community spirit and energy to overcome rural decline" (Baviskar et al, 1980, p. 12). Taking this assertion a bit further, is the belief that depopulation has a negative effect on the sense of self-worth of rural residents (Newby, 1979; Brody, 1973).

2.3 RESPONSES TO RURAL DEPOPULATION

The desire to counter rural depopulation is far from unique to Rural Resettlement Ireland. Rural depopulation has been acknowledged as a "social problem" since the middle of the 19th century (Newby, 1979, p. 125). The reasons why people have been concerned with this issue are varied.

Commonly, the idea has been expressed that rural communities are a necessary part of a complete human culture. It has been claimed that, "Just as a well developed, mature ecosystem has organisms of many different sizes...so too an efficient culture

needs many different sizes of human groupings - individual, household, working group, village, city, region, etc." (Gilman, 1983, p. 33). Others have noted that rural communities are considered repositories of traditional values, national culture and strength (Jedrej and Nuttall, 1996; MacDonald, 1993; Newby, 1979; H. M. Treasury, 1976).

Maintaining, or even increasing, the numbers of full-time residents in rural areas has been highlighted as imperative if the social fabric of rural communities, thought to be of value in its own right, is to be maintained (Nearing, 1989; Stephenson, 1984). However, as Jedrej and Nuttall (1999) point out, it is also the case that in some areas where rural repopulation has been occurring, it "has provoked an ambiguous response", with strong concerns around social or cultural change being forced upon rural populations (p. 51).

There are those who have stressed regeneration of rural communities as a means of improving the ecology of the countryside (Reforesting Scotland, 1994). However, again in contrast, there are also environmental and cost concerns expressed about increasing or maintaining numbers of rural residents due to the potential negative impact of dispersed development (Smith et al, 1998; Blowers, 1993).

Finally, there is a group who view rural regeneration as a means of addressing ecological, economic and human needs simultaneously (Sale, 1985; Berry, 1977; Schumacher, 1973; Leopold, 1949).

Although spurred on by this variety of concerns, approaches to invigorating rural communities, including maintaining current levels of rural populations, often have shared an economic focus (Monk and Hodge, 1995; Baviskar et al, 1980). This is unsurprising given that employment is a major concern of rural dwellers and policy makers (Monk and Hodge, 1995; Bowler and Lewis, 1991; Blunden and Curry, 1985), and that, as noted above, employment issues have been a major force behind depopulation.

Even historical land settlement options detailed in works such as Leneman (1989) and Menzies-Kitchen (1935) were as much "job creation" schemes as anything else. They shared the idea of the settled families making a living from the land and, at least in part, proposed to measure success through the economic success of families.

> *...if there were no unemployment problem there would be no movement to place people on the land....the expectation of increased employment is the main justification of Land Settlement, the success of any settlement policy will depend on its contribution to the 'net' increase in the nation's employment. (Menzies-Kitchen, 1935, p. xi)*

Although these land settlement schemes are interesting in their own right, the very different economic and social circumstances of the times mean that they are not usefully comparable to the approach of RRI.[1] Berlan-Darque and Collomb (1991) discuss the fact that such programmes based on subsistence farming are no longer tenable in industrialised countries (p. 261).

More recently, the approach of repopulating rural areas has been suggested, even undertaken, in some limited circumstances. In the United States, Wes Jackson has put forward the suggestion of rural repopulation and taken some steps to encourage the process in a particular area, but it has not taken the form of a supported programme such as RRI, nor has it had the same response (Jackson, 1996). In Finland, there has been an apparent revival in village populations through in-migration, but there is little information on the process through which this has occurred (Pietila, 1993). Strikingly absent from the literature, and perhaps largely from practical reality, are thorough accounts of functioning contemporary attempts to repopulate rural areas against which RRI can be appropriately measured.

[1] For discussion on historical population redistribution attempts in Ireland, see Chapter 4.

As a result, the most useful framework within which to analyse RRI is the contemporary, spontaneous movement of populations toward rural areas, which has become known as counterurbanisation.

2.4 COUNTERURBANISATION

Even if there were other programmes useful for comparative purposes with RRI, any report into the efficacy of a strategy for rural resettlement still would be incomplete if it did not acknowledge, and examine the relevance of, counterurbanisation.

First coined as a term by American researchers in the 1970s (Perry et al, 1986), counterurbanisation has become an important and pervasive force in many developed nations.

> *The process of [rural] re-population has parallels in all other western countries, and it is now seen as a natural stage of economic development which occurs as countries move towards the very end of the demographic transition and into a 'post-industrial' world. (Rogers, 1989, p. 105)*

It is important for the use of counterurbanisation as a model against which to analyse RRI, and to the potential applicability of RRI outwith Ireland, to stress that counterurbanisation, in common with rural depopulation, is not limited to only one or two localities. Rather, it has been shown to have taken hold, to varying degrees, in most Western developed nations (Dahms and McComb, 1999; Serow, 1991; Robinson, 1990; Rogers, 1989; Dean et al, 1984a; Vining and Pallone, 1982).

There is a wealth of literature devoted to this topic, including many documents discussing a proper definition of counterurbanisation, and conceptual and theoretical approaches to addressing the phenomenon (Dahms, 1995; Sant and Simons, 1993; Champion, 1989; Perry et al, 1986; Cloke, 1985; Dean et al, 1984a; Fielding, 1982). It is not necessary here to enter the debate between "clean-break" theories, where counterurbanisation is seen as an entirely new kind of population movement, and

those where it is part of a continuum (Pooley and Turnbull, 1996; Halliday and Coombes, 1995; Bourne, 1980). Nor is it useful here to be particularly exclusive in defining what qualifies as counterurbanisation.

For the purposes of this study, counterurbanisation can be described as the spontaneous process of people moving from urban to rural locations, thus going against what has been usually accepted as the dominant trend of centuries. The only "category" of counterurbanisation migrant that will be excluded from consideration here is the "second home owner." Some authors include them as migrants, and it is true that a proportion of those who have second homes in rural areas use that experience as a stepping stone to retiring permanently there (Robinson, 1990; Phillips and Williams, 1984). However, if contrasted to the experience of participants in RRI, the part-time use of a rural home for recreation potentially has such a different impact on these "movers" and their host community, that including it in our analysis would at once exaggerate some issues, while obscuring others.

There is some disagreement in the literature as to whether counterurbanisation is a continuing force, or was a phenomenon isolated in particular time periods (Dahms and McComb, 1999; Dahms, 1995; Hugo and Smailes, 1985). There is also disagreement as to whether it occurs only in rural areas near to urban conglomerations, or has also had meaningful impacts upon isolated areas (Hoggart, 1997; Dahms, 1995; Berlan-Darque and Collomb, 1991). However, there is general, if not unanimous, agreement that significant urban to rural migration has taken place over the past 30 years, in many parts of the developed world and that this has deserved the attention of social researchers (Dahms and McComb, 1999; Serow, 1991; Robinson, 1990; Rogers, 1989; Vining and Pallone, 1982).

2.4.1 Counterurbanisation: migrant profiles

Such a widespread phenomenon as counterurbanisation has proven to be is likely to have been influenced, perhaps catalysed, by contemporary changes in one or more of the areas which effect human behaviour. Addressing this, Jones et al (1984) state that counterurbanisation has been enabled by, "...the unparalleled expansion of affluence in the 1960s, providing the material conditions for a larger segment of the population to indulge its residential preferences" (p. 442).

This statement is supported by studies showing that in Western countries higher income groups are able to move longer distances, and that a high proportion of those moving to rural settings are from middle or upper socio-economic status groups and/or higher social classes[2] (Halfacree et al, 1992; Bolton and Chalkley, 1990; Robinson, 1990; Williams and Jobes, 1990; Perry et al, 1986; Dean et al, 1984b; Jones, 1982; Forsythe, 1980; Newby, 1979). A minority of recent work does illustrate high mobility rates for lower income groups moving to rural areas, but these are in response to specific economic and social conditions that do not apply generally (Fitchen, 1995; Nord et al, 1995).

The high socio-economic status of many migrants to rural areas does not only describe them as a certain subset of the "sending" population. Authors state this also places them in a different category from much of the local[3] rural population (Phillips, 1993; Bolton and Chalkley, 1993; Shucksmith, 1990; Forsythe, 1980; Newby, 1979).

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[2] This variation in categorisation is due to the different language utilised in specific studies.

[3] Some studies cited in this research (Findlay et al, 1999; Lumb, 1980a) found that the term 'local' could be misleading in implying life-long residence, whereas the reality they uncovered was that many areas exhibited appreciable historical and on-going levels of migration (often from other rural areas). They then had to carefully define the terms they would use to refer to different lengths of residence. For the purposes of this study, the only distinction made is that between RRI participants (variously referred to in the text as "participants", "the families", "migrants", and "movers") and those residents of rural areas who did not "get there" via RRI (variously referred to as "locals" and "the community"). In this way the language is descriptive rather than definitive.

In fact, the most important point here is not whether or not the migrants are "wealthy" in any absolute sense, but whether they are "wealthier" than the communities they join. For instance, Shucksmith et al (1996), state that,

> *...it was clear that many of the new rural residents were not wealthy by any objective standards. The majority were, however, wealthy in comparison to the very low incomes earned in the [rural] areas. Others came from a 'wealthy' background, or in the past had once had a high earning capacity. (p. 344)*

While Lumb (1984a) says "...a major difference between native Highlands and Islands people and English incomers, and a source of much resentment, is the greater amounts of capital and credit the latter have at their disposal" (p. 146). This situation has ramifications for the way migrants experience their new communities, and for the impact they have on those communities. "...the social impact of [counterurbanisation] has been of greater significance because counter-urbanization has introduced not just more people into the countryside but different people" (Rogers, 1989, p. 106).

Table 2.2 illustrates this situation by drawing upon the findings of six British studies that, in one form or another, give socio-economic or income data on migrants and, usually, also on the rural communities involved.

Study	Scale used[4]	Migrant[5] Info.	Local Info.
Bolton and Chalkley 1990	SC	I and II = 49% of those employed	I and II = 28% of those employed
Dean et al 1984b	SEG	1 and 2 = 49.4% 5 and 6 = 9.7%	1 and 2 = 23.1% 5 and 6 = 24.1%
Findlay et al 1999	Income categories	<£10,000 = 22% >£20,000 = 31%	<£10,000 = 34% >£20,000 = 17%
Forsythe 1982	SC	I and II >50% ¾ non-manual occupations (both these statistics from before move)	"nearly all" manual
Jones et al 1986	SC	I and II = 63% (before move)	Not stated
Perry et al 1986	SEG	1 and 2 = 49% 5 and 6 = 10%	1 and 2 = 23% 5 and 6 = 24%

TABLE 2.2 Socio-economic status of migrants and locals as portrayed in selected counterurbanisation studies

[4] Bolton and Chalkley clearly demonstrate that they are applying the OPCS (now ONS) Social Class scale (now Social Class based on Occupation). Dean et al (1984b) and Perry et al (1986) use the phrase "Socio-Economic Group" (SEG) in describing the Socio-Economic Classification (SEC) they use. Since they are clearly not applying the full SEG approach, with its 17 categories, (Rose and O'Reilly, 1997), it is presumed they are applying the widely used 6 category "condensed version" of SEG (Abercrombie et al, 1984). It is not entirely clear which of these SECs is adopted by Jones et al (1986), but they use the language of Social Class. However, with the considerable overlap between these approaches, and the relatively crude level at which our analysis of RRI SECs will take place, this variation need not prevent useful comparison

[5] Authors (Perry et al, 1986; Dean et al, 1984b) sometimes divide their migrant categories into "return migrant", made up of those moving back to a previous residential area, and "non-return migrant", made up of those moving to an area for the first time. No RRI participants were identified who would fall into a "return migrant" category. Therefore, for accuracy of comparison, where authors present data separately for "non-return migrants" it is that information applied in this research.

A clear pattern can be seen here where migrants are drawn much more heavily from socio-economic classifications I and II (or 1 and 2), than are local residents. Other areas of migrant profiling where there is general agreement among different studies are the age when education finished and housing tenure. These are detailed in Tables 2.3 and 2.4 respectively.

Study	Education Information on Migrants	Education Information on Locals
Dean et al 1984b	18.8% were in f/t education after age of 20	6.4% were in f/t education after age of 20
Findlay et al 1999	40% attended college or more	28% attended college or more
Jones et al 1986	55% had been in f/t higher education	---
Perry et al 1986	19% had tertiary level education	6% had tertiary level education

TABLE 2.3 Final education level data from selected counterurbanisation studies

This shows clearly that migrants in these studies have a higher percentage of people who have attended tertiary level education than do the local rural communities.

Study	Migrant Housing Tenure (after move)	Local Housing Tenure
Bolton and Chalkley 1990	89% owner occupiers	71% owner occupiers
Dean et al 1984b	87.5% owner occupiers	69.2% owner occupiers
Findlay et al 1999	78% owner occupiers	81% owner occupiers
Jones et al 1986	79% owner occupiers	61% owner occupiers
Perry et al 1986	88% owner occupiers	69% owner occupiers

TABLE 2.4 Housing tenure data from selected counterurbanisation studies

Again, there is basic agreement among these studies that migrants have higher rates of owner occupancy than do locals. The only exception was Findlay et al (1999) where locals were only 3 percentage points higher than migrants.

However, studies can also portray conflicting profiles of migrants. A number of authors (Serow, 1991; Robinson, 1990; Perry et al, 1986; Dean et al, 1984b; Phillips and Williams, 1984) demonstrate that migrants as a group are disproportionately elderly. Several other studies describe migrants as being younger overall, or as having more school-age children than the local populations they join (Findlay et al, 1999; Bolton and Chalkley, 1990; Forsythe, 1982; Lumb, 1980a). These differences are illustrated in Table 2.5.

Study	Migrant Age Characteristics	Local Age Characteristics
Bolton and Chalkley 1990	8% retirement age Numbers of children higher than national average	---
Dean et al 1984b	33.7% retired 41.5% over 59	23.6% retired 30.8% over 59
Findlay et al 1999	Heads of household younger than local average 38% have school age children	18% have school age children
Forsythe 1982	14% > 60 30% between 0 -14	26% > 60 18% between 0 - 14
Jones et al 1986	13.5% > 60	---
Perry et al 1986	29% retired Overall migrants slightly older	24% retired

TABLE 2.5 Age characteristics of migrants contrasted to locals in selected counterurbanisation studies

A final pertinent area in the migrant profiles of other studies is that of motivation for their move. Although a variety of motivations are put forward by the migrants themselves in questionnaire and interview responses and through participant observation, the most basic distinction that emerges in the literature is the split between employment/economic motives vs. what are broadly called "quality of life" issues. The economic issues category is fairly static between the various studies as to what it includes. It takes on board moves precipitated by job transfers and those where the search for a new job is the main motive. Perry et al (1986) also include those whose move was precipitated by cheaper housing costs in the rural area.

The quality of life category is much more variable—in terms of what it includes--between the different studies. Some of this variability is due to the diversity of answers study participants could give, but much of it is due to the differences between authors and what they chose to include in this category.

Study	Employment or other Economic	Quality of Life	Other
Bolton and Chalkley 1990	30%		58% non-economic (especially "lifestyle change)
Findlay et al 1999	38%	27%	34% retirement, housing, personal, education
Forsythe 1982		States this as strong	
Halliday and Coombs 1995	36%	17%	12% retirement 17% be near to family
Jones et al 1986	24%	57% (especially "scenic")	19%
Perry et al 1986	Mixture of employment and quality of life, not presented in manner applicable for this table		
Smailes and Hugo 1985	31%	40%	16% retirement 12% marriage 1% other

TABLE 2.6 Migrant motivations in selected counterurbanisation literature

In subsequent chapters data will be presented to illustrate how RRI participants fit within, or fall outside, the information given in Tables 2.2-2.6. Profiles of RRI participants should be relatively straightforward to portray in terms of adult age numbers of children in families, housing tenure and educational histories. Motivations for moving will also be addressed. It should be possible to gauge the economic situation of migrants through carefully enquiring about markers such as income and the job histories of participants. However, these criteria may not be enough to accurately and fully portray participants.

Within the literature of counterurbanisation there exists—sometimes explicitly, sometimes implicitly—the idea that some groups of counterurbanisers are choosing to step outside of "mainstream" societal goals. Lumb (1980a) describes this phenomenon in the following way.

> *The recent emergence of the 'Small is Beautiful' philosophy, environmental protection movements, cooperatives, self-sufficiency and the revival of neighbourhood and small group identity are symptomatic of a radical change in values among a minority within the dominant culture...It is these changed attitudes which stimulate urban-rural migration. (p. 151)*

Bolton and Chalkley (1990) found that 23% of their migrants were motivated mainly by a desire for "lifestyle change" (p. 38). However, they also explicitly point out that even this group cannot be "stereotyped" as seeking "back to the land lifestyles" (p. 29). Rather they were "seeking a new direction, a change from their daily routine, career and commuting patterns and the prospect of a less-pressurised way of life. While very few were seriously interested in self-sufficiency or anti-materialism, many referred to escaping from 'the urban rat race'" (p. 38).

Forsythe (1982), through case studies of migrants, discovered that, "...their moves are portrayed as a personal search for extremely abstract goals, such as contentment, peace, community, and a natural way of life" (p. 49). Later she states that, "The incomers, especially the younger ones, explain their move as 'escape to fulfilment', a radical rejection of urban life in favour of a rural way of life perceived as freer and more natural" (p. 57).

A consideration when analysing RRI, with the limited numbers available to participate in this study, is whether a sizeable group who had "stepped outside" of society could be missed through looking only at the markers used in Tables 2.2-2.6. For instance, a family might quite correctly be classified through the SC scale in Group V, while other information on cultural preferences could suggest a very different background.

Overall social status and background are difficult to describe in a meaningful and transparent manner, yet crucial to the question of impact on the receiving communities. In order to deepen this analysis of RRI, data will not only be analysed with regard to the above noted markers, but also to describe more subtle aspects of families' place within social strata.

The work of sociologist Pierre Bourdieu is most useful here for the way in which he makes explicit defining aspects of social stratification that stand removed from economic data. He does not disregard the importance of economic information; rather he places it in relation to other markers enabling a more robust analysis of overall social and cultural status. "...in Bourdieu's formulation this diffuse or symbolic power is closely intertwined with—but not reducible to—economic and political power..." (Randal Johnson in Bourdieu, 1993, p. 2). In turn, his more wide-ranging concept of status might help to explain differing decisions made concerning consumption within different groupings. One focus of his work has been to elucidate "...the relations between the distinguishing judgements made of all cultural products and the social distinctiveness of those people or groups making the judgements" (Robbins, 1991, p. 124).

It must be clear that it is not a goal of this study to absolutely classify or define RRI participants into a particular "class" that would be recognisable to Marx or Weber. Indeed, applying Bourdieu's work to such an end would badly misinterpret his intentions,

> *...the crucial error, the theoreticist error that you find in Marx, would consist in treating classes on paper as real classes, in concluding from the objective homogeneity of conditions, of conditionings, and thus of dispositions, which flows from the identity of position in social space, that the agents involved exist as a unified group, as a class. (Bourdieu, 1989, p. 17)*[6]

Robbins (1991) further emphasises Bourdieu's wish to avoid treating classes as "real" stating,

> *In spite of the use made of 'class' classifications to interpret the maps [in* Anatomie du gout, *1976], Bourdieu used the arguments advanced in 'Classes et classement' (1973) to disown any possible reading of his intentions in terms of stratification theory or Marxism. (p. 127)*

Rather, the intention here is to determine whether the participants blend with, or stand out from, the people studied in other counterurbanisation portraits and try to understand the implications of this finding. In other words, I intend to use class as a key to identifying that which is situated in conformity or otherwise with a status quo, rather than as a system by which to classify the status quo and that which impinges upon it.

The first work of Bourdieu's to consider, one focused particularly on taste and consumption decisions as classifiers, is his 1984 opus *Distinction*. Here he describes the results of cultural surveys, interviews and observations carried out in France in 1963 and 1967 – 68. His questionnaire covered some basic personal data, but then focused on issues of consumption of goods (e.g. furniture and clothes) and taste in art, music and décor. The respondents were then divided into occupational categories and their questionnaire responses compared as to how they were mutually

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[6] Bourdieu himself does, however, use the concept of class throughout his works, often without clearly defining his precise meaning. Indeed, in a critique of *Distinction* it has been said that, "The primary category through which he analyses the differential structure of social relations is class;...however, his account of class oscillates between a conventional ranking according to relation to economic capital (bourgeoisie/employers, petit bourgeoisie/middle class, working class), and a stratification by occupation. It is never clear how these two very different models of class translate into each other..." (Bennett et al, 1999, p. 12).

situated. Perhaps unsurprisingly, in most instances the categories reinforced each other. He then elaborated and further demonstrated how taste relates to education and social origin, basing the latter on father's occupation.

Bourdieu states that "...all cultural practices (museum visits, concert-going, reading, etc.), and preferences in literature, painting or music, are closely linked to educational level...and secondarily to social origin" (1984, p. 1). He goes on to make the deceptively simple point that "Taste classifies, and it classifies the classifier" (1984, p. 6). He posits this to be a more meaningful way of classifying people than say, employment ranking or income, as such taste is something difficult, or impossible, to add on to or walk away from in ones make-up. "The schemes of the habitus[7], the primary forms of classification, owe their specific efficacy to the fact that they function below the level of consciousness and language, beyond the reach of introspective scrutiny or control by the will" (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 466).

These ideas, taken in conjunction with economic, employment and educational information will lend more insight in later chapters to comparisons between RRI participants and those in other studies.

However, applying the very specific definers of distinction utilised by Bourdieu would be unhelpful in this context. Not only is such a detailed classification of RRI participants beyond the goals of this study; there is no reason to think Bourdieu's specific criteria for France in the 1960s and 70s would apply in 1990s Ireland. "The researcher wanting to evaluate a person's cultural capital[8] would have to reconstruct the code prevailing in this person's environment in its entirety—a most difficult task—before estimating the individual performance" (Lamont and Lareau, 1988, p. 157). For instance, knowledge of the composer of the "Well-Tempered Clavier" (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 516) might, or might not be a reliable signifier of cultural capital in Irish society. Jenkins (1992) also questions the "general relevance" of *Distinction*

[7] For a discussion of Bourdieu's idea of habitus, see later in this section.
[8] For a discussion of Bourdieu's idea of cultural capital, see later in this section.

as it is based solely on French information (p. 148). A re-working and application of Bourdieu's survey and methods would be an interesting exercise, but it is beyond the scope of this research.

There are, however, several other key concepts running throughout Bourdieu's work—germane to consumption decisions, but with much broader applications—that may be useful in describing RRI participants and in analysing their experiences. These are: field, habitus, hexis, practice and capital.

"Field" is used to indicate the many different social/cultural settings—often overlapping--in which each individual lives his or her life. Bourdieu states, "What do I mean by 'field'? As I use the term, a field is a separate social universe having its own laws of functioning independent of those of politics and the economy" (1993, p. 162). This is not, however, to say that the economy is excluded through the concept of field, rather that it is itself one of the fields, and other fields exist that are not necessarily bounded by economics or politics. "...[Bourdieu] sees the economic field *per se* as simply one field among others, without granting it primacy in the general theory of fields" (Randall Johnson in Bourdieu, 1993, p. 8).

There is no necessary limit to the number of fields in existence and they can be broad, or fairly specific. The ones commonly referred to in relevant texts include: economic, political, artistic, religious, educational, cultural, law and housing construction (Bourdieu, 1993; Jenkins, 1992; Wacquant, 1989). That more areas of human interaction are not in this list is simply because other possible areas have not been described and studied as fields.

Aside from being useful as a descriptive tool for noting different arenas for human action, field is important in Bourdieu's work as an active concept that both bounds people and yet enables change to occur. One of Bourdieu's editors, Randal Johnson, explains this well in his Introduction to *The Field of Cultural Production.*

> *Agents do not act in a vacuum, but rather in concrete social situations governed by a set of objective social relations. To account for these situations or contexts, without, again, falling into the determinism of objectivist analysis, Bourdieu developed the concept of field....Each field is relatively autonomous but structurally homologous with the others. Its structure, at any given moment, is determined by the relations between the positions agents occupy in the field. A field is a dynamic concept in that a change in agents' positions necessarily entails a change in the field's structure. (Bourdieu, 1993, p. 6)*

Human actions influence the fields within which these actions take place, just as the rules and understandings of that field influence the human actions.

The second major concept relevant here is that of "habitus". In simplest terms, habitus has been described as being, "composed of the attitudes, beliefs, and experiences of those inhabiting one's social world" (MacLeod, 1995, p. 15). "The 'habitus' transmits from one generation to the next the ethos of groups and classes" (Robbins, 1991, p. 172). The genesis of this concept was, "as an alternative to the solutions offered by subjectivism...and a reaction against structuralism's 'odd philosophy of action' which reduced the agent to a mere 'bearer'...or 'unconscious' expression of structure (Bourdieu, 1993, p. 4). Bourdieu defines habitus in the following way:

> *The conditionings associated with a particular class of conditions of existence produce* habitus, *systems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles which generate and organize practices and representations that can be objectively adapted to their outcomes without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends or an express mastery of the operations necessary in order to attain them. Objectively 'regulated' and 'regular' without being in any way the product of obedience to rules, they can be collectively orchestrated without being the product of the organizing action of a conductor. (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 53)*

This detailed and rigorous manner of defining what others might be tempted to over-simplify and call "mind set", highlights the importance habitus has in much of Bourdieu's work.

Individual habitus is imbued with powerful historical bounds "...the habitus, the product of history, produces individual and collective practices, and hence history, in accordance with the schemes engendered by history" (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 82). Each individual's habitus begins with their own family experiences and then incorporates all other aspects of background including "ethnicity, educational history, peer associations, neighborhood social ecology and demographic characteristics" (MacLeod, 1995, p. 138).

In order to achieve "overcoming the alternative between consciousness and the unconscious and between finalism and mechanicalism" (Wacquant, 1989, p. 43), the concept of habitus also allows for some dynamic possibilities. "...the concept of habitus, like that of field, is relational in that it designates a mediation between objective structures and practices" (Wacquant, 1989, p. 43). Habitus does not "rule out strategic choice and conscious deliberation" but it remains the foundation upon which all such choices are, unconsciously, grounded (Wacquant, 1989, p. 45).

Habitus will be applied in this study for the way in which it impacts on aspects of lifestyle that may in turn be used as some of the classifiers of social stratification for comparing RRI families to participants in other studies. "Lifestyles are thus the systematic products of habitus, which, perceived in their mutual relations through the schemes of the habitus, become sign systems that are socially qualified..." (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 172). Or, as explained by Robbins (1991), "It is the operation of the 'habitus' which explains why tastes in food are not directly functions of income but of inherited life-style" (p. 130).

The third concept from Bourdieu which can be usefully applied to RRI is that of "hexis". Simpler in conception than habitus, it can be described as the outward,

physical manifestation (such as accent and carriage) of habitus in individuals. "Body hexis speaks directly to the motor function, in the form of a pattern of postures that is both individual and systematic, because linked to a whole system of techniques involving the body and tools, and charged with a host of social meanings and values..." (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 87). More specifically, "Bodily hexis is political mythology realized, *em-bodied*, turned into a permanent disposition, a durable way of standing, speaking, walking, and thereby of feeling and thinking" (Bourdieu, 1990, pp. 69 – 70). Hexis may be conceptually easier to grasp than some of Bourdieu's other concepts, yet it is still a powerful attribute. "Our corporal 'hexis'...is the product of our class or group upbringing. Our size and our shape and our deportment all disclose, first of all, our social inheritance and, secondly, our early socialization" (Robbins, 1991, p. 173).

The fourth concept to consider here is "capital". In this context capital does not apply only to monetary goods or savings, but any one of several categories in which it is possible to accumulate power. Bourdieu states that "...these fundamental powers are economic capital (in its different forms), cultural capital, social capital, and symbolic capital, which is the form that the various species of capital assume when they are perceived and recognized as legitimate" (1989, p. 17). In other writings academic and linguistic capital are also acknowledged (Bourdieu, 1993 and 1984; Wacquant, 1989).

The appropriate use of capital is crucial for success in whatever sphere one is operating, as it is "...capable of conferring strength, power and consequently profit on their holder" (Bourdieu, 1987, p. 4). The possession of, or lack of, capital is portrayed as central in differentiating groups of people. "The primary differences, those which distinguish the major classes of conditions of existence, derive from the overall volume of capital, understood as the set of actually usable resources and powers—economic capital, cultural capital and also social capital" (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 114).

The various types of capital are particularly important in Bourdieu's work for the role they play in his approach to reproduction theory (sometimes referred to as cultural or social reproduction). "The concept of cultural capital is...important because it has improved our understanding of the process through which social stratification systems are maintained" (Lamont and Lareau, 1988, p. 154).

The power attributed to capital can be expressed in terms of the advantages bestowed through its possession:

> *Cultural capital is the centrepiece of Bourdieu's theory of cultural reproduction. Children of upper-class origin...inherit substantially different cultural capital than do working class children...Upper-class students, by virtue of a certain linguistic and cultural competence acquired through family upbringing, are provided with the means of appropriation for success in school. (MacLeod, 1995, p. 13)*

Equally, this power can be described in terms of the harm done through lacking sufficient capital:

> *The idea of cultural capital used as a* basis for exclusion *from jobs, resources, and high status groups is one of the most important and original dimensions of Bourdieu and Passeron's theory. (Lamont and Lareau, 1988, p. 156)*

Looking at the possession of, or lack of, capital may prove one of the most useful and specific tools in classifying RRI participants in conjunction with other data such as economic information.

Here we come to the last, for the purposes of this study, central concept of Bourdieu's work, that of "practice". Practice is the daily, social manifestation of the interaction of these other concepts. Practice is made up of the things we actually do and the choices we make; constantly and irrevocably informed by our habitus, influenced by the matrix of fields "in use", fortified or otherwise by our capital and postured by our hexis. Jenkins (1992) states that "Practices are produced in and by the encounter between the habitus and its dispositions, on the one hand, and the

constraints, demands and opportunities of the social field or market to which the habitus is appropriate or within which the actor is moving, on the other" (p. 78).

Illustrated in the form of an equation, the following shows how practice is created through the interaction of three of the other above concepts:

[(habitus) (capital)] + field = practice (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 101).

These then are the basic concepts of field, habitus, hexis, capital and practice. In later chapters these overall concepts, and some of the more specific ideas within *Distinction*, will be referred to in analysing RRI participants in contrast to participants in other studies. Whether or not Bourdieu's theories are robust enough to be thus applied outwith their original cultural milieu (keeping in mind that the minutiae of his approach is not to be employed[9]) was addressed by Bourdieu thus:

> *The model of the relationships between the universe of economic and social conditions and the universe of life-styles which is put forward here..., seems to me to be valid beyond the particular French case and, no doubt, for every stratified society, even if the system of distinctive features which express or reveal economic and social differences (themselves variable in scale and structure) varies considerably from one period, and one society, to another. (Bourdieu, 1984, pp. xi-xii)*

A look at some of the applications to which this work has been put, would seem to support his claim. To name a few, his theories have been employed to help explain: the cultural significance of landlords in Scotland (Samuel, 2000), cultural and consumption patterns in modern Australia (Bennett et al, 1999), patterns of eating out in Britain (Warde et al, 1999) and the aspirations of young men in a low-income housing estate in Massachusetts (MacLeod, 1995). Robbins (1991) firmly states that,

[9] Drudy (1995) specifically warns, "...there might well be difficulties in applying [Bourdieu's] *exact* [emphasis added] dichotomy in the Irish context..." (p. 304).

"Regardless of whether Bourdieu's beliefs or convictions can be said to be identical to our own, there can be no denying that his many investigations and speculations cry out to be imitated or adapted in respect of social phenomena outside France" (p. 179).

This assertion and the above variety of applications does not mean there are no potential pitfalls in choosing aspects of Bourdieu's theories for the purpose of analysing RRI. Many authors are critical of aspects of Bourdieu's work. An earlier footnote highlighted his lack of consistency in working with the concept of social class. Jenkins (1992) criticises Bourdieu's purely French focus in *Distinction* and *Homo Academicus* and also states that, "the superficiality of [Bourdieu's] treatment of the working class is matched only by its condescension" (p. 148). Lamont and Lareau (1988) point out "methodological flaws and conceptual gaps" in Bourdieu's work (p. 160), while du Gay accuses him of failing in his goal to "navigate this dialectic" of objectivism vs. subjectivism (p. 85). Unsurprisingly, for such a well-published and well-known scholar, the list of authors with critical comments could go on much longer. However, for nearly all commentators, the value they find in his intriguing and thorough approaches far outweighs the failings they also identify.

For Wacquant (1989) the most obvious danger in critiquing Bourdieu is that of missing out on the totality of Bourdieu's approaches and criticising him for perceived omissions which he actually addressed in other areas of his work. The danger, therefore, being not in applying Bourdieu to inappropriate areas, but in doing him a disservice in underestimating the breadth and thoroughness of his work and so criticising him wrongly.

2.4.2 Counterurbanisation: impact on migrants

As shown above, the literature of counterurbanisation can be broadly descriptive of migrants in terms of demographics and their reasons for moving. However, it does not often go into great depth as to the effect the move has had upon them. One likely explanation of this is that the migrants were not participating in any programme that required evaluation, nor was there any form of apparent compulsion affecting their decision to move (with the obvious exception of some of those who moved when their jobs were transferred). Since they are thought to be "free agents" in this area, it is likely that the assumption exists that if the move was unsuccessful in their eyes, they have the ability to move again--they do not call for monitoring in that sense.

There are, however, a limited number of works which have addressed this issue. Expressions of satisfaction with rural life come from migrant respondents in the studies of Findlay et al (1999) and Shucksmith et al (1996). Perry et al (1986) state that around 85% of their migrant respondents felt that they had made a good decision by moving to rural West Cornwall (p. 98). Jones et al (1984), looking at the Highlands and Islands of Scotland found that "74 percent of our respondents were very satisfied...with their move" (p. 443). However, both Perry et al (1986) and Jones et al (1984), do point out that others who might not have been satisfied could have moved and not been included in the study. Also, respondents to Perry et al (1984) did acknowledge some level of conflict with locals, varying depending on specific communities (p. 98).

In contrast, Simmons (1997) portrays migrants as eventually suffering from disillusion with their move. This disillusion can come from their having had an unrealistic vision of rural life, and/or from the running down of local services, a process that can continue despite the presence of newcomers. More severely, they can be faced with social and physical isolation, particularly as they age. Jedrej and Nuttall (1996) show that newcomers can experience open hostility from the local population.

2.4.3 Counterurbanisation: impact on communities

In contrast to the relative dearth of information on counterurbanisation's impact on migrants, there is much more available in the literature with regard to its impact on communities. However, that is not to say that all of the literature is in agreement. There is a great deal of conflicting information, both statistical and interpretative, on this topic. In part this is a result of the complex and interwoven nature of the issues that counterurbanisation raises, and the important variation of experience flagged up by detailed, local studies. For many of the noted "positives" in one study, there will be a directly comparable "negative" in another.

For instance, as noted in Section 2.4.1, several studies have shown that migrants as a group are younger than the receiving population (Findlay et al, 1999; Bolton and Chalkley, 1990; Forsythe, 1982; Lumb, 1980a), in this way combating the earlier noted effect of the ageing of rural populations through differential outmigration. However, other local-level studies and overviews of counterurbanisation have shown that large percentages of migrants are elderly, thus further exacerbating the ageing of rural communities (Serow, 1991; Robinson, 1990; Perry et al, 1986; Dean et al, 1984b; Phillips and Williams, 1984).

In the same vein, it has been said that counterurbanisation results in increased numbers of children attending local schools and an influx of politically aware parents who are well able to argue for increased resources in local schools (Jones et al, 1984; Newby, 1979). While another work points out that the migrants can harm local education because they sometimes send their children farther away to school (Phillips and Williams, 1984).

One area where there is broad agreement about an impact of counterurbanisation is that of its effect on local house prices and availability. Table 2.4 demonstrated the high levels of home ownership amongst migrants. Also, as already noted, a high proportion of rural migrants have more financial resources at their disposal than much of the rural population. Although some local people may appreciate the

renovation of declining or derelict properties (Jones et al, 1984), a continued influx of relatively affluent home owners has resulted in increasing house prices. The result of this is that locals, particularly young people, can find it increasingly difficult, in some areas nearly impossible, to afford a home for themselves (Fitchen, 1992; Hunter, 1991; Shucksmith, 1991; McLaughlin, 1990; Rogers, 1989; Newby, 1988; Weekley, 1988; Blunden and Curry, 1985; Byron and MacFarland, 1982; Shucksmith, 1981; Baviskar et al, 1980; Forsythe, 1980).

Another topic that many studies touch upon is that of the social and cultural effects of migrants from urban localities upon rural communities. In contrast to the work on housing prices and availability, there is much more variation to the findings in this area. Here, conflicting results are due in part to the emotive and contradictory responses research into the topic can elicit. "The discussion of new rural residents and counterstream migrants was the most controversial part of the wider debate on the current state of rural society" (Shucksmith et al, 1996, p. 479). It is the case that in this area, one person's positive can be another person's negative. "Feelings about recent incomers run the entire spectrum of human feeling, from the expression of praise and gratitude at one end to statements of rank disaffection at the other" (Stephenson, 1984, p. 129).

There are publications that highlight a variety of difficulties brought about by counterurbanisation. Incomers can be portrayed as 'taking over' local affairs to the exclusion of the indigenous population (Simmons, 1997; Jedrej and Nuttall, 1996; Shucksmith et al, 1996; Forsythe, 1980). Or, incomers may bring their own culture and activities with them, or continue participating in a distant social life, either way not joining in with local social events, engendering a sense of defensiveness on the part of locals (Simmons, 1997; Shucksmith et al, 1996; Gillmor, 1988; Newby, 1979). Locals, who once valued a deep sense of belonging in their communities, can suddenly feel displaced in that, within their locality, they no longer know everybody who lives there, and the entire community has lost the much vaunted quality of *Gemeinschaft* (Simmons, 1997; Newby, 1979). The above situations can be severe

enough to trigger strong concerns around claims of cultural change and domination by new residents (Jedrej and Nuttall, 1996).

Some authors, while still noting 'negative' feelings about counterstream migration, make explicit the seeming contradictions in some of the criticisms. For instance, Shucksmith et al (1996) point out that migrants were blamed simultaneously for not becoming involved in local social events, and for taking over local social events (p. 473).

It is also worth drawing attention to the fact that where negative impacts are ascribed to incomers, it is often thought that the incomers cause these effects unwittingly and unwillingly.

> *The most striking quality of the new urban exodus and its probable aftermath is irony....Incomers move to the island with the conscious intention of escaping from the evils of 20th century urban life. But their method of escape will in the end recreate the conditions they have fled, and in the process destroy the cultural uniqueness of the refuge they have chosen. (Forsythe 1982, p 94)*

In some instances the sense of cultural change is seen as so great, that it seems as if authors are saying that the receiving community is dying as surely as it would with no people left. This view is encapsulated by Stephenson (1984) in this way, "While it is unarguable that a shrinking population will ultimately disappear if the decline is unchecked, it is not necessarily true that increase equals life" (p. 140).

It is very important not to give the impression that studies reveal only disaffection and resentment. It has been pointed out that popular media often does not focus on positive integration (Findlay et al, 1999, p. 94; Jedrej and Nuttall, 1996, p. 54), but there are indeed 'positive' stories here as well. Jones et al (1984) and Shoard (1980), for instance, note that newcomers have been well accepted into their new communities. While Findlay et al (1999), in their study of rural Scottish migration

patterns state that, "The overall message from the survey was...a positive one in terms of social integration" (p. 94).

Intriguingly it has also been noted that there can be an inherent contradiction in the way migrants are sometimes represented by locals, compared to the way the communities actually seem to function. "...there was disparity between the rhetoric about new rural residents and their effect on rural communities and the apparently high levels of community spirit, integration and social well-being" (Shucksmith et al, 1996, p. 476).

As a final point in the "big picture" of counterurbanisation and communities, there is the question as to whether or not the phenomenon actually combats rural depopulation in a physical, as opposed to a social or cultural sense, at all. It may seem logical that new people moving into an area would boost the population, but it has been claimed that this is not always the case. The terms "geriatrification" (high proportion of elderly migrants) and "gentrification" (middle-class migrants) are widely used to describe the effect of some counterurbanisation (Robinson, 1990). Due to the small family sizes that tend to accompany these processes, they do not necessarily increase rural populations.

More extremely, it has been stated that counterurbanisation can even drive depopulation; "...counterurbanisation, semantically seen as the opposite of depopulation, practically as a solution to rural depopulation, is in its social and cultural manifestations actually a cause of rural depopulation" (Weekley, 1988, p. 132). As an example of this, Spencer (1995) noted that 18 parishes in South Oxfordshire lost population, yet "...all but two of them gained additional dwellings" (p. 161). In a later article he described the process saying that, "...depopulation has taken on a 'new' form since counterurbanisation has brought about a rural demographic renaissance. In essence, net losses occur when affluent households comprising one or two persons (often middle aged or elderly) replace less prosperous indigenous families" (Spencer, 1997, p. 75). Although these statements were made

by the authors in a context of debating whether this effect is the fault of planners and landowners, or simply the changing lifestyles of society, it is yet an important point to consider for anyone looking at increasing rural populations through bringing in new households.

Given the mixed and sometimes conflicting picture of counterurbanisation outlined above, and the concerns that go hand in hand with this, it is next vital to examine the actual situation of the rural areas in which RRI mainly operates. With so much spontaneous urban to rural migration taking place in developed countries, is a project like RRI necessary to rural communities? If communities do "need" more people, should the negatives often ascribed to counterurbanisation rule out repopulation as a useful approach?

2.5 THE IRISH CONTEXT

In common with most of the developed world, Ireland has experienced rural depopulation and, more recently, counterurbanisation. However, there are local variations to these processes that must be noted in order to understand the specific context in which RRI is constituted.

2.5.1 Depopulation in Ireland

Referring back to Table 2.1, it is clear that compared to many developed nations, Ireland has a smaller proportion of its population living in urban areas. With only 56% of its total population urban in 1985, this table shows only Austria and Portugal as having more rural-based populations. This, however, is misleading as to the severity of rural depopulation Ireland has experienced.

In contrast to other developed nations, Ireland has undergone not only rural depopulation, but *overall* depopulation. This is significant in two ways for this study. First, it allows us to understand that percentage figures showing the total population that are rural, do not convey an adequate sense of the absolute level of

Irish rural depopulation. Second, some may claim that the roots and ferocity of this overall depopulation may well have an impact on Irish attitudes toward rural repopulation today.

The root cause of depopulation being referred to is that of the famines which struck Ireland during the second half of the 19th century. It is outwith the scope of this study to look closely at the complex interplay of politics, economics, racism and ecology that resulted in the deaths and displacement of so many. However, the basic demographic facts of this period in history must be laid out.

Exact details of population totals and loss from this time vary, but the following account gives a general sense of the loss. The main episodes of famine occurred through the 1840s. Actual census figures from the time give the total population in 1841 as 6,528,799. At the 1851 census the figure had dropped to 5,111,557, a loss of 1,417,242 people, or 22% of the population (Central Statistics Office, 1993b). Stark as they are, these figures are often thought to underestimate the original size of the population and the subsequent loss. Brody (1973) states that, "Between 1846 and 1851 approximately one million people emigrated, and at least one and a half million died of hunger or diseases precipitated by famine conditions" (p. 59). According to his estimate, during a period of less than 10 years, 19% of the population died and 13% emigrated, a total drop in 32% of the population.

This overall picture is startling enough, but it is even more unsettling to have pointed out that the poorer, rural areas of the West of Ireland were hardest hit by the famine (Scott, 1985, p. 3). Looking in detail at County Clare, at the specific area where RRI was founded and where its headquarters are, Murphy (1992) states that,

> *The population of these two parishes in 1841 was 12,943, and...a figure of at least a third more in numbers may have been more correct according to an official of the period. By 1851 the population of these parishes was 9,330, a loss of 3,613 or 28%. (p. 144)*

Contrasted with Brody's estimates, the above quote may not appear to illustrate the disproportionate loss in rural areas. However, it is these parishes where population numbers were most severely underestimated so, even using official figures, Murphy details a 28% loss compared to the national one of 22%.

The national population continued to decline at each census (with a slight rise in 1956), albeit less dramatically, until sustained growth began in 1966. This pattern of loss, and the fact that today's population of 3,621,035 (Central Statistics Office, 1996) remains so much smaller than the pre-Famine count, makes Ireland the "exceptional example of [historical] sustained population decline [in Western Europe]" (Coward, 1989, p. 57).

2.5.2 Rural Irish depopulation, some repercussions

Despite the devastating and pervasive nature of the impact of famine in terms of population numbers, it has been claimed that it did not change the desire of rural Irish people to remain in their communities. Economics and carrying capacity forced emigration as an option, but that did not mean it was generally a welcome goal. Only in the past few decades has continued emigration been the result of negative feelings about rural existence. Negative feelings brought on, in part, by the pressures of continued depopulation (Brody, 1973, pp. 40, 63). Another example, like those in Section 2.2.1, of how depopulation can become a self-perpetuating phenomenon.

Rural Ireland gives other examples of the differential impact depopulation can have in terms of demographics. As in examples given earlier, the rural population is disproportionately older than the population as a whole (Brody, 1973).

Somewhat more distinctly, Ireland exhibits a gender effect in rural depopulation. Specifically, women leaving at younger ages, and in higher numbers, than do men (Brody, 1973). Perry et al (1986) explain this pattern and note how it has continued into more recent times,

> *Traditionally, a higher proportion of females had been forced to leave the rural regions because there were even fewer job opportunities for them on the land....this pattern continued in the 1970's in Mayo, where a net gain of 470 males was more than offset by a net loss of 890 females. (p. 188)*

This has obvious ramifications in terms of the potential for populations to renew themselves and is paid close attention by demographers. The Central Statistics Office, in its Census Reports, makes particular note of the ratio of women per 1,000 men. In fact, this differential in numbers of men and women, was for many years apparent in Ireland overall. "The number of males exceeded the number of females in each census from the foundation of the State up to and including 1981" (Central Statistics Office, 1993b, p. 8). In 1986 the overall balance tipped slightly in favour of females, and that strengthened in 1991 (Central Statistics Office, 1993b). However, this changing national trend, occurring mainly in Leinster where Dublin is located, masks the continued severity of the "excess" of males in specific rural parishes.

Category	Males	Females	% Male
Kilrush Rural District	5,743	5,163	53%
Kilballyowen Parish	169	129	57%
Kilballyowen Parish Ages 15 - 44	63	35	64%

TABLE 2.7 Males as % of different population categories in 1991 (source: Central Statistics Office, 1993a)

Looking at the area where RRI was founded, which is neither the most nor the least skewed of the parishes in Kilrush Rural District, Table 2.7 shows graphically how more detailed and focused analyses produce a truer picture of local conditions and needs. By this reckoning, in the age groups of 15 to 44 years, i.e. the groups likely to have children, females have fallen to only 36% of the total. This is of obvious demographic importance, and also has implications for the quality of life for those living in rural areas. Cawley (1989) refers to work where she used the population distribution of single males as a measure of rural deprivation, and Coward (1989)

feels this has, "...important implications for the maintenance of community cohesion..." (p. 66).

2.5.3 Counterurbanisation: the Irish experience

Understanding counterurbanisation in Ireland also requires one to look beyond national trends to the local level. Taking the big picture first, it should be noted that Ireland's overall trend toward depopulation has seen changes in recent decades. "In the Republic as a whole, population loss turned into a gain of over 5% during the early 1960's, due to a natural gain that more than compensated for a reduced loss through migration" (Perry et al, 1986, p. 179).

In rural areas, this rate of gain became even more pronounced. "During the 1970's a definite counterurbanisation pattern emerged in Ireland as a whole, with population growth rates rising as one moved down the urban hierarchy" (Perry et al, 1986, p. 180). While Gillmor (1988) notes that villages have seen "substantial growth...in the last two decades" (p. 57). This growth was pronounced enough that the effect of newcomers was noted as a social negative in Gillmor and Jeffers (1987). "[Growth] had greatly reduced the traditionally high level of personal familiarity amongst villagers" (p. 97).

However, there is also evidence to support the idea that there are many areas of rural Ireland that have not felt substantial effects from counterurbanisation. Parker (1972) places emphasis on "...the increasing differentiation between a prospering eastern Ireland and a declining west" (p. 31). More recently, Horner and Daultrey (1980) emphasise growth taking place in the vicinity of towns, and Cawley (1990) notes the importance of suburbanisation to population change in Ireland.

Focusing more specifically on Western counties, Perry et al (1986) show that in Counties Galway and Mayo, the process of urbanisation continued, during the same time that they had noted that overall counterurbanisation became apparent in Ireland.

Cawley (1990) reinforces this by showing that even within a national pattern of widespread growth, certain local areas were still losing. She states that during the population boom of the 70's, "...Ireland recorded one of the highest growth rates in Western Europe," (p. 67), and "...all counties save one...registered increases in population" (p. 68). However, there continued to be decline, "associated...with depressed agricultural areas in the northwest and along the west coast, notably in Counties Mayo, Clare, Kerry, Leitrim, south Sligo and Roscommon" (p. 71). Most recently, Cawley (1994) questions if counterurbanisation really took place in rural areas that were far removed from County Boroughs containing major cities.

The contrasting findings above fit well with studies in other countries which have demonstrated that small, remote areas can still be losing population, even as the larger rural picture is one of gain (Spencer, 1995; Phillips and Williams, 1984; Lumb, 1980b).

Just as the impact of depopulation needs to be viewed at the local level, where real people live their lives, in order to get a full picture of the impact of variables (as in the gender disparity noted in Table 2.7), so too parish statistics are enlightening as to the impact of counterurbanisation on rural Ireland.

The past three censuses illustrate an overall period of slight population growth.

Year	Total	Percent change
1986	3,540,643	2.8
1991	3,525,719	-0.4
1996	3,621,035	2.7

TABLE 2.8 Total population of Ireland and percent change in censuses 1986, 1991 and 1996 (source: Central Statistics Office, 1996, 1993b)

At the county level, using Clare as an example, the picture is similar, with the percent gains in years 1986 and 1996 larger.

Year	Total	Percent change
1986	91,344	4.3
1991	90,918	-0.5
1996	93,914	3.3

TABLE 2.9 Total population of County Clare and percent change in censuses 1986, 1991 and 1996 (source: Central Statistics Office, 1996, 1993b)

In contrast, looking at the parish statistics of Kilballyowen gives the following numbers.

Year	Total	Percent change
1986	380	-6.2
1991	298	-21.6
1996	288	-3.4

TABLE 2.10 Total population and percent change in parish of Kilballyowen in censuses 1986, 1991 and 1996 (Source: Central Statistics Office, 1996, 1993b, 1981)

Tables 2.8, 2.9 and 2.10 demonstrate how population decline in the most rural areas can continue while the picture surrounding them is one of growth. As Lumb (1980b) states, "It is above all in the very small communities...that generalisation and large-scale statistical analysis is demonstrably inadequate and where small differences in migration patterns can produce the greatest impact" (p. 626).

These figures of continued decline, and demographic imbalance, for rural areas have implications for the sectors noted earlier in Section 2.2.1. Walsh (1991) warns that "In rural areas the effects of low levels of natural increase and high out-migration have implications for the provision of services such as public transport, postal delivery, police and medical services, as well as basic shopping facilities....The

prospects for the immediate future are not very encouraging" (p. 123). Cawley (1994) notes this combination of population loss, demographic weakening, and service closure, and adds in the abandonment of agricultural land, calling the process "desertification" (p. 395). She predicts that, without a conscious effort to address these issues, "further weakening of the population and economic structures of many of these areas may be anticipated" (p. 406).

2.6 CONCLUSION

The above statistics and studies show that, despite the national reversal of long-term population decline in Ireland, including some rural areas, there are still rural communities suffering continued population loss. RRI proposes that one way of addressing this might be to encourage migration into these areas. These statistics cannot, however, address the complex question of how newcomers might impact upon these rural communities. This is particularly important as much of the earlier-noted literature of counterurbanisation raises questions as to the nature of such change for rural communities and, to a certain extent, for the migrants themselves.

Migrant profiles from six counterurbanisation studies illustrated that migrants, contrasted with their receiving rural communities, tend to be drawn from higher socio-economic groups, have spent longer in education and exhibit high rates of home ownership. It has been claimed that "...the social impact of [counterurbanisation] has been of greater significance because counterurbanisation has introduced not just more people into the countryside, but different people" (Rogers, 1989, p. 106). In the chapters to come, each of the above characteristics will be researched with regard to RRI in order to place participants within, or without, the picture drawn by these other studies.

However, given the importance of clearly identifying RRI participants' backgrounds, in order to determine if they are, or in what ways they are, "different people", the work of sociologist Pierre Bourdieu has been discussed. Applying some of his

concepts to the characteristics and experiences of RRI participants should draw a more complete picture of their backgrounds and perhaps help in explaining the ways in which they impact on their new communities.

In the chapters to come, by referring to the findings of previous counterurbanisation studies, establishing profiles of RRI participants and their experiences and, to a lesser extent, local communities, it will be possible to clearly answer the research questions posed in Chapter One.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

At the time this fieldwork was conducted, the work of RRI had been on going for 6 years. Still having a relatively contained participant base, the goal was to design a research programme that, while remaining focused, would produce a thorough portrait of the resettlement process.

As noted in Chapter One, the questions this study sets out to answer are:

- How does the presence and work of the RRI organisation impact upon the choice participants make to move and their practical experience of rural life after the move?

- Do RRI participants differ demographically or otherwise from migrants in other counterurbanisation studies?

- Are the goals and aspirations of RRI participants for the move different from those of migrants in other counterurbanisation studies?

- Do RRI participants experience their move differently from migrants in other counterurbanisation studies?

- What expectations and concerns do local communities hold for RRI migrants?

- Do the rural communities to which RRI participants move experience these newcomers differently from the communities in other studies of counterurbanisation?

In order to answer these questions, the fieldwork design need ensure that the following goals are achieved:

- Full description of the daily work of the RRI organisation and any broader policy work it may undertake, and an awareness of how this work is experienced by participants and communities;

- Production of profiles of RRI participants that can be contrasted with other studies of counterurbanisation;

- Comprehension of the goals and aspirations RRI participants hold for their rural move that can be contrasted with other studies of counterurbanisation;

- Understanding of the overall impact participants feel this move has upon them;

- Collection of information on the ways in which rural communities are affected by RRI participants.

Before making final decisions on the methodology to employ, two scoping visits took place in order to base the choice of methodology on first-hand experience of the sphere in which it would be applied.

3.2 SCOPING AND PROJECT DESIGN

The first scoping visit to RRI took place in 1995. This time was used to develop a basic understanding of the work of RRI and to meet the staff of the organisation. As the successful implementation of the research would require the organisation's co-operation, it was important not only to be familiar with RRI before designing the details of the research, but also for the staff to understand and support the project's goals.

At a second scoping visit, practical arrangements for the research period were confirmed, and several of the family participants of RRI were met. These meetings were informal, but gave insight into the likely opportunities and challenges to be involved in investigating the participants, and helped in question formulation.

In order to ensure appropriate breadth and depth of the research approach, as well as research into relevant literature, prior to commencing the main body of fieldwork, input was sought from experts in a variety of disciplines. These fields included rural development, sociology, ecology, human ecology, geography, planning and housing. These discussions helped to inform which topics should be raised in later stages of the research. This was felt to be particularly important as the work of RRI is of potential interest to many different fields, and it was hoped to develop a research design that could provide information relevant to most of them.

Through these interviews and the scoping visits, it was decided that the fieldwork on RRI should be divided into three distinct areas, each requiring its own methodological approach. These areas were:

- the RRI organisation;
- the families and individuals who have resettled through the programme;
- the communities to which participants move.

While gathering this information, the author lived in a village in the West of Ireland from January—April, 1996. During this time she also travelled extensively through Ireland to meet with participant families.

3.3 THE RRI ORGANISATION

Research into the RRI organisation began with the above-mentioned scoping visits, during which time preliminary interviews with staff were held and time was spent working with the organisation's records. This process continued throughout the main "in situ" fieldwork phase from January through April 1996.

Staff at RRI were extremely supportive of the research, spending many hours discussing the project and allowing full access to RRI's records. They were also very open about the internal workings of the organisation including budgets, funding sources and future goals.

3.4 THE RRI PARTICIPANTS

RRI records at the time of this fieldwork showed that 211 families had moved through the programme. An attempt was made to include each of these families in the research project, knowing that it would not be possible to locate all of them due to the sketchy nature of early records. As a first division of the list, those families whose current address was unknown were set aside, as were those who were known to have moved back to urban areas. These groups of names would be dealt with separately. This process brought the *in situ* population to be studied to 160. Due to this limited population, it was particularly important to choose methodologies that would ensure as many participants as practically possible would be successfully contacted.

3.4.1 Qualitative inquiry

Based on the scoping visits, it was predicted that many of the RRI participants would be articulate and enthusiastic about sharing their experiences. In order to make best use of the opportunity this offered, it was decided at a very early stage that at least a portion of the fieldwork would employ qualitative methods involving personal contact between the researcher and the families.

> *...the value of qualitative research methods [is] in enabling respondents to articulate all the messy paradoxes, contradictions, and ambiguities of their everyday lives which are so important if we are to understand their accounts of their experiences. (Valentine, 1997, p. 147)*

Another study, which valued quantitative methods as well, states,

> *With regard to a humanistic approach, there is a need to move beyond contrasts in aggregate characteristics to an appreciation of impact in terms of personal experiences and social interaction in local areas. The issues of assimilation, integration and conflict are best studied in this way. (Dean et al, 1984b, p. 189)*

Addressing these issues of "assimilation, integration and conflict" is obviously germane to answering our research questions. In looking for research methods, the underlying philosophy adopted was to seek out a fieldwork design that would enable participants to feel valued by the study and be interested in its findings. The reciprocal nature of the research relationship should also be kept in mind throughout the fieldwork. These ethical bases for research are outlined and emphasised in Kirby and McKenna, 1989 and Marshall and Rossman, 1989.

In a similar vein, the analysis of much of the data should adopt a phenomenological approach. In this way, the beliefs of participants about their situation will be given credibility, even if objectively there might little to support their statement. In other words, their perception of their situation is as important, sometimes more important, than any "factual" reality which might contradict their perception. When this occurs it is made clear, where necessary, during commentary in the data chapters to come.

Four different qualitative methodologies were considered.

The first of these, *participant observation*, can be described as "the sustained immersion of the researcher among those whom he or she seeks to study with a view to generating a rounded, in-depth account of the group..." (Bryman, 1988, p. 45). It is a primary technique of ethnographers (Burns, 2000) and one of the best-known methods of qualitative research (Bryman, 1988). However, it was ruled out as a major data-collection method for information on RRI participants. The reason for this was that, as stated earlier, a main goal of the research was to produce as comprehensive a portrait as possible of the families' experience of resettlement. This necessitated involving as many of the population of 160 in the study as would be

achievable. Due to the geographic spread of participants in 11 different counties at the time of this fieldwork, participant observation would have been impractical and ineffective as the main technique of collecting information on families.

Arguably, participant observation could still have been employed as one part of a *case study* approach to acquiring data. "The case study is the social research equivalent of the spotlight or the microscope; its value depends crucially on how well the study is focused. Case studies take as their subject one or more selected examples of a social entity..." (Hakim, 1987, p. 61). In this scenario a portion of the RRI study could have centred around the three resettled families living nearest to where the researcher was based. There was no reason, however, to believe that these families' experiences were characteristic of the overall RRI population. In fact, given that they were in fairly close proximity to the RRI headquarters, one of them being employed there, there was reason to expect that at least some of their experiences would make them stand out from the rest of the population. As noted before, the purpose of this research was to produce an overall portrait of RRI, including and acknowledging individual experiences, but not overly emphasising the individual variations that must exist. "...the case study has been criticised as a weak vehicle for generalisation....Case studies are focused on circumstantial uniqueness and not on the obscurities of mass representation" (Burns, 2000, p. 474).

Another technique considered was that of the *focus group*. "...focus groups are basically group interviews...the reliance is on interaction within the group, based on topics that are supplied by the researcher..." (Morgan, 1997, p.2). This method appealed in that there is a real possibility of obtaining information "...that would be less accessible without the interaction found in a group" (Morgan, 1997, p. 2). However, it is also the case that the group nature of this approach raises particular "...privacy concerns and effectively limits the kinds of topics that the researcher can pursue" (Morgan, 1997, p. 32). The sorts of topics central to this study that might not suit group discussion included: family income information and children's educational experiences.

There was a further specific concern that in groups, individuals in the minority with negative experiences to relate might be less likely to speak up. This concern was based on the few earlier, small studies done on RRI, and the copious media coverage of the organisation, all of which strongly emphasised the positive. It was, of course, possible that there were simply few or no negative experiences to be related. On the other hand, it was also possible that a group of mainly disaffected RRI participants would be empowered to express their dissatisfaction, but it was thought that this could equally well be brought to light in other ways, such as sensitive individual contact, without depending on the chance that such a group would exist.

Another factor mediating against the choice of focus groups was purely practical. With the exception of parts of County Clare, the families were quite widely spread. Many did not have home telephones nor access to reliable transportation. The difficulties in organising and transporting participants to group locations ruled this out as the primary source of information gathering.

The final qualitative technique seriously considered, and eventually chosen as a main source, was that of *individual interviews*. A central advantage of choosing this method is that individual interviews "...allow for the study of motives, beliefs, values and attitudes" (Phillips, 1971, p. 100). They are also acknowledged to allow flexibility in repeating questions, acceptability of long answers, observation of the environment and high response rates (Burns, 2000, pp. 582-583).

Disadvantages to this technique include that it is expensive and time-consuming, interview bias can come through interaction between respondents and researcher and respondents may "...feel that they are being 'put on the spot'" (Burns, 2000, p. 583). It was hoped that these disadvantages could be managed through the approach in implementation and the use of an additional, complementary fieldwork method (see below). It remained then, to choose the type of interview to conduct.

Interviews, even face-to-face ones, can be very structured quantitative information gathering sessions. At the other end of the spectrum is the completely open-ended

depth interview (Burns, 2000; Bryman, 1988; Hakim, 1987). For the purposes of this study it was decided to use a version of what is generally called a "semi-structured" interview.

This technique avoids the highly quantitative nature of a set questionnaire and order of questions such as that described in McCracken, 1988. While discussion is loosely guided by the interviewer it was hoped the approach chosen would allow "...enough freedom for respondents also to steer the conversation, for example to bring in all sorts of tangential matters which, for them, have a bearing on the main subject" (Hakim, 1987, pp. 26-27). This technique is appropriate to the previously noted goal of wanting participants to feel valued by and interested in the study.

However, through the use of an interview guide detailing definite topics to be covered, it avoids the potential danger of truly open interviews which can be "...an ever-expanding realm of possibility in which the generative power of language is unleashed to potentially chaotic effect" (McCracken, 1988, pp. 24-25).

Accordingly, an interview guide was drawn up (see Appendix One), incorporating topics raised in literature searches, the earlier-noted expert interviews, and points raised by research into the RRI organisation.

The next decision to be made was how many of the families should be interviewed. Meeting with 100% of the population was considered, but it became apparent this was impractical. Aside from the time required to contact them, travel to them, and to conduct the interviews, the time involved in transcribing so many interviews would have been overwhelming. Also, through looking into appropriate quantitative approaches (such as a postal survey, see 3.4.2) it was decided that useful and interesting information could best be obtained by combining a limited number of interviews with a wide-reaching quantitative method.



It was decided that, before choosing how many and whom to interview, the population should be stratified according to two criteria, which are defined below. In this way there was "...an increased possibility of accuracy by ensuring all groups are represented in the sample in the same proportions as they are in the population" (Burns, 2000, p. 90). The two criteria chosen as the basis of stratification were relevant to investigating the impact the RRI organisation itself had on families' experiences.

The first criterion was geographical. County Clare had by far the largest number with 60 participant families.. Ten other counties had 100 families spread amongst them. In this way they would be split into "Clare" and "Other". This was justified as County Clare families were often close enough to RRI headquarters and to one another that they could offer mutual support. Also, the programme had a very high profile within Clare and this could effect how communities reacted to the new families.

The second criterion of stratification was the date their move took place. The first 3 and a half years of the project being the start (58 families), and the second 2 and a half years representing the "professionalisation" of RRI (102 families). This was potentially important as the level of support from RRI, both before and after their move, had increased markedly in the second phase of the programme. Also, the quality of housing on offer to families improved in the 2nd phase (see Chapter 6).

A main overall consideration in choosing the number to interview was the trade-off between choosing a practical, achievable number and the concern that a potentially low response-rate to any postal survey, combined with having only conducted minimal interviews, would lead to a less representative study. A second consideration was to have a large enough number that each stratum would be well represented. Ultimately, it was decided to interview 33 families, which happened to represent 20% of the total *in situ* population. This was considered to be the most that could practically be contacted in this way.

Once the population was stratified according to the above criteria, and the number to interview decided upon, random number tables were employed in choosing whom to interview. Figure 3.1 illustrates the stratification process and choice of those to be interviewed.

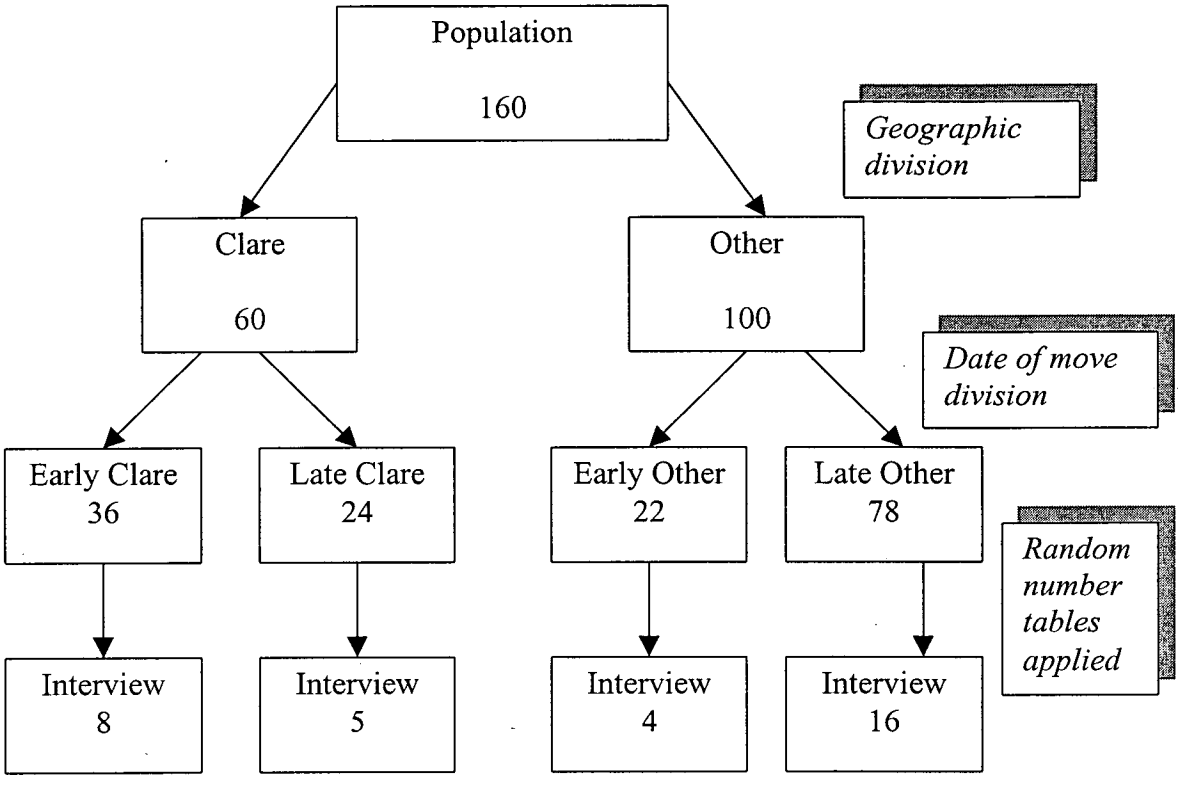


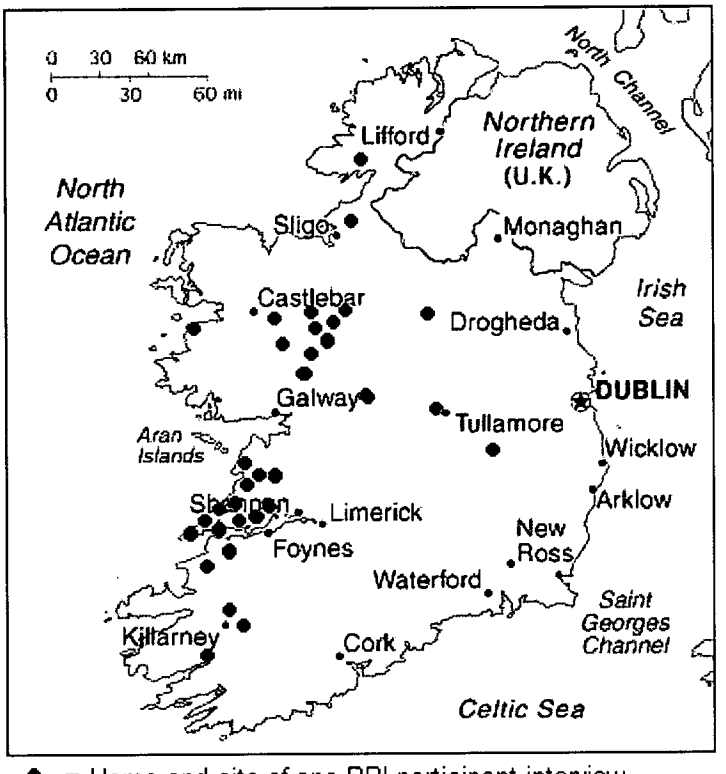
FIGURE 3.1 Chart of interview divisions and numbers interviewed

Although it is still possible to end up with sampling error following this process, the chances of avoiding this are improved through the use of strata. "...the sample cannot differ from the population with respect to the stratifying factor(s)...A stratum is fairly homogeneous with respect to the characteristic on which the stratum is based; therefore variance must be restricted and as a corollary sampling error reduced" (Burns, 2000, p. 90).

It was particularly important to guard against a "wild" sample (Burns, 2000, p. 90) including disproportionately high numbers of Early Clare families. This was because the few earlier studies that had been done on RRI had focused mainly on these

families, and thus were potentially unrepresentative of the experiences of the majority of families, and that bias could be compounded through this study if strata were not employed. In at least two of those studies, the families to be interviewed were chosen by RRI itself, an obvious source of bias.

Over a four-month period interviews were held with the 33 families. Figure 3.2 illustrates the locations of these families.



● = Home and site of one RRI participant interview

FIGURE 3.2 Sites of RRI participant interviews

Only one of the selected families chose not to participate and was replaced with another family in the same stratum. This rate of 97% of those first asked to participate agreeing, compares favourably with Burns (2000) who notes that "Properly designed and executed interview surveys should yield response rates of at least 80-85 per cent" (p. 583). Of the 33 interviews, 23 were with both members of a couple, 5 were with a man only, and 5 were with a woman only. In some cases children were also present.

Although a guide was used to ensure that certain topics were touched upon in each interview, participants were encouraged to raise their own issues and to determine how deeply to go into any given subject area. At the end of interviews a short quantitative form was completed to gather further specific data (see Appendix Two).

People were generous with their time, interviews varying in length from one and a half to seven hours. All but one interview was taped, this omission being at the request of the interviewee (taped portions no longer than 2 and a half hours), and the tapes have been transcribed into numbered line format for referencing purposes.

Confidentiality was stressed before each interview and participants seemed comfortable with this approach. Twice the researcher was asked to erase a portion of tape when income information was involved. This sensitivity is discussed more in Chapter 8.

Throughout the following chapters, interview quotes are referred to using a code that identifies the respondent with regard to in which stratum they were placed (i.e. "EC" = Early Clare, as noted in Table 3.1), what number of respondent they were within that stratum, and then the relevant line numbers from the interview. Occasionally the quote is identified as coming from a woman or a man. This is done where the question is strongly gender-relevant, or where both a woman and man were present at the interview, and quotes from each are being used in the same box.

3.4.2 Quantitative inquiry

As noted above, it was decided that combining the interviews with another, less labour intensive method of reaching families would be the best approach. Other than a postal survey, the only alternative method considered at this point was to conduct a telephone survey. However, as a number of families had no home phone, it would have been impossible to employ this method and claim representativeness.

A postal survey offered the advantages of being cheap, quick, able to reach all the remaining population, removing interviewer bias and offering respondents greater

confidentiality than interviews (Burns, 2000; Bell, 1993). The potential disadvantages to a postal survey, including low response rates, sampling bias due to non-response, less depth of response, inflexibility and no observational data (Burns, 2000; Hakim, 1987), would be leavened by the presence of information from the interviews. As noted in 3.4.1, some of the strengths of in-depth interviews are in precisely these areas where postal surveys can be weak. As Perry et al (1986) wrote, "...the 'harder' facts obtained from the survey could be supplemented by 'softer' and more subjective data" (p. 221).

Another possible drawback in the use of a postal survey in these circumstances is voiced, and then answered, by Halliday and Coombs (1995),

> *...retrospective response to a postal questionnaire will obviously not give as strong data as face-to-face interviews undertaken close to the time of the move. However, whilst this may be a source of imprecision, there is no evidence to suggest it will bias the data in any important way. (p. 441)*

Survey questions were chosen and phrased largely based upon the responses from the interviews. The questionnaire was designed and tested during the fieldwork period in Ireland, with attention paid to the likely effect of lay-out on the response rate (Fox et al, 1988). A copy of the questionnaire is presented in Appendix Three.

In order to stress to families that the survey was confidential and not coming from RRI itself, it was administered from Scotland. Again, in order to achieve a high response rate, administration followed a modified form of the approach detailed in Dillman (1977).[1] Initially, the questionnaire was sent to 127 people. After bad addresses were weeded out, the number receiving it was 116. There was no need to consider representativeness of the postal survey sample (Bell, 1993, p. 11), as the entire population, less those who were interviewed, was included.

One month after the first letter and questionnaire went out, a reminder and second copy were sent to those who had not yet responded. Acknowledgements were sent to

[1] Achieving a high survey response rate was a particular concern as two previous postal surveys of RRI participants had only achieved return rates of under 40% (Pal, 1994; Daly, 1993).

all who participated. Ultimately, 90 responses were received, giving a response rate of 78%. This result compares well to the statement that "...response rates to mail questionnaires seldom exceed 50 per cent and rates between 15-50 percent are common" (Burns, 2000, p. 581). Responses were entered on computer and analysed through SPSS. Table 3.1 gives the breakdown of response rates within strata.

Stratum	Number of surveys sent	Number of survey responses received	Survey response rate within strata
Early Clare (EC)	26	18	69%
Early Other (EO)	13	10	77%
Late Clare (LC)	17	9	53%
Late Other (LO)	60	53	88%
Total	**116**	**90**	**78%**

TABLE 3.1 Survey numbers broken down according to strata

In the following data chapters,"n's" are, of course, given for the data used. In some cases, the "n" may be larger than the total number of survey returns. This occurs for items where the same question was also asked of interviewees, and these responses added in, or where more than one response might come on one questionnaire (e.g. "children's ages").

In some cases survey respondents wrote extra information on their survey. Where these comments are quoted, they are identified with the same code form as that used for interviews (e.g. "EC" = Early Clare), and an identity number. Instead of line references for the quote, a letter code is used (i.e. "sbp"= survey back page).

Finally, Table 3.2 gives a breakdown of the total numbers of "in place" RRI families who participated in this study.

Stratum	Total number	Number interviewed	Number responding to survey	Total number who participated[2]	Percent participation
Early Clare	34	8	18	25	74%
Early Other	17	4	10	14	82%
Late Clare	22	5	9	14	64%
Late Other	76	16	53	69	91%
Total	**149**	**33**	**90**	**122**	**82%**

TABLE 3.2 Breakdown of total "in place" study participants[3]

3.4.3 "Gone Back" and "Missing" Families

The most problematic aspect of research into the RRI participants was trying to find "lost" families, and those who were thought to have moved back to urban areas. According to RRI's records, 8 families had left rural Ireland, but stayed in contact with RRI. Another 43 families had moved on and not left another address with the organisation. After administering the postal survey and receiving the returned, unopened questionnaires, the number of families no longer at a known rural address grew to 62. Fourteen of these families there was no prospect of tracing, as the records from the early informal phase of the organisation did not contain enough information to make this feasible.

RRI believed that most of these missing families would simply have moved to other rural addresses, without maintaining contact with the organisation. However, working on the supposition that many of these families could have moved back to their urban place of origin, feelers were put out for them. Telephone directories were consulted in the areas of origin for these families, but none were turned up in this

[2] Not including the two "gone back" families who were interviewed, as they were not included in the initial stratification process.
[3] These numbers do not include the eleven "bad" addresses from the postal survey.

way. Since a high proportion of families moved from public housing (see Chapter 5), it was thought probable they would have their names on housing lists in areas to which they returned. When requested, three of the four housing districts in Dublin were willing to check their lists. Only two names turned up in this way, but the addresses they had were out of date.

In the end, eight of these families were located through RRI's own records. Two did not wish to participate in the project and one had moved to a rural area in another country after inheriting property. The homes of four of these families were finally contacted or visited. Two of them had moved back to rural Ireland in the month before contact was attempted, and left no forwarding address. In the end, two families who had moved back to urban areas were interviewed, bringing to 35 the total number of participant interviews.

It remains unclear how many of the "missing" families have gone back to urban areas and how many have moved on to other rural locations. However, having made a strong, but unsuccessful attempt to find them, it is reasonable to venture that there is a high probability some of them remain in rural Ireland.

3.4.4 Methodologies in related literature

It must also be noted that, in making the above choices of methodologies, consideration was given to the approaches adopted in related studies. Particular reference was made to the six British counterurbanisation studies relied on for Tables 2.2-2.6. Table 3.3 outlines their approaches and shows that, with the exception of Forsythe's participant observation, each of them used either a postal survey, or a type of face-to-face interviewing, or both.

Study	Postal survey	Interview structured	Interview semi-structured	Partici-pant observa-tion	Sample size	Rate of return
Bolton and Chalkley 1990		YES			302 (226 migrants, 76 locals)	Not given (assume 302) total
Dean et al 1984b	YES				2526 completed 43.3% non-return migrants 44.2% locals	72.2%
Findlay et al 1999	Survey per-sonally delivered and collected		YES, 38 inter-views		689 returns	61%
Forsythe 1982				YES		
Jones et al 1986		YES			367 interviewed	82% partici-pation
Perry et al 1986	YES	YES			2,500 postal 418 interviewed out of 663	72% postal 63% interviews

TABLE 3.3 Methodologies of related studies

Table 3.3 also demonstrates that the rates of participation (interviews) and rates of return (postal survey) for this study of RRI participants compare favourably in all cases with these other studies. However, they were working with larger populations and samples, so the absolute numbers included in their studies are higher.

Versions of postal surveys and/or face to face interviews were also adopted by other authors whose work did not lend itself to the migrant/community comparisons of the tables in Chapter 2 but which are cited in this research (Shucksmith et al, 1996; Williams and Jobes, 1990; Adamchak, 1987; Gillmor and Jeffers, 1987; Smailes and Hugo, 1985; Byron and McFarlane, 1982; Lumb, 1980a). These overlapping methods make comparison between this and the other studies more convincing.

3.5 LOCAL COMMUNITIES

The research approach to understanding how RRI impacts and fits with local communities evolved during the course of the project. Initially, the plan was to choose a community for a case study approach. This was to include interviews with locals and a specific economic analysis of the impact of RRI. It became apparent, however, that this would be untenable. Due to RRI's policy of trying to keep families spread out, there was no one community with a high enough concentration of re-settled families to make this approach useful. Interviews would have been more about the specific family in the area rather than about the concept of RRI, and the economic impact of individual families was too diffuse to usefully quantify.

The one area that might have qualified would have been that around the headquarters of RRI. This would have been inappropriate, however, due to the high profile of the organisation in that area, potentially producing skewed results.

What was decided upon was to administer a community postal survey (see Appendix Four) and combine this with on-going observation during the fieldwork phase. This included attending community meetings, meeting with local leaders, and speaking informally with as many rural residents as was possible.

The survey was administered to three categories of people in two representative counties, Clare and Mayo. The "categories" surveyed were County Councillors (elected local representatives), Social Welfare Officers, and a sample of people involved in rural development. These groups were chosen as likely to have had contact with RRI participants and likely to be aware of the views of other rural residents. They are referenced in the same manner as RRI participant surveys, with a stratum code (e.g. MC=Mayo Councillor), survey number, and question response number. 81 questionnaires were sent out, 43 responses were received, making a return rate of 53%. This data was also analysed through SPSS.

3.6 CONCLUSION

Thanks to the willingness of RRI staff, participants and local community members to share their thoughts and experiences, this fieldwork generated a large and varied data set. Due to the strong participation and response rates, there is a high degree of confidence in the representativeness of the data. This was achieved, at least in part, through the research approach taken. The methods chosen (semi-structured interviews and postal surveys) overlap with many other relevant studies, allowing for useful comparison.

The underlying methodological approach informing this research prioritised a fieldwork design and implementation ensuring that participants felt valued by the study and, where possible, were interested in its findings. It was through the adoption of this attitude that the depth and diversity of data needed for a complete picture of the work of RRI was gathered.

In particular, involving respondents as participants rather than subjects, was invaluable in terms of enabling respondents to feel comfortable expressing both positive and negative views about their experiences of resettlement. Several people expressed that they were pleased to note that the interviews did not have a set agenda nor "axe to grind." This approach was also instrumental in achieving desired participation and response rates, particularly in the case of some RRI participant families who had already been interviewed or surveyed multiple times by other researchers or the media.

This fieldwork data is presented in Chapters 4-9. Each chapter addresses a different component or aspect of resettlement, incorporating the appropriate information from the interviews and two postal surveys within each chapter. In order to present the data in a clear fashion, statistics, based on the surveys and forms filled in at interviews, are given first, with interview quotes then used to add depth and detail to the quantitative information. In the few instances where interview and survey responses diverged, this is specifically noted and an attempt made at explanation.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE ORGANISATION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

RRI is notable for its locally based and organic approach to the challenge of addressing rural depopulation. The founder prioritised action over investigation and put into practice what can be characterised as a radical, yet surprisingly simple, concept for bringing new people to rural Ireland.

However, the simplicity of the concept should not cause observers to discount the importance, to making the idea reality, of the organisation behind it. Research into rural resettlement in Ireland teaches that an understanding of the inception and development of RRI as an organisation is central to a full comprehension of the overall process.

It is also important to consider the historical Irish context of rural land ownership, occupancy and right of use. Separate from the demographic background covered in Chapter Two, these issues have had a far-reaching impact on many aspects of Irish development.

> *Land tenure and the transfer of land, whether through state intervention, inheritance or sale, have also had a profound impact on family, social, economic and cultural events in Ireland during the [20th] century. Land has acted as a political power base for many groups in rural Ireland. Cultural and social models of the Irish family have been heavily influenced by the farm family and the exigencies imposed upon it by economic pressures. (Drudy, 1982a, p. 2)*

4.2 HISTORICAL CONTEXT

As noted in Chapter Two, the Irish famine years of 1846-1851 changed the face of Ireland, particularly rural Ireland. Not only did in the region of a million people die, another million emigrated to escape the certainty of hardship and the possibility of starvation and fatal disease. Once this flow of emigrants began it continued, albeit in lesser and fluctuating amounts, well into the latter half of the 20th century.

Another effect of the Famine was to highlight the issue of land tenure in Ireland, which was at that point still under British rule. At the time of the Famine, "...the relationship of landlord and tenant in Ireland was based on tenure, not on contract. It gave no security of occupation to the tenant and did not protect his improvements..." (Kolbert and O'Brien, 1975, p. 31). This lack of secure tenure was one part of the reason so many tenants suffered when the potato, the only crop the Irish poor could afford to keep for themselves, failed.

> *...every sort of food except the potato* was *there because the harvest in every other crop but the potato was excellent. Food was leaving the country for export in vast quantities. Even more was coming in...nearly four times as much wheat was being imported into Ireland as exported. It was just not available to the hungry. (Kee, 1980, p. 83)*

Their corn was growing well yet, "...they dared not eat for fear of eviction for non-payment of rent" (Kolbert and O'Brien, 1975, p. 27).

During this period some tenants and landless labourers did fight the power of landlords through membership of various "secret societies" that "sprang up to give the countryman and his dependants that defence and protection that the law of the country had denied them" (Kolbert and O'Brien, 1975, p. 30). At the same time, landlords were agitating for yet more control and fewer checks on their already near total authority over the land (Kolbert and O'Brien, 1975). In this climate the famine years served to,

> *...etch in stark relief the imperatives driving each side and the incompatibility of their interests as they currently conceived them. From this the Irish land question emerged*

to dominate the political life of Ireland for the next fifty years and, to an extent, beyond. (Bull, 1996, p. 26)

Despite the horror of famine, the landlords succeeded one more time in increasing their power. With the passing of Deasy's Act through the British Parliament in 1860, eviction of tenants became even simpler and, legally, the position of tenants reached its nadir. This period saw "clearances" of tenants in order to create single large holdings, fuelling further emigration (Kolbert and O'Brien, 1975).

This situation did result in further direct protest actions by some rural residents. Perhaps more significantly, though, it was one part of the social picture catalysing political change, "...the emerging Fenian movement drew much of its local political sustenance from [the land] issue, giving both a new vitality and a more formidable and threatening character to land agitation" (Bull, 1996, p. 45). At the same time, a change of administration in Westminster in 1865, "...facilitated a more open look at the question of landlord-tenant relationships in Ireland..." (Bull, 1996, p. 45).

This new political climate led to "...a first tentative effort at reform...in the Land Act of 1870" (Kolbert and O'Brien, 1975, p. 33). This offered some limited compensation to tenants who lost possession and a small amount of land-purchase aid for tenants. Eventually 500 properties were purchased through this Act (Kolbert and O'Brien, 1975, p. 33).

Although a significant step in one sense, the 1870 Act was not enough for tenant farmers. Further politicisation led, in 1879, to the founding of the Irish Land League, "...the movement that, at last, gave the cause of the Irish tenants shape and aim, and a momentum that was to prove irresistible" (Kolbert and O'Brien, 1975, p. 33). In 1881 a much stronger Land Act was passed. This addressed what came to be known as the "3Fs (fair rent, fixity of tenure and free sale)" (Bew, 1982, p. 82). It also created the Irish Land Commission, the body that would determine rents and could help tenants to purchase land (Kolbert and O'Brien, 1975).

Major revisions of the Land Act would follow in 1885, 1891, 1903 and 1909 (Kolbert and O'Brien, 1975). Each of these successively strengthened the position of tenants and made possible for many the purchase of the land they worked.

> *During the years between Gladstone's Land Act of 1881 and the establishment of the Irish Free State in 1922 there occurred a massive transfer of landownership in Ireland....In 1870 only 3 percent of the occupiers of Irish agricultural holdings were owners of those same holdings; by 1916 this figure had jumped to 64 per cent and was still rising. (O Tuathaigh, 1982, p. 167)*

This process has been further described as "...no less than a transfer of the greater part of Ireland from one class to another; it was, in short, an agrarian revolution" (Palmer, 1940, p. 7).

Within the growing body of legislation driving the enormous transfer of agricultural land, another agency had been created in 1891 called the Congested Districts Board. Prior to the founding of the Congested Districts Board "no attempt had been made to distinguish between the two classes of occupiers of Irish land; the occupiers of economic and uneconomic farms were subject to the same laws and were treated in the same manner" (Kolbert and O'Brien, 1975, p. 38). Now this entity was "...charged with relieving congestion on poor land and smallholdings in the western half of the country, through a programme of land redistribution, assisted migration, investment in infrastructure, the encouragement of local crafts and husbandry..." (O Tuathaigh, 1982, pp. 167-168). It is this specific programme, particularly the aspect of assisted migration, that has the most obvious parallels with RRI today.

In its early years, the Board "undertook a small number of schemes which set a model for purchase of grasslands and very poor estates, where redistribution of holdings could do something to address underlying problems of agrarian viability" (Bull, 1996, p. 109). The 1903 Act accelerated this process by enabling further "purchase of entire estates from the owners...for the purpose of improving, enlarging and rearranging the holdings on the estates before revesting them in the tenant-purchasers (Kolbert and O'Brien, 1975, p. 41).

However, as subsequent Land Acts continued to increase the purchasing power of tenants, it became clear that in some areas, particularly in the poorest counties along the Western seaboard, there simply was not enough fertile land to be economically divided among the population there. Soon after the founding of the Irish Free State, the 1923 Land Act was created and implemented by the Irish government. Strongly expanding on the powers of the previous Acts it "...put the machinery for making the tenants their own landlords, and for expropriating lands for relieving congestion, on a definitely compulsory basis" (Kolbert and O'Brien, 1975, p. 47). In 1933 another Land Act was to further increase the Land Commission's power of land acquisition and redistribution (O Tuathaigh, 1982).

By the late 1920s the specific issue of congestion was being approached through "...a policy of encouraging the migration of farmers from western congested districts to new holdings in the east" (Kolbert and O'Brien, 1975, p. 44). Migration was purely voluntary and the process was slow and costly as it involved the creation of new holdings, including new houses and out buildings. During the 1930s this assisted migration took place with groups of 20 or more families moving together from one western district to new groups of holdings in eastern counties (Commins, 1982; Kolbert and O'Brien, 1975). After 1939 families moved in smaller groups of 3 or 4 (Kolbert and O'Brien, 1975). Over the years nearly 2,700 families have been relocated through this process (Commins, 1982).

These practical steps of land redistribution and assisted migration, catalysed through time by the various Land Acts, have resulted in a fundamental reversal in land tenure patterns in Ireland. The 3% owner-occupancy rate of 1870 (O Tuathaigh, 1982, p. 167) had risen to 92%—the highest in the EEC—by 1977 (Drudy, 1982b, p. 196).

This approach to land tenure has also become embedded in philosophical aspects of Irish politics and culture. An early version of this philosophy was put forward by the Free State's first Minister for Agriculture, Patrick Hogan. O Tuathaigh (1982) quotes Hogan as saying, "...the Irish countryman believes that nature intended him

to be a farmer, and there is an idea that there is enough land for all" (p. 178). O Tuathaigh continues "...the underlying assumptions of Hogan's policies were...the dominant assumptions on the ownership and usage of land in the 26 counties in the half-century after 1922" (p. 178).

Indeed, Fianna Fail, one of the two main political parties, had as one of its founding objectives, "...arresting the population decline and settling as many families as possible on the land" (O Tuathaigh, 1982, p. 183). Building on this theme, de Valera stated in 1943 that,

> *The Ireland which we dreamed of would be the home of a people who valued material wealth only as the basis of right living, of a people who were satisfied with frugal comfort and devoted their leisure to things of the spirit—a land whose countryside would be bright with cosy homesteads, whose fields and villages would be joyous with the joy of industry, with the romping of sturdy children, the contests of athletic youths and the laughter of comely maidens, whose firesides would be the forums for serene old age. (Bew, 1982, pp. 87-88)*

This speech came, however, as the primacy of agrarian livelihood in Ireland was drawing to an end. "...by the 1950s...The coherent social ideal of Irish nationalism based on the special sanctity of the family farm and family labour had disintegrated under the pressure of capitalist development" (Bew, 1982, pp., 88-89). This in no way implies, however, that rural life and livelihood were now of no importance.

> *...Ireland has inherited a strong current of rural fundamentalist values which, traditionally, have placed a high premium on the 'rural way of life' and on having a proportionately large rural population...it has been increasingly recognised that although* farm *population numbers cannot be maintained the aim of national economic policy should be to retain the* rural *population. (Commins, 1982, p. 234)*

The local population statistics referred to in Chapter 2 show that in some rural areas this policy has not been an unqualified success. However, its existence as an overt goal is an important marker of Irish attitudes toward proper use of rural areas.

This then is a brief sketch of the historical, practical and philosophical background of Irish land redistribution and assisted migration and it is within this context that the organisation of RRI should be considered. It is clear from this that the idea of resettling families is not brand new to Ireland. It is also clear that a belief that rural populations should be maintained is in the backdrop to Irish consciousness and attitudes toward the countryside. However, although undoubtedly building on this heritage, there are at least three major ways in which the stated goals of Rural Resettlement Ireland make it stand out clearly from the work of the Congested Districts Board.

Firstly, it is fundamental to RRI that their work is intended to benefit the communities to which families move. In the case of the Congested Districts Board, they did intend to help the areas the families left behind—through relieving congestion and thus offering larger holdings to those who remained—but they did not state as a main goal benefiting the areas to which families would move.

Secondly, RRI is not attempting to redistribute population between rural areas while leaving the total numbers in rural Ireland the same. Rather, it is specifically dedicated to moving urban dwellers into the countryside, thus increasing the overall rural population.

Thirdly, the predicted reasons a family might choose to participate in RRI are quite different from the reasons a family would have agreed to move through the Congested Districts Board. As noted in Chapter One, RRI expects families to join because,

> *Today as increasing numbers of ordinary people seriously question the quality of their everyday lives under the fundamental headings of environment, work satisfaction and many aspects of the very materialistic set of values which form part of our cultural/educational system, many now look to the West of Ireland for a new way of life....* (Connolly, 1990, p. 2)

In the case of the Congested Districts Board, families were expected to join in order to continue in the same lifestyle and type of work (farming), but with greater prospects for success. In RRI's case, they believe they are offering an entirely new way of life for participants.

Finally, although RRI may well be building on the history of Irish resettlement programmes, and may well benefit from a positive national attitude toward rural dwelling, the process through which the organisation developed contrasts strongly to a funded government programme that included building entirely new homes and farm buildings for participants. This process of development is detailed in the following sections.

4.3 EARLY DAYS OF RURAL RESETTLEMENT IRELAND

Two days after Jim Connolly's 1990 appearance on radio issuing an invitation to urban families to move to rural areas, he began receiving letters from interested families. Not primarily craftworkers (as per Connolly's own definition), as first envisioned, but Dublin families who simply wanted to embark on a different way of life, regardless of applicable skills they possessed. Many, but by no means all, of the enquiries came from unemployed families. He set about finding homes for these people, mainly in County Clare where he lived himself. At first he went to people he knew, or simply to places where he could see empty houses, to convince the owners to rent to one of these families. He met the families himself and showed them around the property. Then it was up to them to arrange the actual legal and financial side of the rental with the owner.

By the end of the first year, through his own efforts, he had relocated 7 families. At that point in time the organisation of RRI did not exist. It was only in Connolly's publication quoted in Chapter One, that for the first time he stated that an official body of some sort might prove useful in the resettlement process. "...it may be desirable in time to establish a voluntary non profit making organisation to help promote and run the resettlement scheme...It will become obvious as time goes on...if

such an organisation is required" (Connolly, 1990, p. 23). He continued without an official organisation, with varying amounts of other volunteer support to keep track of enquiries, for another year, moving another 17 families. However, as he posited, this approach could not continue, as more and more people applied and as houses in the surrounding area became harder to find.

4.4 DEVELOPMENT

In 1992, Rural Resettlement Ireland was set up as a formal organisation. This involved the start of serious fundraising from charitable trusts and the national government to support the project, and an increase in the numbers of staff, albeit still volunteer, involved. In early 1993, the first full-time paid staff member was taken on and the professionalisation of the programme was underway.

Inevitably, the action-based beginning meant that RRI had been, and continued to be, in a position of learning as it went along. Although the underlying people-centred approach has persisted, some of the early assumptions and processes either have been dropped or altered as the programme developed.

For example, RRI now more carefully vets the houses to which people will move, as in the first couple of years the quality of housing was not always acceptable for every family (for more on this see *Section 4.5* and *Chapter 6*). At the same time, the home owners are now required to give a one-year lease to RRI families, where at first there was no minimum tenure required.

Another significant change has been that RRI now asks for basic letters of recommendation from families as part of the application process. These letters ensure that families are up to date with their rent or mortgage payments and also that one other community member (School Principal, local doctor, etc.) is willing to support them. By keeping the requirements basic, RRI is making no value judgements on families, but is affording a basic level of protection to local communities that families are not moving to escape debt or illegal activities.



PHOTO 4.1 RRI headquarters during the time of this research[1] (source: author)

These changes, and the expansion in RRI, have brought on a growth in staff needs and overall "professionalism" of the organisation. Where at the beginning it was dependent on extensive amounts of volunteer labour from a couple of individuals, it now has 3 full-time employees working out of headquarters in Kilbaha (Photo 4.1), one part-time employee in Dublin, and many volunteers. It has also been active in setting up county-based initiatives in order to strengthen and ensure continuing local ownership of the programme. Clare, Kerry, Mayo, Galway and Roscommon today have their own RRI County Boards.

[1] In 1999 RRI moved into permanent, purpose built offices adjacent to this site.

RRI's local base and its ability to embrace change are just two attributes which point to its holding what Chambers (1993) calls a "learning process approach to rural development" (p. 12). Table 4.1, based on Chambers (1993), but adapted with an extra column referring to RRI, further illustrates these qualities.

Although these categories of rural development were designed with developing country projects in mind, there is much overlap between this "new professionalism" and locally based projects in the developed world. "...the new development paradigm is not just a rural Third World phenomenon. It overlaps and resonates with the alternative movements of rich countries" (Chambers, 1993, p. 13). It was through adopting this type of approach that RRI has grown into the organisation it is today.

	Blueprint	*Learning Process*	*Rural Resettlement Ireland*
idea originates in	capital city	village	founded in Kilbaha, County Clare
first steps	data collection and plan	awareness and action	local knowledge and response
design	static, by experts	evolving, people involved	local involvement
supporting organization	existing, or built top down	built bottom-up, with lateral spread	organisational growth only as need proven, more local offices
main resources	central funds and technicians	local people and their assets	locals offer houses, welcome, support
staff training and development	classroom, didactic	field-based learning through action	all training "on the job"
implementation	rapid, widespread	gradual, local, at people's pace	growth as needed and as local areas are able to provide housing
management focus	spending budgets, completing projects on time	sustained improvement and performance	effective changes implemented as partici-pants give feedback
content of action	standardized	diverse	action on several fronts at once
communication	vertical: order down, reports up	lateral: mutual learning and sharing experience	employees and volunteers in partnership
leadership	positional, changing	personal, sustained	founder still involved, low staff turnover
evaluation	external, intermittent	internal, continuous	listening to criticisms and praise
error	buried	embraced	openness about needs for change
effects	dependency-creating	empowering	independence of participants and communities
associated with	normal professionalism	new professionalism	

Table 4.1 The blueprint and learning-process approaches in rural development contrasted (source: Chambers, 1993, p. 12)

4.5 TODAY

As of 1 September, 1999, 312[2] families had moved through RRI. On a day-to-day level, much of the work of RRI centres on matching people with appropriate houses in the country. This can be roughly divided into the process of managing applications, and the process of locating suitable housing for the over 4,000 families who have applied.

4.5.1 Applications

The process by which people apply for resettlement is quite straightforward. First the applicant must know of the organisation, and contact them.

How did you first hear of RRI?	
Television	32%
Family or friends	23%
Radio	22%
Newspaper or magazine	8%
Other	15%

TABLE 4.2 Means by which participants first learn about RRI (n=87)

Table 4.2 demonstrates the importance of various forms of media in reaching potential programme participants. It must be pointed out, however, that this coverage does not take the form of advertising, but comes rather from media interviews with staff members and participants, and general interest and news stories about the project. Partly as a result of this widespread interest, RRI has never needed to advertise in order to attract applicants.

[2] It was 211 families at the time fieldwork on participants took place.

Once someone contacts RRI, they are sent a "Family Questionnaire" to complete and return. It is important to note that, although the term "Family" is used in many connections with RRI, there is no requirement to be a "family" in order to participate. Although most participants are adults with children, single people are also moved with the scheme, and there is no definition of what constitutes a "family" (for more on participant profiles see Chapter 5).

The questionnaire itself is very simple, asking only for name, address, number of people wanting to move, and why they want to move. The "why" question is not used to exclude anyone, simply to encourage them to ask themselves this question. Applicants are told that after submitting this questionnaire, they need to be responsible for staying in touch with RRI to check their status.

If an applicant continues to contact RRI approximately every two weeks for a period of a few months, they will then be sent a letter requesting two references. One of these references must come from their current landlord (the council, a private individual, the bank where their mortgage might be). The second can come from anyone able to vouch for them, but they are encouraged to ask someone from their children's school, the local doctor, or other responsible individual. As noted above, the references are not used to make value judgements on people, simply to screen out those who might be applying for the wrong reasons. Only one family to date has been turned down on the basis of references received. More likely is that some families take the process no further when they discover this requirement, although no research has taken place to determine any such "drop out" effect.

Once references are submitted, applicants are again told to stay in touch. If they continue to contact RRI regularly they will then be "upgraded" to the active waitlist. At any given time, around 100 families are on this list. That is to say they have submitted all forms and are in frequent contact with RRI. They are then expected to receive housing sometime in the next 6-12 months, depending on how well they stay in touch. In particular cases, for instance if a very large house is needed, or if the family drops out of touch, it could take longer. RRI, trying to be as fair as possible

in its allocation of the limited number of houses offered for rent, moves families up this list solely according to how regularly the families stay in touch. In this way they hope to be "choosing" those families with the highest motivation to move.

To date, this system has enabled RRI to place the families they feel have demonstrated the most enthusiasm and commitment to the move. However, as numbers on the waitlist continue to increase, it seems likely that at some point a further method of prioritisation will need to be developed. This will be challenging as RRI is very committed to the idea that if it "chooses" families, the main criteria should be that family's commitment to the move, and this is a difficult quality to measure beyond the current system of frequency of contact.

A recent innovation trying to address this issue of "choice" is that families are now required to meet with the RRI Field Officer before the final decision to move. The Field Officer visits the RRI Dublin office on a monthly basis and these meetings take place then. To date the Field Officer has not turned anyone down based on these meetings. However, it is thought that in some cases families have decided not to take their application further, after learning in more detail what the move entails. At the same time, those who do go ahead with the move are better prepared for the changes to come.

Since the start of RRI, the average length of time between a family submitting their "application" in the form of a Family Questionnaire, and being offered housing, has changed according to the statistics in Table 4.3.

After you sent your Family Questionnaire to Rural Resettlement, how long was it before you moved? If you moved before there were Questionnaires, how long after you first contacted RRI did you move?

Length of time	1990-6/93	7/1993-1995
Less than 6 months	61%	28%
6 to 12 months	11%	38%
13 to 18 months	11%	12%
Over 18 months	4%	15%
Other	14%	7%

TABLE 4.3 Change in length of time between applying for RRI, and moving (n=85)

The increase shown in Table 4.3 is a result of higher numbers applying, the more thorough application process, and the shortage of quality rental housing available. It does not indicate any lessening of efficiency on the part of the organisation and there is no indication from the research that it has hurt RRI's effectiveness. In fact, if anything the longer wait is a side effect of the organisation's improved overall effectiveness in providing better housing stock (see *Chapter 6*) and increased support for families.

One example of this increased support was the offer, in 1995, of a course of evening meetings for a group of families who were preparing for their move to the country. On six consecutive weeks in Dublin, workshops were held for this cadre of 11 families, covering topics ranging from: the psychological effect of the move, practical tips on home improvements and organic gardening, and information on rural communities in general. This course was felt to be useful, but it required a large input of effort from RRI staff, and it also was only practical when a sizeable number of families were expected to move all at once. It is more usual for families to move in small, steady amounts through the year. The personal meeting with the Field Officer should meet some aspects of this need.

Another large aspect of RRI's work is the on-going support available to families who have been offered a house, and those who have already moved. This support, once somewhat haphazard due to limited resources, now follows a well-established pattern.

Once families have accepted accommodation, RRI provides a truck and driver to collect and move the household's belongings. Costs for this service are covered by a grant from the Eastern Health Board offered individually as each family moves. In rare cases where this might not be available, RRI makes separate arrangements with each family. When families arrive at their new house, or sometimes on the following day, they are "greeted" by RRI's Field Worker. At this visit the worker welcomes the family and provides a small box of essential groceries to help them in the first couple of days. A follow-up visit is always made in the next week. After this, visits are generally made on a bi-monthly basis, but this can vary depending on how well the family are deemed to be settling in. Families also know that they can phone the RRI office, and often do so, for advice or to request another visit from the Field Officer. This back-up is seen as very important by families, even if they do not use it often. The following quote illustrates this view:

Just knowing that they're there. Just knowing that if you're, if you need to know something, don't understand something, just to be able to pick up a phone or go and speak to them...knowing that there was always somebody there. Even if you didn't ever phone them, or you didn't see them for weeks. EC14:1399-1404, 1410-1413

4.5.2 Locating houses

In order to locate the houses needed to meet growing demand, RRI actively advertises its need in local communities. When houses are offered as part of the rental stock they are first vetted over the phone with RRI. At this first stage, approximately 50% of houses offered are declined, either because the rent is too high, the house is in a town rather than village or rural area, or the condition of the building is not acceptable. If the problem is the latter, some owners upgrade the dwelling and get back in touch.

For properties which are passed at this first stage, an RRI employee, usually the Field Officer, then goes to visit the property to ensure it is in adequate condition. If it passes at this point, it is matched with a family on the waitlist, who are strongly encouraged to go and look at it themselves before accepting.

RRI does not offer the rental agreement to families. After locating housing and matching a family with that house, the lease and other arrangements are worked out solely between the family and the landlord. For a more detailed look at housing issues, see Chapter 6.

4.6 RELATIONSHIP WITH THE FAMILIES

A large amount of RRI staff time is devoted to interaction with the projects' family participants, both pre- and post-move. For this reason, it is appropriate here to include a more evaluative section looking at the organisations' strengths and weaknesses in this area, according to the participants. Both in the interviews and in the family survey, participants overall felt positive about RRI and the service they offer, as exemplified in this quote:

> *We had great help from RRI. If it wasn't for their help we would never have moved.* LO45:sbp

When asked in the survey *"What suggestions could you make to improve RRI?"*, sixty-five respondents made one or more comments (total comments n=91). 44% of these comments were either suggestions for ways they felt RRI itself could be aided (such as increased funding), or ideas for new initiatives (such as "experienced" RRI families being put in touch with new ones). A further 4% of comments were simply to say that RRI "does great work." 18% of responses were "one-off" or did not appropriately answer the question. These were neither negative nor positive.

In the end, 34% of the comments were criticisms of the way RRI functioned when that particular family moved. Of these comments (n=31), the criticisms were split amongst three categories: those who wanted higher quality housing (23%), those

who wanted more or better advice before they moved (23%), and those who wanted more or better advice and support after they moved (55%).

It is likely that housing quality will be an ongoing issue for any organisation trying to make use of rural housing stock, some of which has been uninhabited for some time.

The only thing I suppose is the houses. Maybe [RRI] could get better houses for people. Maybe if they raised the standard around the houses. LO46:860-864

RRI has attempted to improve this area by more closely vetting the houses made available than was the case at the beginning of the programme. However, this study's data could not show whether or not a significant drop in this type of complaint was taking place. For a fuller discussion of housing quality implications, please refer to *Chapter 6 Experiencing Place.*

For those who wanted better advice before their move, the new system of meeting with the Field Officer before moving (see above Section 4.4.1) is designed to address this gap, although there is no way to assess the success of this from the available data.

However, for the group who criticised the quality of advice and support since their move, by breaking down the data in terms of when respondents moved, we can assess the effectiveness of RRI's newer post-move advice and support. 47% of these criticisms were made by those who moved in the "first phase" of the project (see *Chapter 3 Methodology*), up to July 1993 (n=65).

Although this is 57% of the time frame covered by this study, it is only 39% of families moved who could be located (n=149) and it is only 31% of survey respondents (n=90). Of surveys returned by participants from the "first phase" of the project (n=28), 29% criticised the advice and support offered after their move. Of surveys returned by participants from the "second phase" of the programme (n=62), only 15% of respondents made this comment, signifying a reduction of 48% in this type of complaint.

The following two survey quotes exemplify these sorts of criticisms, which increased post-move support has nearly halved.

A lot more help needed in following areas: dealing with person that house is rented from; also in dealing with leases, also more info about area been moved to i.e. doctor's, distance to town, hospital etc. and public transport if any. EC13:sq16

We had no information about local Social Welfare officers and ESB and schools and as we had no transport we had to do a lot of walking which could have been avoided. EO10:sq16

BOX 4.1 Criticisms of support offered by RRI after move

It is also worth noting that RRI itself has stated that sometimes in the past it ran into difficulty because participants believed RRI could promise support of a kind which it actually never claimed to offer. However, this study only elicited one such comment, and that was during one of the interviews. It seems likely that the levels of press coverage, combined with better pre-move information, has dealt effectively with misunderstandings such as the following.

Well, I thought that [RRI] would kind of organise a bit of work for you as well. And that you'd kind of work on the house that you got and it would be yours eventually like you know. EC19:1165-1170

Other families, who did not share the above complaints, were adamant in their defence of RRI, and also in explaining that it is vital for RRI participants to stand on their own. In fact, too much reliance on RRI after the move was viewed as a negative by some people. These were not views that were likely to be drawn out by the postal survey, thus the following examples are also from interviews.

They're not there to carry you from day to day, and go there with a runny nose like.... 'Oh, the window's cracked, oh, something's wrong, something's wrong'...We've actually talked to [RRI] people who have lived in a house, they're not prepared to do any maintenance on the house theirselves. EC14:1418-1421, 1435-1437, 1444-1448

But it wasn't the fault of [RRI that we moved back to the city]. I used to ring [RRI] quite a lot and ask [them] about advice and that and they were great you know, they had a lot of information and everything. GB1:103-108

...it's up to each individual couple I'd say, or family you know what I mean. To work it out for themselves. All [RRI] can do really is get you the house....it's up to you to live your life, they can't really. EO9:1002-1012, 1028-1029

I could not understand, 'cause I have spoken to people, to Resettlers that have come down and, you know things may not have worked out in the particular house they were living in, and they blamed [RRI]! And they were saying, oh well it's all [RRI's] fault, like [they] should have sorted this out and [they] should have done this. And I thought hold on! EC24:1681-1690

...you don't expect to keep going back to people, you're never going to make things work yourself if you keep looking for help off other people. EC15:849-853

...we didn't want to be baby-sat by [RRI] you know what I mean. But some other families now I believe did. You know, 'hello, there's mice in this house.' EC31:1597-1603

...it's up to yourself whether you're going to take a house or not going to take a house, and no matter what [RRI] say or do for you at the end of the day it's up to yourself. You know, that kind of way, they can only advise you and there's plenty of that. I mean, it's no problem. You can phone them ten times a day and you can ask a hundred questions and they'll always be there for you to answer them. LO30:3224-3235

BOX 4.2 Defence of RRI and importance of independence expressed

A final aspect of families' comments on the work of RRI is that even families from the same phase of the programme sometimes expressed very different opinions of the support offered. The following conflicting opinions come from six different families who moved in the "second phase" of the programme, to counties other than Clare.

Rural Resettlement has done nothing for us, except answer the odd query, and even then the information we got was incorrect. LO43:sq16

I find RRI to be very helpful. They found us the house in Ireland and have helped us up to the present day and will continue being there for us if need be. LO45:sq16

Basically what I think as well is there's no backup. There's not really much of a backup. LO27:717-719

I've found [RRI] absolutely brilliant. They couldn't do enough for you. And they don't just tell you all the good things, the ups about moving. They tell you about the downs of what you could be facing....They go into every detail with you. And then they don't just drop you in the middle of nowhere when they get you to the house and leave you....ringing all the time to see how we were getting on. LO74:434-440, 441-445, 446-447

More support (emotional) needed after moving as you can feel quite isolated. LO47:sq16

RRI were kind and considerate and the psychological backup was tremendous. LO79:sq15

BOX 4.3 Conflicting views on the service offered by RRI

For the sake of illustration, the quotes in Box 4.3 were evenly split between negative and positive views. However, overall the level of support RRI offers now is viewed as excellent by the majority, and lacking by a minority. Having spent large amounts of time in the office observing the staff at work, it is the researcher's belief that these differences are mainly to do with individual personalities and expectations, rather than any inconsistencies in the working practices of RRI.

This is not to dismiss the criticisms out-of-hand. However, it is important not to overemphasise the dissatisfaction which exists as it is a minority viewpoint, and many of those with criticisms were still pleased overall with the organisation. Also, this research was as carefully conducted as possible in order to elicit negative responses where appropriate, as it was felt that previous studies had not given families enough scope for expressing dissatisfaction where it exists (Gorman, 1995; Pal, 1994; Daly, 1993).

4.7 LOCAL AND PUBLIC PERCEPTION

Kilbaha, the village where RRI was founded and where "national headquarters" is located has been generally very supportive of the organisation. From their perspective, aside from the vital increase in pupils in the local school and residents in the area, the organisation has brought a new full-time job to the village (held by a "resettler"), other casual work, and countless visitors in the form of journalists, rural

development workers and students. Staying for varying lengths of time, all of these people contribute to the local economy and, to some extent, to the social life of the area. No one from Kilbaha expressed any negative views toward the organisation during the course of this research.

Wider local response, in terms of other local rural communities, rather than simply the community surrounding the administrative centre, is mainly focused on the impact of the programme rather than the organisation itself. This will be discussed in *Chapter 5 Participation.* However, a few Community Survey respondents did comment on the organisation, shown in the following quotes.

The scheme appears to be working. The process is quite organic. Encouragement without force, assistance with balance. MS:614bp

I believe it could do with more support, financial, political, etc. CR:670bp

The RRI proposal/initiative is the only realistic undertaking this century to address depopulation in the more remote rural areas of Ireland. CC:647bp

BOX 4.4 Community comments on the RRI organisation

The only negative organisational comments from the Community Survey were three respondents who referred to the importance of vetting families, an area which we saw earlier has been tightened up. This is discussed further in Chapter 5, Section 5.5.2.

The general public response to RRI has been huge, both within Ireland and internationally. In fact, when media interest was at its peak in 1993-1994, a sizeable portion of the organisation's time was spent in newspaper interviews, radio and television appearances and simply answering media enquiries. RRI has featured in many local Irish newspapers, national publications and national talk shows, both radio and TV. International press coverage has included *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, and publications from France, Germany, Switzerland and Israel (Harvey and Kiernan, 1993). Film crews have come from as far afield as Japan and South Korea.

These were primarily stories caught up in the romantic idea of making a move back to the country, rather than rigorous analyses of RRI's impact, but they served to widely publicise the organisation's work. More recently, working groups from France and Switzerland have visited the project to learn from them how best to start their own resettlement programmes, and a community worker from Scotland has also been in touch.

4.8 EXPANDING INFLUENCE

That international bodies are beginning to learn from RRI is one sign of how influential their ideas might prove. However, RRI has not stagnated within its own context. While continuing to address local needs and concerns RRI has also been skilful in leveraging political support for its work. This is most clearly seen in the two newest initiatives of the organisation.

The first of these is a mortgage partnership brokered between RRI, the Bank of Ireland, and the Department of the Environment. This initiative, launched in 1996, offers families in Ireland who are moving out of public housing, or off waiting lists, the chance to apply for specially subsidised loans enabling them to purchase a rural house. There are criteria as to where the house may be located and the purchasers must live there themselves. However, there is a flexible income/employment requirement, meaning that people who might not qualify for a traditional mortgage, may well be passed for this one. Twenty families are currently being "processed" through this programme.

The second initiative centres on Local Authority provision of housing to RRI families. These will be houses, supplied by the Department of Environment in the five counties (Clare, Kerry, Mayo, Galway and Roscommon) with RRI County Boards. A total of 40 houses will be supplied in the first instance, with a possibility of more to come. These numbers will be made up of a combination of existing properties needing renovation, and new-build homes.

These houses are connected with the government's "Village Renewal Programme." This means that there is a requirement that the houses be in, or close to, existing villages. The houses can be detached, or they might be "in fill," which means renovating a derelict home in a village terrace of houses.

RRI has the responsibility of nominating the families to take these places. They will continue to have the "nominating" authority to fill these houses if any family moves out of them in under 5 years. RRI is also responsible for choosing the village areas for the housing and they are prioritising those areas where schools are in danger of losing teachers due to falling pupil numbers.[3]

Initially, both of the above programmes are likely to slow down the process of RRI moving families due to the increasing number of outside organisations involved. However, by lessening RRI's dependence on waiting for suitable rental properties to become available, these two new approaches to housing provision will improve RRI's ability to locate sufficient and secure housing for applicants. They are also clear illustrations of the wide-ranging support the programme has garnered.

4.9 FUNDING

A final illustration of the type of support RRI has garnered is its funding situation. From a beginning of purely volunteer labour, free premises in the founder's home and no funding for administrative costs, RRI has won recognition for its work which translates into a very different financial picture. Although, in line with most NGOs, money is an ever-present issue, today they receive a meaningful level of support from the government.

Funding needs are divided between core costs and project costs. The core costs cover salaries, office equipment and expenses and transportation. The Department of Environment provides 2/3 of these costs, expecting RRI to raise the other 1/3 from

[3] There is some potential for bad feeling here, as RRI cannot nominate families who moved in the early part of the programme, thus "disadvantaging" them. There is no way around this situation, but it should be acknowledged as a source of possible friction.

private sources. In the 1997 financial year, this grant totalled £65,000. They work to raise the remaining £35,000 primarily from Irish organisations in the United States.

Projects, including the new mortgage partnership and RRI's part in the "Village Renewal Programme," are self-financing through further government and private grants.

4.10 CONCLUSION

Any history or analysis of the RRI organisation should acknowledge the historical context of land tenure within which the idea of RRI was formed. From the latter part of the 19th century through to the 1930s, a series of Land Acts were passed which fundamentally altered the pattern of Irish land tenure. One part of this process also involved a programme of resettling farm families to less populous rural areas with more productive land. Land ownership and use came to be a powerful political ideal within the Republic and support for the rural population was central to much government policy. So, not only is a belief in the "rural way of life" part of the Irish tradition (Commins, 1982), the actual process of assisted rural resettlement has happened there before.

RRI, however, can be said to be offering a very modern take on this older theme. RRI is not about the redistribution of rural population, but of moving urban dwellers to the countryside. It also does not offer participants an improvement on a continuing way of life, rather it aims to offer a complete change of lifestyle. It is also clearly not about creating new farms, as workable or sizeable land is not part of what they offer participants. In these three major ways, RRI stands out from the earlier resettlement work of the Congested Districts Board.

It also stands out from that programme in the grassroots nature of its approach to addressing rural depopulation. The programme was not begun by a government agency or by other professionals in the field of rural development, but rather by a

rural resident who identified a need and believed he had also identified a solution. This beginning set the tone for future challenges and growth of the organisation.

When the idea was put into practice, and the response received was both greater (in numbers and speed) and different (in terms of who replied) than anticipated, commitment did not waver. The size and alacrity of the response was understandably a spur, but the fact that many largely practically unskilled people were coming forward could have caused a more rigidly conceived concept to falter.

The action-based approach did lead to mistakes being made early on, particularly in the areas of housing quality, the participant application process and housing tenure. Later chapters will more closely analyse these issues. From an organisational angle, though, the most important aspect of these modifications is that they were made as the need was understood, without a compulsion to cling to early-held ideologies.

This resilience, apparent from the project's inception right up to the present day, has its roots in RRI's acceptance of the fact that

> *...the real world is complex; objectives are multiple; paths of change are not undirectional, and they cannot be predetermined. The single objective or measure gives some security but the many-sided nature of physical and human reality is difficult to keep permanently shut out. (Chambers, 1993, p. 5)*

This approach has been central to RRI's development as an organisation, enabling it to grow from an idea with no resources and no proven ability to deliver, into an established NGO. Without the flexibility to make changes as the need arose, it could not have achieved this status.

This picture of how the RRI organisation functions gives a grounding for looking more deeply at the impact of the rural resettlement process as they promote it. Chapter 5 takes us further by analysing the nature of participation in the programme.

CHAPTER FIVE

PARTICIPATION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Central to an analysis of Rural Resettlement Ireland is an understanding of who the participants are and their motivations for migrating to a rural area. Local communities also need to be profiled and consideration given as to their expectations for these migrants.

Accordingly, this chapter presents interview and survey data to develop portraits of RRI participants for comparison to other studies. It also examines the families' own thinking on their hopes and fears for this move and how they made their decision.

In terms of local experience of the programme, census data is applied to draw up a sample community profile. Community survey responses are analysed to look at the hopes and concerns residents express toward possible impacts their new neighbours might have on the community. Also here, we should note any potential social impacts these moves could be having on the migrants' areas of origin.

5.2 WHO ARE THE FAMILIES?

At the time of this research, RRI records showed a total of 211 families had moved with them. Including only the families who participated in this study, the numbers from which the following data chapters are drawn are: 125 families, made up of 229 adults, and 326 children.

A profile of the "typical" RRI participant family can be outlined as follows:

- You are a married couple (88%, n=118);
- If male, you are between 35 and 44 years of age (52%, n=104);
- If female, you are between 30 and 39 years of age (56%, n=109);
- You have at least one child living with you (89%, n=123);
- The children are between 5 and 16 years of age (71%, n=326);
- You move from Dublin (77%, n=117);
- You move from a house owned by a Local Council or Corporation (61%, n=118);
- You were claiming welfare benefit immediately before moving (61%, n=88).

TABLE 5.1 Profile of "typical" RRI participants (n's as shown)

These statistics, particularly those for housing tenure and benefit claimant frequency, suggest a different migrant profile from those of the counterurbanisation portraits noted in Chapter 2 that point to an overall middle-class bias in long-distance migration generally and counterurbanisation specifically (Halfacree et al, 1992; Bolton and Chalkley, 1990; Robinson, 1990; Williams and Jobes, 1990; Perry et al, 1986; Dean et al, 1984b; Jones, 1982; Forsythe, 1980; Newby, 1979). However, this broad look at overall characteristics is not sufficient to compare RRI migrants to the various specific categories researched in those studies.

In order to achieve this comparison Sections 5.2.1—5.2.5 present more detailed information on participants.

5.2.1 Socio-economic characteristics of migrants

Table 2.2 illustrated what has emerged as a frequent theme in the literature of counterurbanisation—namely the high socio-economic or social class status of migrants. In order to analyse this characteristic for RRI participants, the interview data will be relied upon. Although, as will be seen in Chapter 8, a wealth of employment data was collected through the postal survey, it was not designed for the placing of respondents into set categories.

Table 5.2 applies the OPCS scale of Social Class based on Occupation (Rose and O'Reilly, 1997) to RRI participants' responses on their employment history prior to their move.[1] The information used is for the primary earner regardless of gender.

Categories I and II	Category III (manual)	Categories IV and V
6%	30%	64%

TABLE 5.2 RRI interview participants placed in Social Class based on Occupation categories (n=33)

Two studies in Table 2.2 specifically noted the socio-economic characteristics of migrants prior to their move. Jones et al (1986) who stated that 63% were in categories I and II, and Forsythe (1982) who placed "over 50%" in categories I and II. The other three works that addressed SECs did not specify pre-or post-move, but there is no reason to think in their studies that it would change substantially. All three (Bolton and Chalkley, 1990; Dean et al, 1984b; Perry et al, 1986) placed 49% into categories I and II, or 1 and 2.

This then is one area in which RRI participants stand out clearly from the bulk of the counterurbanisation literature.

[1] For those who were unemployed prior to moving, their most recent employment before that was used to place them on the scale (Drudy, 1995). For the few who had never been employed, their aspired-to employment was applied (in all cases this resulted in Categories IV and V).

5.2.2 Markers of social status

If, as 5.2.1 suggests, RRI participants are not rich in economic capital (although it is acknowledged that questions were not asked with regard to various types of savings) perhaps there are markers to suggest the possession of a high degree of cultural capital. In Chapter Two consideration was given to whether relying only on SECs to classify families might overlook more subtle markers, such as those of differential consumption decisions, that could suggest different social and cultural roots or simply a conscious values change such as Lumb (1980a) suggested. Some, perhaps most, RRI participants could be part of what Williams and Jobes (1980) describe as, "...a hedonistic type of chosen poverty. Most have decided to move there. Those who remain are often part of a 'life-style' enclave" (p. 189). Alternatively, Whelan (1995), referring to earlier work with which he was involved, notes a particular process that occurred in the 1980s in Ireland. "...a dramatic rise in the unemployment rate coupled with a process of 'trading down' for middle-class school leavers as they took up jobs which traditionally had been the preserve of the working class" (pp. 348-349).

To demonstrate whether or not any of the above-noted groups make up a large portion of RRI participants, the approach developed by Bourdieu (1984) will be applied. Although clearly in no way attempting to replicate the detail or depth of *Distinction*, Appendix 5 was drawn up to consider some family characteristics that might demonstrate backgrounds or choices in some way at odds with their SECs. In writing about Bourdieu's work, Gershung (2000) states that "Individuals seek to distinguish themselves—in effect establish their distinct social position—by adopting a pattern of consumption that provides an optimal level of final satisfactions from the combination of their financial resources with their consumption skills" (p. 46). We have seen that most RRI participants have limited incomes; this approach is a way to look at their consumption skills. Or, in other words, to see if they exhibit signs of habitus that point to an inherited life-style belied by their current occupational standing.

The categories of characteristics used (art on walls, reading material, music/television, body language, food, accent and "things missed from urban life") were chosen based on the author's own observations combined with discussions with people in Ireland as to what markers could have social meaning. In this way it is hoped to avoid, as much as is possible, what Cohen (1985) describes as, "trip[ing] over the concealed obstacles of cultural difference" (p. 39). These categories were also all relatively straightforward to recall from the interview experiences. However, some categories present particular difficulties. For instance, the presence of original art hung on the walls (in 5 cases), may be suggestive of a means of marking oneself out. However, an absence of any art, original or otherwise, may in some instances simply reflect the dampness of walls in the rural house. The type of music listened to, if any, only provides a snapshot of what happened during the time of the interview, questions were not asked about this preference. Accent, in many ways a powerful marker, is less so here because the author was not experienced enough to differentiate reliably the different "types" of Dublin accent, therefore it is not shown in the figures below. The record made of "body language" was not detailed enough to demonstrate any interesting information and is not shown in the figures. No doubt as an American living in Scotland, the author has overlooked telling nuances that could have been part of this discussion. However, this process is intended to add texture to the portrait built up through the other markers in this section, it is not meant to be exhaustive.

In interpreting the information presented in Appendix 5, assumptions were not made as to what, if any, findings would indicate what, if any, "levels" of distinction (e.g. the presence of many books was not an indicator of "above" or "below" those without books, simply as a potential marker of difference). Instead, the categories were examined for overlap and differences between the social class categories of Table 5.2.

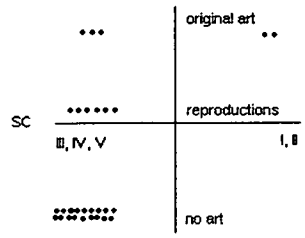


Figure 5.1 Art on walls

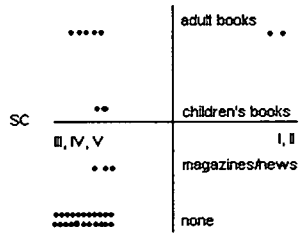


Figure 5.2 Reading material

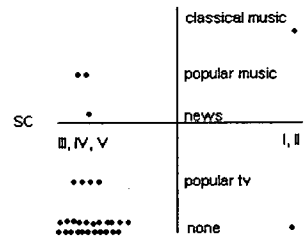


Figure 5.3 Music/television on

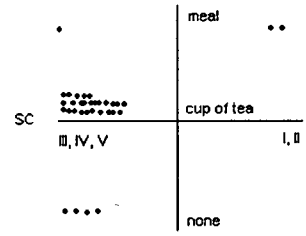


Figure 5.4 Food offered

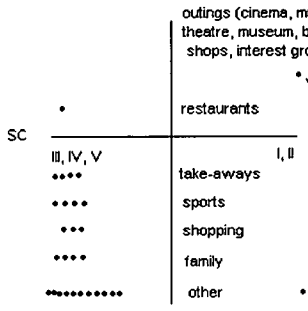


Figure 5.5 Things missed from urban life

With such small numbers there is a limited amount of useful analysis that can be accomplished with this data. Certainly it is striking that the two members of SC I and II fall together in all but one of these categories. In this way, as noted with Bourdieu's findings (1984), the categories reinforce one another. However, it is also apparent that in every case, bar the listening to classical music during the course of the interview, there is at least one family from SC III-V that overlaps with the SC I and II families.

Such a confined snapshot as that provided by Appendix 5 and Figures 5.1-5.5 can only ever be suggestive, not definitive. However, what it does suggest is that nothing noted therein raises any substantive doubts about the classifications of Table 5.2.

5.2.3 Educational background

We also saw in Chapter Two, Table 2.3 that another characteristic some studies found differentiated migrants from locals, was that of educational background. Although the scales used varied between studies, the "lowest" level of migrant education was reported by Dean et al (1984b) who found that 18.8% of non-return migrants had been in fulltime education at the age of 20 or older (p. 187). This was also the only study to give a figure for the number of non-return migrants who had finished their education at 16 or before, 57.6% (p. 187).

Detailing RRI migrants' education levels will allow comparison with the studies in Table 2.3. It will also provide another means of trying to see if their store of cultural capital (of which education is a large component) is greater than the economic capital at their disposal. Education levels also have a specific and very practical use in Ireland at the time of this study where "...with high rates of unemployment (15.5 per cent of the labour force in 1994...), the possession of educational credentials is the best guarantee of avoiding unemployment" (Clancy, 1995, p. 483).

Table 5.3 illustrates the findings on adult educational levels of RRI participants based on interview responses.

Left school before age 16	Left school at age 16	Left school at age 17	Left school at age 18	College	University
38%	44%	2%	4%	6%	6%

TABLE 5.3 Educational background of adult RRI participants (n=52)

With only 12% of interview respondents having attended college or university, and 84% having left school by the age of 16 (Lower secondary), RRI participants clearly stand out from the profile of Table 2.3.

This finding also supports Bourdieu's (1984) finding that educational level is closely related to "cultural practices" and to "social origin". The three interviewed RRI participants who attended university belong to the two families placed in Social

Classes I and II. Again, there is nothing here to raise questions about the classifications in Table 5.2—rather they are reinforced by these statistics.

5.2.4 Age characteristics and family size of migrants

The ages of those participating in RRI are important for the previously noted tendency of rural out-migration to draw disproportionately from younger age groups. Table 2.5 demonstrated that local-level studies yielded different results on the age of migrants. Perry et al (1986) and Dean et al (1984b) found that the migrants were slightly older, overall, than the populations they joined. However, Findlay et al (1999), Bolton and Chalkley (1990) and Forsythe (1982) found migrants were generally somewhat younger and/or more frequently had children with them, then the rural communities to which they moved. Tables 5.4, 5.5 and 5.6 detail this information for RRI participants.

Age	Percent
Under 25	---
25 – 29	8%
30 – 34	26%
35 – 39	24%
40 – 44	25%
45 – 49	10%
Over 50	4%

TABLE 5.4 Ages of adult RRI participants (n=227)

Age of Child	Percent
Under 5	17%
5 – 12	52%
13 –16	22%
17 – 18	6%
Over 18	5%

TABLE 5.5 Ages of RRI participant's children (n=321)

Number of Children	Percent
0	11%
1	8%
2	26%
3	31%
4	12%
5	10%
6	2%

TABLE 5.6 Family size of RRI participants (n=123)

5.2.5 Further descriptive information on migrants

Three other descriptive categories are presented below, that either were not covered in other literature, or where a precise comparison between RRI and other studies would not be relevant (for instance, the areas participants move from is unlikely to fit usefully with a counterurbanisation study of Cornwall). They add further detail to the overall profile of RRI participants.

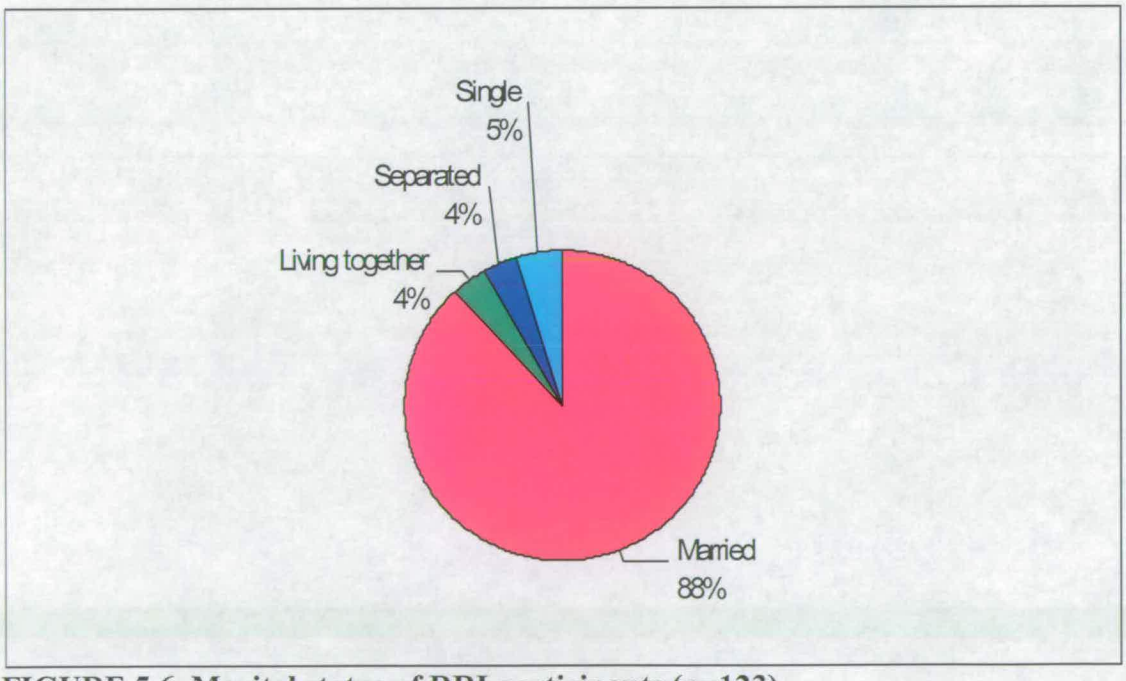


FIGURE 5.6 Marital status of RRI participants (n=123)

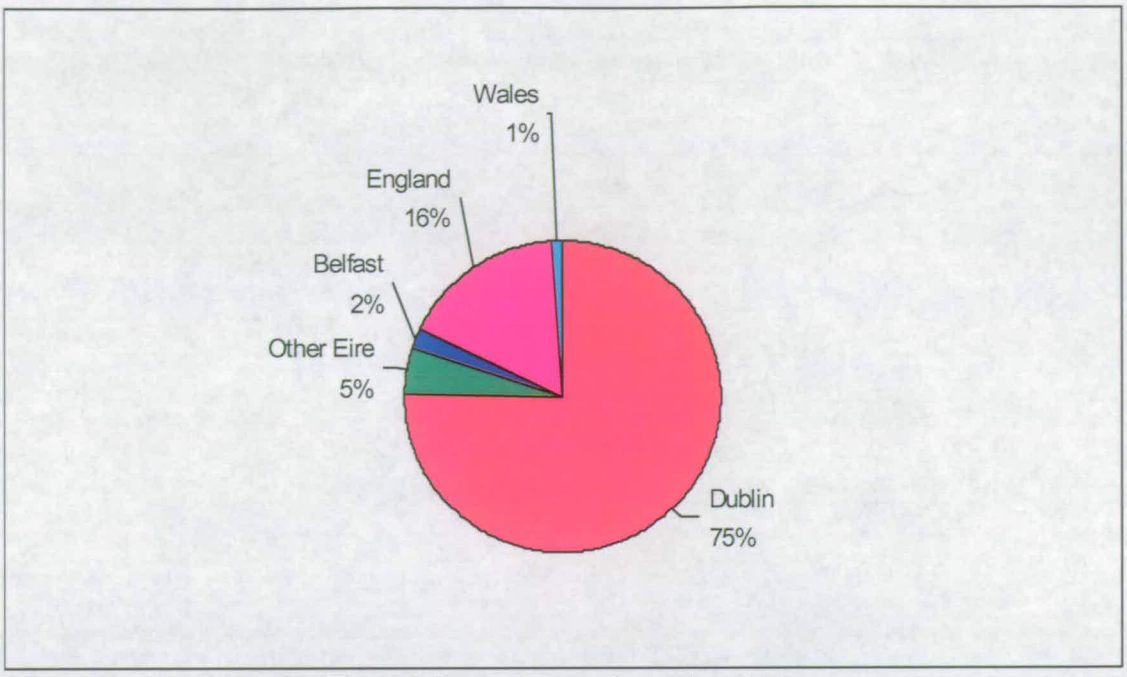


FIGURE 5.7 Areas RRI participants move from (n=85)

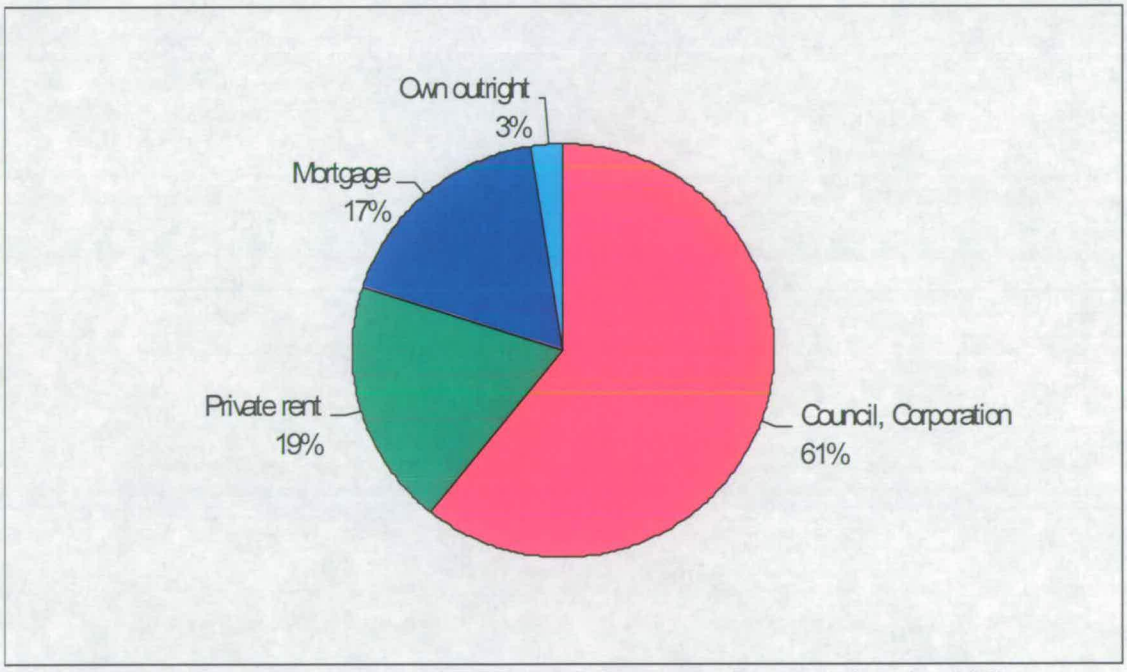


FIGURE 5.8 Housing tenure of RRI participants before moving (n=120)

5.3 INITIAL IDEA

The actual idea of moving to the country originated, in 80% of cases, with the families themselves (n=86). Only 20% of respondents stated that they had never thought of moving to the country before learning of RRI. As Adamchak (1987) states, "This preference [to move to a rural area] could very well be grounded in life-quality considerations that existed long before the opportunity structure developed. The opportunity structure (economic/employment) facilitated migration but did not necessarily create a preference for rural living..." (p. 117).

In this case the "opportunity structure" that changed was the creation of the RRI organisation. Looking at the migrants decision in this light, "...offers the possibility of a synthesis of phenomenological and structuralist insights and provides a conceptual basis for studying migration as both, on the one hand, a personal and experiential and, on the other, a supra-individual phenomenon" (Dean et al, 1984b, pp. 179-180). The reasons why the 80% who had a desire to move to the country, did not do so without RRI's help, are educational as to the needs the project meets. These reasons are shown below in Table 5.7.

What kept you from moving without RRI? (please circle all that apply)	
Did not think I/we could afford to move	44%
Did not know how to start	40%
Could not afford to look for a house	34%
Could not find a house in the country	21%
No support from family or friends	8%
Did not know if I/we would be welcome	1%

TABLE 5.7 Reasons preventing interested families from moving without the support of RRI (n=73)

Overwhelmingly then, the factors preventing these families from moving to rural areas on their own are practical ones of finance, lack of knowledge in how to go about it, and an actual or perceived poor availability of housing. This fits with a study of migration patterns in Scotland which found that,

> *...[unskilled workers'] lower incomes and lower mobility allowances make the financial costs of migration a significant deterrent, while their access to housing in a new area is restricted by the difficulties faced by incomers, as opposed to long-term residents, in acquiring rented housing in both public and private sectors. (Jones, 1982, p. 41)*

Interviewed participants added detail to the list of deterrent factors. As in Table 5.7, some focused on financial obstacles or simply not knowing where to start. Others described a kind of inertia in their living situation.

I'd been unemployed in Dublin. I think everybody wanted a house in the country, but being unemployed you have to face it—you're never gonna have the money for it. And then [RRI] came along and said 'I can get you houses'... LC9:234-240

...we were wracking our brains, like how can we get out of the situation that we're in. We had no money to put a deposit down on a mortgage, and it was going on for nearly a year, like how can we get out of here, we all just hated it. And just one day...[I remembered seeing a] show about people moving to rural. LO6:375-382, 386-387

If we'd a had the money we'd a just went and built a house in the country but the Rural Resettlement, when this come up, it was the only option that we'd a had... LO30:857-861

[RRI is] for people like us that would never have the opportunity of buying a house exactly where we wanted one. It was a way of getting out of where we were without costing us a fortune. LO46:845-850

I think it's great having Rural Resettlement there because it does give you that, what it did for me, when I saw [RRI] that day on that film with them houses, at least there is someone to contact and say what do I do? How do we do it? Or somebody you can go to and say can you help me? What's the first step to make? So really, [RRI] gave me the boost I needed. Or the boost we both needed. EC14:1655-1666

I don't think it would have been possible. They have made it possible...Wouldn't have dreamt of picking up a paper and looking for a house. LO14:notes page 3

BOX 5.1 "Practical" reasons why participants did not move without RRI

...I suppose when you're brought up in Dublin, that kind of thing, it's like, I suppose [Dublin's] just such a way of life you don't even, you say 'God great living in the country,' but you don't actually do anything about it... EC31:25-31

Well, we thought it was impossible actually like you know. It probably had, it crossed our minds you would like to move somewhere else you know? But when you

see it on a postcard or a picture, 'oh I'd love to live there.' You know that way? But it'd just pass you know, I wouldn't think about it again. EO7:484-492

I was probably afraid to just up and go. When you knew there was other people doing it as well, then. Maybe just [RRI] even making the contacts made it that bit easier for them to....[RRI] smoothed the way for you...you didn't have to go and do that and try to impress people about why you're moving down and all this then. EC15:811-816, 820, 822-825

[My husband] always thought, oh gosh we don't know anybody who did it, you know, we would be the only ones, people would think we were mad...we thought of a million and one excuses why not. EO3:11-14, 15-16

So yeah, I suppose I wouldn't have bothered if Rural Resettlement wasn't there, I probably wouldn't have been moving down. I think you need, it was a bit of a push, kind of someone to help you along the way coming down. LC15:147-153

BOX 5.2 "Social/cultural" reasons why participants did not move without RRI

Others pointed out that families do move out of Dublin, as they wanted to, but that it was easier to emigrate than to move to a rural area in Ireland, simply because the process of emigration is well known. They are more likely to have relatives or friends overseas than in a rural county.

Emigrate was basically what we were thinking...We investigated, we were investigating Australia, America and Holland. I have a sister who lived in Holland, his brother lived in Australia and we'd relations living in America. EC24: 987-988 1128-1133

...we thought about everything, we thought about Australia, Scotland, anywhere really. I tried to emigrate to Australia because I have a sister over there. But things didn't work out, so we couldn't. Everywhere we turned to get out of Dublin, or any plans we made backfired. LO44:1011-1021

BOX 5.3 Emigration as known path for migration

This belief that emigration is more easily accomplished than moving to a rural area within their own country, fits with the idea that migration paths often follow the pattern of other people known to the potential migrant (Clark, 1986; Lewis, 1982). Jones (1982) specifically notes how pre-existing emigration from Scotland

encourages that course of action to continue. This is particularly important to potential participants of RRI, given Ireland's long history of wide-scale emigration. Brody (1973) phrased it thus, "Flows of emigration create and nurture flows of information" (p. 7).

The importance of following a known path in choosing to migrate is further supported by the relatives who have followed RRI participants. In interviews, two families noted that they joined up after other family members had moved through RRI. More intriguingly, again in interviews, three families stated that since they themselves moved, other family members had moved to rural areas, inspired by them, but not through RRI.

...I have one sister, she's living in [rural county] now....But they didn't come down with [RRI]....All after I moved. And yet they were all telling me I was mad. And there's none of them in Dublin at all now....it was all after being down visiting here, staying for weekends, staying for a week you know. It was like getting the atmosphere.... EC15:647-650, 657-660, 677-680

Honest to God they thought we were gonna make a bad mistake in coming here. And it's turned out since...[my mother's] after moving down herself!...And her two daughters. LC9:363-366, 368-369, 396

BOX 5.4 Family members following RRI participants in rural move

Forsythe (1982) noted a similar phenomenon in her Orkney research and stated that the migrants dubbed it "the mother-in-law syndrome" (p. 33). In this case two of the three families who followed, not through RRI, were families with children. This has obvious implications for a potential "emigrant multiplier" effect of RRI through time.

5.4 WHY MOVE?

In terms of core motivation, when asked in open format for the single most important reason they moved, respondents gave a variety of responses.

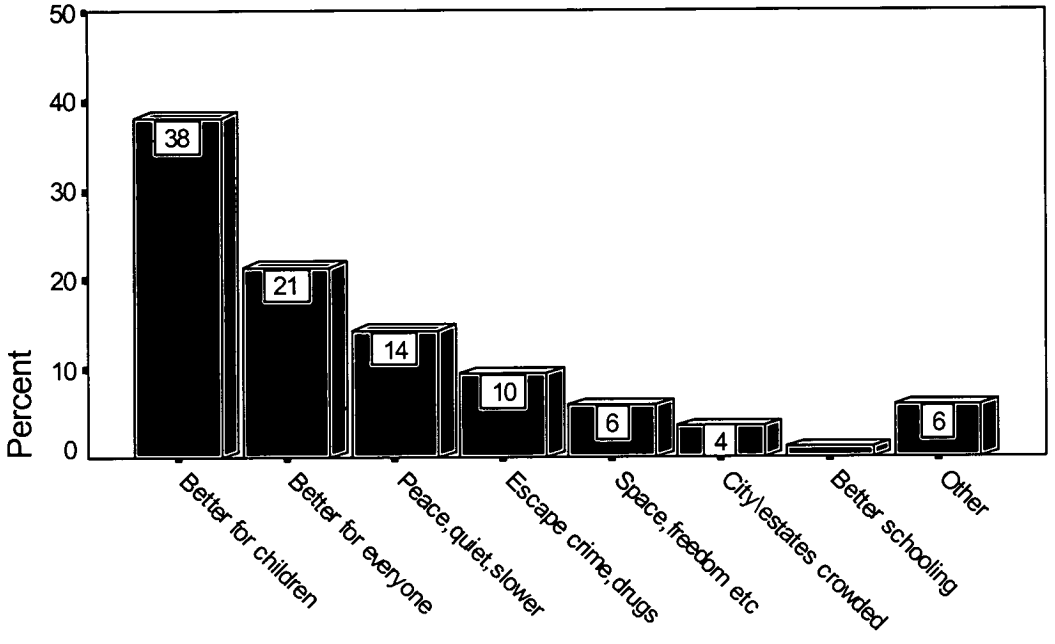


FIGURE 5.9 "What was the single most important reason you moved to the country?" (n=84)

The 6% "other" category from Figure 5.9 gave reasons including escaping from pollution in the city and the cheaper costs of buying a house in the country. That only one noted house prices as a motivating factor again sets the RRI profile off from some other posited causes for counterurbanisation. For instance, Halliday and Coombes (1995) suggest that differential house prices were an important force fuelling counterurbanisation in late 1980's southern Britain.

More important, though, is the obvious contrast that can be drawn between this information and that of Table 2.6 which showed how other studies found a marked mixture of first goals between economic and quality of life motives.

Employment or Economic motivation	Quality of life motivation
1%	99%

TABLE 5.8 RRI migrant "single most important" motivations by category (n=84)

Here, as with the markers of SEC and education levels, RRI stands out from the other studies. The specific goals noted, however, do overlap with the other authors' findings. Some, such as "peace, quiet, slower pace of life" match with the mainly abstract goals uncovered by Forsythe (1982). Others such as "escaping from crime" or "finding a better place to raise a family" appeared in Bolton and Chalkley (1990). In fact, overlap appears between these RRI participants' goals and the respondents of many other studies (Findlay et al, 1999; Halliday and Coombs, 1995; Pietila, 1993; Folkesdotter, 1987; Jones et al, 1986; Perry et al, 1986; Smailes and Hugo, 1985). The important variation here is the fact that only 1% of respondents in this study gave an economic-related reason (lower house prices) as their main motivation for moving.

Figure 5.9 also shows clearly that the most common single motivation for moving with RRI was a belief that the move would be better for the children. This was an opinion that was also raised during interviews. This feeling of many respondents about needing to find a better place for their children is illustrated by Box 5.5.

...it's for when they're growing up...To give them the basis. If you have a happy childhood...well it's a good way to having a happy adult life...And if you get that and you can grow up in an area in surroundings like that, I mean it gives you confidence, it gives you everything...so if we can give them that, by living here...that's all you can do. EC24:807-808, 812-813, 815-816, 817-821, 821-823, 823-824 (man)

So, I was going, where in the world is safe to bring up children? All I'm looking for is a little patch of land to bring my children up you know. EC24:1161-1165 (woman)

So then I started thinking of the kids. I seen all that [crime]--the age that we moved they weren't leaving friends as such behind...you can't keep them locked up 24 hours a day. They'd either be dragged in or be called chicken and their mates are trying some and 'come on you chicken.' They'll all be drawn into it. I'm not saying it won't happen down here or anywhere, but you're giving yourself a bit more chance down here. EC15:438-441, 446-456

For the children to grow up in the country. Just didn't like the town or city. They could hardly play, just a little back garden. And we always wanted that they can run around... EC22:147-153

Had to get out for the kids like. I seen what was happening to other kids and I said the only chance is getting out of here like you know. EO7:1052-1055

In a big housing estate you can't do your own thing. You know the way. Especially in a poorer type of area. You know the way. If you want to rear your children properly, well there's always someone to knock the good out of it. LO77:318-324

BOX 5.5 Children's welfare as prime motivation for moving

Another question asked of survey respondents addressed which family member had pushed most for the move. Table 5.9 indicates that gender difference in this decision making was not significant.

If you moved as a couple, which one of you encouraged the move most?	
The woman	23%
The man	19%
No difference	58%

TABLE 5.9 Breakdown of who encouraged move, according to gender (n=80)

For more discussion on possible gender differences after the move see Chapter 6.

5.4.1 Positive thinking

One of the interesting aspects of the responses given in Figure 5.9 is the distinction that can be drawn between the percentage of families whose first reason given is phrased in terms of moving TO something positive, as opposed to those who phrase it in terms of moving FROM something negative. The question was open-ended, so

these responses are purely respondents' own words. 83% phrase it in the positive, with only 17% in the negative. 1% could not be categorised in terms of positive or negative.

This is not to deny that families were influenced in their decision to move by their negative perceptions of some aspects of urban life. It will be shown in Section 5.4.2, that this was also a powerful motivator. Within the literature of migration and counterurbanisation, this distinction in motivations is referred to as "push" vs. "pull" factors (Jones et al, 1986; Cloke, 1985; Lewis, 1982).

Intriguingly, further analysis of responses in Figure 5.9 reveals that they are strongly influenced by the length of time since respondents moved to a rural area. "Push" factors were listed as the single most important reason for moving by only one family, or 4%, from the early phase of the programme (n=26) but by 12 families, or 21%, from the second phase (n=58).

Remembered motives, and the potential confusion caused by post-decisional cognitive dissonance reduction, are acknowledged difficulties in understanding and analysing motivations (Halliday and Coombes, 1995; Bolton and Chalkley, 1990; Folkesdotter, 1987; Taylor, 1969). However, the strength of these differences would suggest that through time, these respondents are "forgetting" the challenges of urban life, while still believing in the opportunities of rural life. Whatever psychological factors might underlie this, it still may bode well for the overall "success" of their move, which will be further discussed in Chapters 6 and 9.

Another level of detail illustrating what they were moving toward, or away from, is achieved through use of a semantic difference scale listing various possible reasons why families might have moved. Tables 5.10, 5.11, 5.12 and 5.13 report the results of this enquiry. The phrasing of the responses offered in this section of the questionnaire was based on the 33 in-depth interviews held prior to conducting the survey. It is thought that by basing it on the words of other RRI families, it was offering the expressions they would have chosen themselves.

On a scale of 1 to 4, how important were the following hopes in YOUR household's decision to move to the country?

The hope that you would:	*"Very important"*	*Combined "Very important" or "Important"*
Find a better natural environment	68%	93%
Have some space around you	63%	93%
Get your children a better education	62%	87%
Fulfil a dream or ambition	38%	71%

TABLE 5.10 Positive hopes seen as important in making the decision to move to the country (n=87, n=86, n=82, n=85)

The hopes listed in Table 5.10 as frequently the most important to RRI migrants fit with the results of previous studies of RRI. Pal (1994) found that 52% of respondents mentioned "better environment" when asked for their motivations, while Daly (1993) had 72% rank "better environment" as their first reason for moving. That these percentages are slightly different than this study's can be explained through methodological differences in how the question was asked and responses offered. The important point is that all three studies are in agreement that the broad category of "environment" was ranked highly by respondents as a motivating factor.

The other important aspect of Table 5.10 is the fact that each of these most highly ranked hopes, as with 99% of "single reasons" noted in Figure 5.9, fit under the "quality of life" category of motivations rather than "economic." This is a particularly strong result given that Halliday and Coombs (1995) found that asking for "all motives" and "single motives" gave very different results. In the case of RRI, these questions reinforce each other.

In the literature there are conflicting views as to what "categories" of migrants will prioritise quality of life over employment/economics. DeJong and Gardner (1981) state that those most likely to prioritise quality of life are persons of high socio-economic status (SES) or retirees. Furthermore, they find that "...the economic

motive for migration continues to dominate long-distance migration" (p. 41). RRI moves would fit under their definition of "long distance." More recently, Findlay et al (1999) also found that quality of life migrants were, overall, those with the highest incomes (p. 62). In contrast, Williams and Jobes (1990) find that lower SES families were most motivated by quality of life. How RRI migrants are able to pursue this priority will be further considered in Chapter 10.

It is also illuminating to look at the positive motivations which elicited fairly even responses, as shown in Table 5.11.

On a scale of 1 to 4, how important were the following hopes in YOUR household's decision to move to the country?

The hope that you would:	*Combined "Not at all important" or "Not very important"*	*Combined "Very important" or "Important"*
Grow your own food	52%	48%
Find more or better work	52%	48%
Be part of a close-knit community	51%	49%

TABLE 5.11 Potential positive reasons for moving which were "not important" and "important" to respondents in equal measure (n=87, n=87, n=86)

In Table 5.11 we find that 52% of respondents state outright that finding work was not important in their decision to move, while in Figure 5.9 no one named employment as their most important reason for moving. Again, this does not fit comfortably within existing literature. Although as noted earlier, quality of life issues are strong in counterurbanisation motivations, Halliday and Coombes (1995) found that 26% of migrants to their study area in Devon note employment as the *most important* (emphasis added) reason for their move. Serow (1991) further states that "persons of working age" tend to have "job-related reasons" for their move (pp. 275-276). Adamchak (1987) also found that, "In this research, employment (economic) seems to be the main motivation, and life quality (noneconomic) the secondary motivation" (p. 116). Finally, Dean et al (1984b) found "the majority of moves to West Cornwall [were] economic or retirement orientated..." (p. 189).

However, within Table 5.11, the 48% who state that work was important in their decision, considered along with Table 5.10's strong quality of life responses, demonstrate that the "quality-of-life vs. economics" discussion is not necessarily an either/or proposition. The reality for many RRI migrants would appear to be more complex than simply choosing one or the other.

Finally, there was a group of offered responses that the majority, although not always as strong a one as shown in Table 5.10, marked as "not at all important" or "not important" in the same section of questions.

On a scale of 1 to 4, how important were the following hopes in YOUR household's decision to move to the country?		
The hope that you would:	*"Not at all important"*	*Combined "Not at all important" or "Not very important"*
Start your own business	36%	72%
Fix up an abandoned or poor condition house	30%	56%
Participate in traditional music, crafts or dance	25%	61%
Be with rural people	24%	64%

TABLE 5.12 Potential positive reasons for moving which overall were not very important to respondents (n=85, n=84, n=87, n=86)

These responses further demonstrate the diversity of hopes which motivate RRI participants.

5.4.2 Escape factor

It would be completely misleading to imply that no perceived negative urban qualities were involved in the families' decision making. Quite the contrary, these were very important in the choice they made. Moreover, there was greater agreement among respondents as to the importance of these factors, than was seen in the responses about positive aspects of rural life.

On a scale of 1 to 4, how important were the following hopes in YOUR household's decision to move to the country?

The hope that you would:	*"Very important"*	*Combined "Very important" or "Important"*
Get away from drugs in the city	74%	90%
Get away from crime in the city	63%	87%

TABLE 5.13 Hopes for escape seen as important in making the decision to move to the country (n=87, n=87)

During the course of interviews, people also raised the issue of drugs and crime as factors for them to leave the city.

...it was for me working in the Youth Club and I saw the amount of drugs in the area, I saw the amount of stolen cars, I saw a 12 year old...girl pregnant. I saw a 12 year old boy die from an overdose of drugs. I said, you know, there was no employment in the area...there was 32 houses in our cul-de-sac and there was only 8 families left living with husband and wife. EC24:1031-1035, 1035-1039, 1040-1043

We only wanted to get away from the drugs for the kid's sake. So that's the only reason really for moving. LO57:45-48

Well, we were living in Tallaght and it was getting bad you know. So we thought for their sakes they might you know do better here in the country...stolen cars going around. That's all they were seeing. They were there at the windows. We were facing a big park and every night we used to have [stolen] car going up and down and he was growing up with that you know. We wanted to get him away from all that. LO72:233-237, 243-251

...like all hours of the night there'd be teenagers making noises and smoking God knows what outside. Outside the wall and if you went out to them then they'd threaten to smash your windows, or they'd retaliate or... LO44:165-171

BOX 5.6 Negative urban experiences as motivations for moving

Table 5.13 and Box 5.6 illustrate the importance of some urban "push" factors. However, as we saw in Figure 5.9, only 10% of respondents noted these as the primary reasons for their move, with many more of them listing rural "pull" factors as their single most important reason for moving.

Finally, although many acknowledged the goal of escaping urban drugs and crime as reasons to move[2], many of those interviewed stressed that there are other problems which moving to the country cannot solve. They highlight these as wrong reasons to move, and express concern at people in too much of a hurry.

People should be very clear about their reasons for making the move to a rural area; it is not an escape from reality. LO32:s598

And don't come down thinking that it's going to solve your problems. It's just a different way of life, it's not going to solve any problems. It's not going to solve financial problems or marital problems... EC24:2864-2870

...if the family has a problem in Dublin and they're trying to escape their problem, this is certainly no place for escaping...Because you're only going to, especially if it's a money problem...there's no way you're going to solve a problem like that down here....Particularly money problems. Um, or even husband and wife problems, whatever. And problems like that at all, that there's, it's the old thing you know trying to escape something, run away from it, there's no where to run. Because here is certainly no where to run. EC21:1254-1258, 1262-1263, 1264-1266, 2343-2350

Don't use it for somewhere to run to!...It's not an escape, it's a beginning, to start something. It's not like you've escaped from something. That's the wrong way of looking at it... EC14:2819-2820, 2827-2831

...sometimes people are a bit too anxious to leave. And there might be a house available and they say 'we'll take it. Don't want to see it. We have to get out of here, we'll take the house.' That's not a great idea I don't think. EC22:1183-1190

BOX 5.7 Expressing caution against using the move as an escape

Box 5.7 can be seen as demonstrating people's concern that there are "push" factors which are inappropriate reasons for choosing to move to a rural area.

[2] Several respondents also noted that drugs and crime are present in rural areas too, but that the influence was much smaller than in urban areas. This is further acknowledged in Chapter 6.

5.4.3 Concerns

Just as participants inevitably had hopes for their rural move, many of them had concerns as well. Some of these are expressed in Box 5.8.

The most scary thing was not knowing anybody. EO3:262-263

You're going to be in the middle of nowhere! There's no Mr. Whippy or shops or anything like that...we're going to have no friends. We're going to have no baby-sitter, so we're going to be tied to home. He was working in Dublin, and you're going to have no job. We're going to have less money, with more expenses, no friends... EC24:875-877, 879-886

It was frightening. I was scared of my future. And very nervous really about it all. LO38:686-688

Having such young kids and the nearest child hospital is fifty-five miles away. LO19:507-509

...isolation. The fear of the isolation, a fear of not getting a job. LC1:1864-1866

BOX 5.8 Concerns before moving

For others, leaving behind their families and friends was a difficult choice. Although Table 5.7 showed that only 8% of migrants felt that lack of support from family or friends actually kept them from moving, many more stated that their families were not in favour of the move.

When you told your family and friends that you were moving, what was their response?	
They thought it was a bad idea	39%
They thought it was a good idea	56%
Other	5%

TABLE 5.14 Family response to idea of move (n=84)

Interviewed respondents gave a more vivid sense of the possible level of family disapproval, as shown in Box 5.9.

They were like, you're out of your head. Honest to Jesus, oh you're stupid. I mean that was the biggest disaster as far as everyone was concerned. EC24:1559-1563

My mother and father thought it was great but me sisters and brothers thought I was totally cracked. They said 'there's no way...You won't last...' LO30:1690-1695, 1695-1696

They thought I was crazy, absolutely. I mean we're both, we're both late 40's now, and you don't do things like this. I mean this is something that you know, you go for a fortnight and then you come home again like and that's it and you just get back into the rut and carry on working. EC14:1674-1683

MAD! That's what they said to me, I was mad. Mayo Mick they called me. EO7:580-582

It varied from the one who said, 'you're doing what I always wished I'd do' to 'You're absolutely daft, what on Earth are you doing that for? You've never farmed before, you've never kept animals before. What do you think you're doing?' LO68:309-316

Well, when we first said we were moving down here there was, my dad thought we were MAD. Over 200 miles away... LO44:598-601

That we were mad. One said, 'what are you moving to a war zone for?' Another one asked why we were taking our electric lights because there was no electricity. LO7:1895-1899

BOX 5.9 Negative family responses to move

It seems likely that the strength of these responses may have effected the attitude with which participants embarked upon their move, even if it did not hold them back altogether.

5.5 LOCAL RESPONSE

The other component of participation which is central to RRI is that of the extant local community. Many people are "participants by default," in that they live or work in areas to which RRI families have moved. Other local people are actively involved in the programme.

5.5.1 Community profiles

Sections 5.2.1—5.2.5 gave information on specific characteristics of RRI participants, including their SECs, educational background and ages. Where appropriate, this information was contrasted with the findings of counterurbanisation studies noted in Chapter 2. RRI participants were shown, on several counts, to stand out from migrants in other studies. This does not necessarily mean, however, that their profile will fit better with local community members than did that of those other studies' migrants.

Using Census data, the following tables 5.15—5.17 give relevant information on SEC, education and age for one sample area in rural Ireland. These statistics are based, as in Chapter 2, on Kilballyowen parish where RRI has placed families. By using such very local statistics, a detailed degree of comparison with RRI statistics is possible. However, it must be acknowledged that different areas where RRI migrants settled might present different profiles. This one is chosen as typical, but not absolute.

Total #	Employers and managers	Higher professional	Lower professional	Non-manual	Manual skilled	Semi-skilled	Unskilled	Own account workers	Farmers	Agricultural workers	All others gainfully occupied and unknown
235	1%	--	3%	4%	3%	1%	5%	3%	63%	6%	11%

TABLE 5.15 Kilballyowen Parish "classified by socio-economic group" (source: Central Statistics Office, 1998a)

The above categories do not immediately appear to be comparable with the Social Class based on Occupation categories applied to RRI participants in Table 5.2. Indeed, it may at first seem that comparisons would be better made using the CSO's

seven-division Social Class scale. However, that scale is based on the classification system developed by Goldthorpe (Rose and O'Reilly, 1997) and so cannot be appropriately compared category by category with Social Class based on Occupation.

More useful in this instance is to adopt Forsythe's (1982) straightforward approach of contrasting manual workers and non-manual workers. While this might appear as a weaker means of analysis, if we keep in mind that our primary goal is not to place RRI migrants or local community members firmly into or outwith established categories of class, but rather to discern how their profiles fit within or without the patterns of other studies, this approach can be seen to be appropriate.

In this way, Forsythe (1982) found that the figures shown in Table 2.2 illustrate that "One of the most striking differences between the incomers and the receiving community is in occupational background" (p. 25). Similarly, Bolton and Chalkley (1990) found that after moving, of those migrants who were employed, 61% did non-manual work, while 37% did manual work. While, of locals in employment, 37% did non-manual and 62% manual work (p. 36).

Table 5.2 showed that 6% of RRI participants were in categories appropriate to "non-manual" work. In the above Table 5.15, omitting the final "unknown" category, 9% of locals are in "non-manual" categories. It cannot be said that urban manual work and rural farm work are identical in their skills/approaches or attitudes. However, the split apparent in other studies between non-manual working migrants and manual-working locals does not occur here.

Another important way in which other studies showed migrants to stand out from locals was that of educational background. Table 5.16 gives this information for Kilballyowen.

Left school before age 16	Left school at age 16	Left school at age 17	Left school at age 18	Left school at ages 19 or 20	Left school at age 21 or after
63%	16%	11%	6%	3%	1%

TABLE 5.16 Educational background of Kilballyowen residents (n=188) (source: Central Statistics Office, 1991)

Table 5.3 showed that 82% of RRI migrants left school by age 16, while the above shows that a similar amount, 79%, of Kilballyowen residents had left by age 16. Table 5.16 also shows that 4% of Kilballyowen residents were in school after age 18. If it is assumed they were at college or university, this contrasts with 12% for RRI. Although this does demonstrate a difference, it remains smaller than the figures for any other study. The overall picture demonstrates that the substantial differences in levels of education between migrants and locals in Table 2.3 does not hold true for this study.

A final characteristic to consider here is that of age. Unlike SEC and education, other studies had varied results comparing the ages of migrants and locals. It is, however, of great potential importance to the impact of counterurbanisation on rural areas. As noted in Chapter 2, rural depopulation tends to draw away disproportionately the younger members of communities. This has obvious future demographic consequences, but it also effects the social well-being of communities.

> *The ageing of the population also had social implications. As successive cohorts became smaller, there was a steady decline in the number of individuals available to fill social positions, provide leadership, carry on local traditions. (Forsythe, 1982, p. 18)*

How RRI participants contrast with the age profile of their new communities can be seen in Tables 5.17 and 5.18

Year	Ages 0-14		Ages 15-24		Ages 25-44		Ages 45-64		Ages 65+		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
1981	96	24	55	14	69	17	100	25	85	21	405	101
1991	67	22	35	12	63	21	68	23	65	22	298	100
1996	53	18	38	13	60	21	69	24	68	24	288	100

TABLE 5.17 Age structure of Kilballyowen Parish in three sample years (source CSO, 1998a; CSO, 1993a; CSO, 1981)

Ages 0 - 12		*Ages* 13 - 24		Ages 25 - 44		Ages 45 - 64		Ages 65+		Total	
#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
222	41	100	18	190	35	33	6	---	---	545	100

TABLE 5.18 Age structure of RRI participants (n=545)

Table 5.17 illustrates that the population of Kilballyowen Parish, as well as continuing to fall, is continuing to age. Together, Tables 5.17 and 5.18 illustrate that the age structure of RRI participants is markedly younger than that of the sample rural parish. 59% of RRI participants are under the age of 25, while in 1996 only 31% of Kilballyowen Parish fell into this category. Only 6% of RRI participants were over 45, while in 1996 48% of Kilballyowen Parish was over 45. This demonstrates a quantifiable impact of the programme, addressing one of the major demographic concerns highlighted for rural areas in Chapter 2.

5.5.2 Attitudes towards depopulation and repopulation

Having looked at some Census information on rural Ireland and contrasted it to RRI information, we now turn to local attitudes toward the programmes and the issues it addresses. One community survey participant volunteered the following prediction about local attitudes toward RRI.

Rural people can be conservative in their outlook and slow to accept change. However, I believe that in general rural people accept and agree with the idea behind Rural Resettlement. MS:616

Results from the community survey tended to support this overall favourable impression. In the first instance, the community survey demonstrates that lack of population is a strong concern of local people in areas where RRI works.

Do you think that rural Ireland has too few people living in it?	
No	5%
Yes	95%

TABLE 5.19 Community survey response as to whether rural Ireland has too few people (n=43)

Of the above 95% "yes" respondents, 83% agreed with the statement *"People moving out of the cities and into the country is one good way to change this situation."* This means that out of all respondents, 79% agreed with the idea of urban to rural migration.[3]

95% of all respondents (n=43) stated that they themselves would welcome city people moving into their area and 90% (n=40) thought that their community would welcome city people. It is interesting to note that these percentages are higher than those of people agreeing with the general idea of urban to rural migration.

[3] Mention should be made here that RRI has chosen to treat the Gaeltacht areas as a special case. No families have been or will be placed there unless they are themselves Irish-speaking and/or if a particular request were to be made by a community.

5.5.3 Hopes for newcomers

Given that such a high number of respondents are in favour of urban to rural migration, what positive results do they expect from such migration?

What are your main hopes, if any, for the effect of new people moving to rural areas?	
Rejuvenate the local community generally	48%
Keep local schools open	30%
Hopes on behalf of the new families' own happiness	23%
Keep other services (shops, p.o.'s) open	18%
Stop depopulation	13%

TABLE 5.20 Most common hopes listed by community respondents for the effect of new people moving into their area (n=40)

The following quotes are examples of the comments from which Table 5.20 was compiled.

Schools, sporting and social organisations, threatened with demise, are given a vital lifeline. CC:647

When picking a football team there are more children to choose from. MR:628

That they will add to sense of community in rural areas. CC:646

Energy input in communities, increased diversity stimulating growth, thought, knowledge, social integration, abundance and understanding of the environment. MS:614

BOX 5.10 Community respondents' hopes for the effect of newcomers on their area

A further level of detail about respondents' expectations for this migration was obtained by asking them to respond, using a semantic difference scale, on a number of different statements. Tables 5.21, 5.23 and 5.24 outline this information.

On a scale of 1 to 5, please state the strength of your disagreement or agreement with the following statements:		
I think city people moving to the country will:	"Strongly agree"	Combined "Strongly agree" and "Agree"
Help local schools stay open	60%	95%
Help keep shops and p.o. open	28%	84%
Improve the social life in an area	7%	71%
Fit in well	2%	49%[4]

TABLE 5.21 Statements about urban/rural migrants with which community respondents agreed (n=43, n=43, n=42, n=43)

Tables 5.20 and 5.21 and Box 5.10 demonstrate that, within rural communities, one of the major perceived benefits of RRI is supporting local schools. We have already seen that improving the lives of their children is the number one motivation of RRI migrants. This convergence of goals is looked at in more detail in Chapter 7, *Children and Rural Resettlement.*

5.5.4 Concerns about newcomers

The fact that so many people approve of the idea of this migration, and have specific hopes for its influence, does not mean that they have no worries at all about it. The following responses were received from 86% of the questionnaires. 14% of respondents did not answer this question.

[4] 49% of responses to this statement were neutral.

What are your main concerns, if any, about the effect of new people moving to rural areas?	
Families won't settle in	30%
Unspecified negative social change	22%
New people might bring drugs and crime	19%
Specifically state have no concerns, only positive hopes	16%
Families have an unrealistic view of rural life	14%
Concerns on behalf of the new families' own happiness	11%

TABLE 5.22 Most common local concerns with regard to new residents (n=37)

The following quotes are examples of the comments from which Table 5.22 was compiled.

City people think and act differently, not all of them. CC:651

They are a burden on Local Authorities, some of them they want to live on the State and not work. MC:602

That wrong people might come bringing city habits like drugs etc. MC:610

Unreal expectations of instant gratification, misunderstanding of attitudes. MS:614

Problems of the large urban areas may transfer to rural areas. MS:616

That rural areas would lose their "ruralness."...That rural way of life and all its advantages would be eroded, lose its qualities. I would be concerned re the over population of any particular areas by new people--a balance should be maintained. CO:661

I don't have concerns because I have seen nothing but positive reactions from this idea of Rural Resettlement. CO:662

New people are unknown quantities. They may push their values on settled community. They may not wish to contribute to the everyday life of their new community. CO:663

BOX 5.11 Community respondent concerns about urban migrants

Again using the semantic difference scale, a divided response was recorded for the following statements:

On a scale of 1 to 5, please state the strength of your disagreement or agreement with the following statements:			
I think city people moving to the country will:	*"Strongly disagree" or "Disagree"*	*"Neutral"*	*"Strongly agree" or "Agree"*
Change local customs	45%	36%	19%
Help stop rural people from moving away to the city	31%	31%	38%

TABLE 5.23 Statements about urban/rural migrants to which local people gave a mixed response (n=42, n=42)

Finally, there was slightly less accord among respondents as to which statements were disagreed with, compared with those they agreed upon. Nonetheless a pattern did emerge, as illustrated in Table 5.24.

On a scale of 1 to 5, please state the strength of your disagreement or agreement with the following statements:		
I think city people moving to the country will:	*"Strongly disagree"*	*Combined "Strongly disagree" or "Disagree"*
Take jobs away from locals	19%	74%
Take houses local people need	16%	70%
Bring new jobs to the area	15%	49%[5]

TABLE 5.24 Statements about urban/rural migrants with which community survey respondents disagreed (n=42, n=43, n=41)

On the back page of the survey where open comments were invited, a few respondents elaborated further upon some concerns.

[5] 39% of respondents to this statement were neutral.

In the course of my work I get positive and negative vibes in relation to RRI. The negative vibes tend to be very strong and deeply rooted. Great concern amongst local rural community--particularly rural areas with high geriatric and elderly population, re: "screening" or lack of "screening" of families who opt to move to rural areas. Particular concern re cultural differences, criminal activities and a definite concern re drug use, drug abuse and drug selling. CO:661

Initially people who moved were not vetted properly. MS:621

It is important for RRI to "vet" the applicants fully to ensure that undesirables do not get through the net. MC:607

The only thing I don't like about Resettlement is that most of these people are already on the Dole, and I am afraid they will be looking for Council Houses in the near future. CC:655

People have taken poorly serviced houses through RRI and after about a year or less began to complain to Councillors that they should be re-housed. This has succeeded and Mayo Co. Council has housed people who came to the country through RRI. MC:610

...they must be made aware they have to accept the Services available [not] be seeking more hand outs than the locals. MC:602

BOX 5.12 Community survey respondent concerns expressed on "open" page for comments

Three of the above quotes specifically note the importance of appropriate "vetting" of applicants. This is an area where RRI has increased its requirements, as noted in Chapter 4.

Interestingly, some RRI migrants share to a certain extent the concern that the wrong people might move, and express this in terms of being worried how such an event could effect their own move.

If you are from Dublin and somebody from Dublin does something, they're automatically 'well, you're from Dublin.' So, I'd reckon that the references and things that the Rural Resettlement make you get, I think that's a great idea...We find now ourselves that if, we're kind of worried now of what type of families are coming down on the Rural Resettlement because even though [county name] is a big place, it's a very small place in terms of talking. LO44:1997-2004, 2018-2024

However, other RRI participants react strongly against the minority concern that urban migrants might bring with them drugs and crime. This is exacerbated by the fact that this concern, although expressed only occasionally, receives a fair amount of media attention and has been put forward, albeit rarely, as a reason to prevent urban to rural migration.

...that really annoys me when I hear about that kind of thing....And I said to myself, what the bloody, you know it's ridiculous really because I mean, this is, I mean it's all our, this is all our country you know. I mean you can't be so insulated that you don't like you know what I mean. And the slur, the slur they put on it too, like people coming from Dublin were going to be trouble you know. Because in actual fact people that would be involved in trouble, they don't want to live in a rural area...It's not the kind of life they want....I mean you can't stop people from moving to any part of Ireland they want to. They're here. I mean and even, Dublin is full of country people. EC31:915-916, 919-921, 922-923, 925-931, 932-933, 971-975

Finally, these issues are related to the question of whether communities do or should have control over who lives in them. Given the above hopes and concerns, how do community survey respondents feel about this issue?

On a scale of 1 to 5, please state the strength of your disagreement or agreement with the following statements.					
	"Strongly disagree"	*"Disagree"*	*"Neutral"*	*"Agree"*	*"Strongly agree"*
People have a right to choose where they live in Ireland	---	5%	7%	56%	33%

TABLE 5.25 Community survey response to question of right of choice in where to live

Specific local community hopes and concerns will be further explored in the topical data chapters which follow.

5.6 COMMUNITY OF ORIGIN

Section 5.5 highlighted potential benefits and disbenefits to the rural areas involved with RRI. What then of the urban areas they leave behind? Clark (1986) states that, "In general population movements are seen as having a beneficial effect on the places receiving migrants, and a negative effect on the places from which migrants come" (p. 24). Although, as Clark also points out, this is not true in all instances, there is still a case for considering any impact RRI may have on the "sending" communities. 77% of participants moved from Dublin, so it is most useful to focus attention on possible impacts there.

It was outside the scope of this study to interview or survey Dubliners on their views of RRI. However, officials in the Department of Environment, which covers Housing, expressed favourable opinions (pers. comm.) and politicians from the area have done likewise (Harvey and Kiernan, 1993).

It has been suggested that a sizeable number of RRI participants might be "local leaders" and therefore the neighbourhoods they leave behind would be impoverished through the loss of their skills. It has even been argued that perhaps they should not be "allowed" to move out, particularly those in public housing, as it is unfair to those left behind. This idea is fascinating for what it indicates about attitudes toward counterstream migration and also to migration of different groups. It has long been known that the migration of professional classes away from urban areas has affected the social composition of those areas, as well as the local tax base. Yet no one seriously supposes that their movement could or should be curtailed, although means of addressing the tax issue have been suggested and implemented in some circumstances.

More concretely, the Mortgage initiative described in Chapter 4 is a direct result of perceived benefits to Dublin from the migration of these families. This is looked at in more detail in Chapter 6, *Experiencing Place*.

5.7 CONCLUSION

Perry et al (1986) describe rural migration as being an option available to an increasing proportion of society,

> *...until recently escape has been the privilege of the rich, the talented and the hermit. Now, with higher incomes, greatly increased mobility and a vastly improved rural infrastructure large numbers of town-dwellers can...move towards their ideal of a rural paradise. (p. 3)*

This chimes with Jones et al (1984), quoted in Chapter 2, who attributed counterurbanisation to increasing societal affluence. Although helpful in explaining who is moving to rural areas and how they are able to manage this move, these statements fail to acknowledge that there remains a large segment of society in the developed world who have not benefited from generally higher levels of affluence. Tables 5.1 and 5.2 seem to indicate that this less affluent segment of society is one of the groups making use of the opportunity offered by RRI.

This SEC profile makes RRI participants stand out from other studies of population turnaround. Nothing was demonstrated by other possible markers of social status to call into question this profile. In particular, the education history of participants was strongly supportive of the classifications in Table 5.2.

However, the specific quality of life reasons migrants gave for their decision to move, place them centrally within the literature on counterurbanisation motivations. Better conditions for children, better environment, more peace, and more space and freedom, are all themes that run through other studies (Findlay et al, 1999; Halliday and Coombs, 1995; Pietila, 1993; Folkesdotter, 1987; Jones et al, 1986; Perry et al, 1986; Smailes and Hugo, 1985).

Where RRI did notably differ from many previous studies of counterurbanisation motivations was the fact that none of the RRI participants noted employment as their main reason for moving, and only one family gave any economic reason as their main motivation. This will be looked at more closely in Chapter 8 *Making Their Way*.

Another aspect of the data on decision-making was the distinction that could be drawn between "positive" and "negative" motivations for moving. This study demonstrated that positive reasons, or "pull factors" were more commonly voiced by RRI participants as their main motivation than negative reasons, or "push factors". This result was even more pronounced when length of time since moving was considered as well. Further data showed that "push factors" were also important and that there was greater agreement on their specifics than with the "pull factors", even if they were not so commonly expressed as the primary reason for moving.

Using census data, profiles of SEC, education and age were given for a sample rural community that has received RRI participants. These showed that RRI migrants, compared with the migrants in other counterurbanisation studies, shared much more in the way of SECs and educational background with local people. In the area of age, RRI participants were shown to be younger than the sample community.

Through survey responses, the receiving community is shown to have both hopes and concerns for this influx of new arrivals, but to be largely supportive of the programme overall. Specific hopes for the impact of RRI participants revolve around strengthening local schools, shops and other services, and generally improving the quality of life. Concerns focused on lack of "fitting in", unspecified social change and any possible increase of crime or drug use.

One area where community survey respondents were notably unconcerned was that of any potential impact RRI migrants might have on local housing availability. This is of particular interest given the many studies noted in Chapter 2 that highlighted the negative impact counterurbanisation can have on local people's access to affordable housing. This will be looked at more closely in the following chapter *Experiencing Place.*

CHAPTER 6

EXPERIENCING PLACE

6.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 5 demonstrated that, in several respects, RRI participants stand out from migrants in other studies. At the same time they were shown to share more characteristics with the local community members--with the exception of age--than do those other migrants. Does it then necessarily follow that RRI families will be easily accepted by the communities to which they move? Does it mean they will find it easy in turn to accept their new communities? These questions of acceptance, and attendant issues of belonging and identity, will be considered here.

As an initial measure of community response to RRI migrants, we will look at the sense of welcome migrants did, or did not, feel when they first moved. Building on this, following sections address whether or not migrants develop a more lasting sense of belonging within their new communities. This involves some discussion of the nature and attributes of the communities to which migrants move, what social impact RRI migrants may have upon these communities and how the migrants own social lives change with the move. In turn, this leads to discussion of a variety of topics that could effect RRI participants' experiences of moving including gender, religion and health.

Perhaps more prosaic, but still crucial to their experience of rural life, is the then following analysis of the housing available to RRI families. Having seen in Chapter 5 that many RRI families are not moving from an affluent base, it needs to be considered whether, by moving to rural areas, they are at risk of permanently accepting low quality housing.

> *An adequate home is as essential a component of a reasonable living standard as is a worthwhile job. But in*

much of North America and The European Community,...rural poverty remains firmly linked with housing of a markedly inferior quality. (Hunter, 1991, p. 14)

RRI participants migrate between two very different physical environments when they move to rural Ireland, and their circumstances change dramatically both in terms of their own home, and of their overall surroundings. These changes, and their responses to them, are covered in the second part of this chapter.

Furthermore, in Chapter 2 it was shown that one frequent effect of counterurbanisation on communities is the inflation of rural housing costs. How RRI migrants influence local housing availability and costs is discussed here. We also look at the attitudes of people who have a "spare" rural house to rent out, and the reasons behind their decision on whether or not to do this. With participants leaving behind urban housing, most commonly in Dublin, RRI also may impact upon housing issues there and this will be considered.

Finally, we will look at what, if any, effect the RRI families have on the physical environment and how the existing population views it.



PHOTO 6.1 Housing dispersed along a rural road, fairly typical of the situation of RRI participant's houses (source: RRI)

6.2 WELCOME

One commonly expressed concern about the concept of urban to rural migration is based on the belief that rural communities can be unwelcoming to incomers. Instances of resentment towards new rural residents have been documented in numerous sources (Jedrej and Nuttall, 1996; Shucksmith et al, 1996; Gillmor, 1988; Gillmor and Jeffers, 1987; Forsythe, 1980; Newby, 1979). However, as noted in Table 5.7, concern about potential lack of welcome in rural areas was not a factor that kept families from moving before they had the support of RRI. Section 5.5.2 further stated that 90% of community respondents felt that urban migrants would be welcomed into their rural area. What then are the actual experiences of RRI participants with regard to their welcome in their new communities?

When you first moved, did you feel welcome in your new community?	
No	9%
Yes	91%

TABLE 6.1 Sense of initial community welcome expressed by RRI participants (n=87)

Table 6.1 expresses a strong sense of being welcome in their rural area. Interviews supported this overall picture, while adding detail to the nature and importance of this. Many people felt there were no reservations in the local area, and that they were part of things from the start.

Oh brilliant, yeah...that's one thing I found extraordinary about [county] now...they were exceptionally friendly now. Couldn't believe how friendly they were. Nobody's ever called us outsiders or anything, you know. EC31:526, 527-528, 531-535

You know [at Christmas] people would be dropping in with presents and that. It wasn't, you know there wasn't flags and banners waiting for us, but people were always very nice, there was no problem. Very helpful and that. EC22:521-527

There was never one bad thing ever said. Like we were told you'd probably get the odd person telling you to go back to Dublin and all this...Never got one. LO57:220-223, 228

When we first came down here, everyone came to the door to meet us like. EO19:1771-1773

Right from the start, they were all down to welcome us weren't they? Every day we had people coming in and out, it was great. They always made us feel welcome. We get on great with the locals. LC9:632-637

BOX 6.1 Sense of immediate welcome

Others made qualifying comments about their welcome locally.

Well, in [the welcoming] respect it was very much the same as Dublin. Because there was good and bad. LC1:937-939

Well I mean you will get the odd couple you know...Think you're blow-ins or you know, but I mean, other than that, the neighbours are fantastic around here. Very friendly and hope you were getting on great, have you everything over in the house? And you know, you know just literally call and see were you all right. They were, they were very very good now. I mean, you wouldn't be stuck for anything here. EO9:682-683, 687-697

People were hesitant at first, because we were from Dublin. But there's a minor few that made us feel very welcome at the start. Now [5 months later] the barriers are kind of broken down. The children broke the barriers really for us. LO44:254-260

Well, they kept they're distance...At first, and now they're, they're beginning to say hello. LC21:1027-1028, 1032-1033

BOX 6.2 Qualifying comments about local welcome

6.3 ACCEPTANCE AND BELONGING

Welcome, however important, is only a possible first step in belonging. To consider this issue appropriately, it is necessary to step back from the detail of RRI participants and look more generally at the idea of belonging to a community and to a place. As noted in Chapter 2, the word "community" is used throughout this study as a descriptive term for the people who live in areas of rural Ireland to which RRI participants move. It does not assume any particular levels of social/economic/cultural cohesion or intimacy. No claims are made as to consanguinity.

However, that does not then mean that there are not cohesive communities of people living in many of these areas. To define precisely what is intended by this use of the word "community" is not a simple task.

> *The rhetoric of 'community', however, often serves to obscure as much as to clarify...The word community itself means so many different things to different people that its use frequently adds to the confusion. (Newby, 1979, p. 154)*

> *'Community' is one of those words—like 'culture', 'myth', 'ritual', 'symbol'—bandied around in ordinary, everyday speech, apparently readily intelligible to speaker and listener, which, when imported into the discourse of social science, however, causes immense difficulty. (Cohen, 1985, p. 11)*

Newby goes on in *Green and Pleasant Land?* to offer three variations of definitions of community that are applied to villages. The third one offers the best definition of what we are considering:

> *...the 'village community' can mean a disembodied 'spirit' of community, a sense of belonging, of sharing a social identity in a spirit of friendliness and common emotional experience. These feelings of community are better termed communion, since they represent a form of community at the level of an individual's subjective experience or consciousness. (Newby, 1979, p. 154)*

There is a danger, acknowledged by Newby, that in adopting such a definition one implies that there is no conflict and no necessity involved in these relationships. Such implications are not intended here, but neither does the existence of conflict and necessity take away from the importance this communion has for its members.

Illustrating that this type of communion is part of life in rural Ireland, two instances that took place during the fieldwork can be related. In and of themselves, these examples might seem unimportant, yet each elucidates an important aspect of community life. The first example demonstrates that,

> *...the meanings which people find in behaviour goes far beyond the functions or character of their behaviour as these may be perceived by others. Any behaviour, no matter how*

routine, may have a symbolic aspect if members of society wish to endow it with such significance. (Cohen, 1985, p. 42)

Soon after moving into the cottage I was to occupy for the next four months, it became apparent to me that it was the local custom when driving to acknowledge and be acknowledged, by a wave of the hand, when one passing another car or someone on foot. Quickly "getting into the spirit" of things, I began to wave at whomever I passed. Before long, I was grunting with disapproval at the tourists who did not know how to behave and so did not wave back. Much more disconcerting, though, was the fact that there was one elderly local man who would not return my wave. I wrote him off in my mind as rude and stopped waving myself. As the weeks passed I found myself begin to wave to him again, but with an exaggerated motion, making a point. Finally, only a few days before I was to leave the area, as I passed him he sketched a wave in the air. My surprise and pleasure were writ large on my face and my passenger, an RRI participant, smiled and related how he could still remember the first time that ___ had acknowledged him.

Talking it over with local residents in the pub that evening I was told laughingly, and with some congratulations, that ___ had long ago decided not to waste energy waving at every tourist who came by, he only waved to people he was reasonably sure to see again. Simply by staying put, I had earned the right of that acknowledgement, and could not help but feel a sense of achievement. In terms of the gesture's symbolism, the important point, however, was not how it made me feel, but the fact that others in the community knew of his "rule", and felt it humorously significant that I had made such a "break through".

The second story demonstrates the shared history and knowledge of local residents. One evening in the pub the door opened and a local man came in. One of those unexpected brief silences ensued as he entered. Into that silence, another local man quietly uttered one word—I could not even hear what was said. However, instantly everyone in that room, including the newcomer, burst into near hysterical laughter. Everyone, that is, excepting myself and one other person who had moved to the area a few years before with RRI, he smiled and looked comfortable, but was not part of

the joke. After the noise had settled down a local friend who I was sitting with explained that the joke had to do with events that had taken place one Christmas many years before. He did not try to explain the event, simply saying that everyone from there knew about it and so enjoyed the joke. Somewhat pityingly he said that it would not be possible to understand if one had not been there.

Cohen (1986) recounts a humorous local story from the community of Whalsay where he was doing research. He states that "...the story resonates with the vibrations of locality" (p. 7). This one word spoken by the right person, at the right moment in that pub, resonated in precisely the same manner.

It is into localities with this kind of sense of communion that RRI families move and, despite the welcome noted earlier, it is not a given that they will fit long-term into a rural lifestyle. Of particular potential relevance to many RRI families is the assertion that, "[Unskilled workers] are also less socialised than the middle classes in modes of adaptation to new environments" (Jones, 1982, p. 41). Given that the majority of RRI participants felt initially welcome by their rural community, did this sense change over time?

Do you feel welcome in your community now?	
No	7%
Yes	92%

TABLE 6.2 Sense of on-going community welcome expressed by RRI participants (n=86)

By pairing the responses in Table 6.1 and 6.2, we can see how perceptions of welcome changed within individual households.

Category	Number	Percent
Did not feel welcome at start, or now	2	2%
Felt welcome at start, but do not feel welcome now	6	7%
Did not feel welcome at start, but do feel welcome now	4	5%
Felt welcome at start, and feel welcome now	72	86%

TABLE 6.3 Any change in sense of community welcome since first moving (n=84)

These tables suggest that a strong majority of RRI families is assimilated into their new surroundings. The following quote gives resounding support for this belief.

...we know most of the people all round about here. And we've been in a kind of way accepted. In that since we've been here, it's as if we were born and reared here. There's no difference, people around here treat you like I mean, they mightn't know you, but you're treated just as a neighbour. Like the minute you come in. LO11:1291-1301

Other survey data, however, seems to indicate a broader spectrum of experience with regards to local attitudes to urban migrants. Furthermore, it is interesting to compare Family Survey responses with Community Survey responses on the question of local resentment toward urban-rural migrants.

On a scale of 1 to 5, please state the strength of your disagreement or agreement with the following statements.					
	"Strongly disagree"	*"Disagree"*	*"Neutral"*	*"Agree"*	*"Strongly agree"*
Most country people resent city people moving in (Fam. Survey)	15%	36%	32%	10%	7%
Most country people resent city people moving in (Comm. Survey)	23%	44%	28%	5%	---%

TABLE 6.4 Perceived resentment of migrants, Family and Community Surveys (n=83, n=43)

Given that responses in Table 6.4, albeit largely favourable, did fall within all categories, it is important to look to interviews for details on this experience. This is especially true given that families' sense of local "resentment" is slightly higher than that predicted by the community survey.

In some interviews the point was made that although acceptance was forthcoming, it required an investment of time.

They were wary, they stood back a bit all right, some of them, you know. And they were friendly enough to you, but they still kind of didn't trust you as such...About a year and then they start accepting...Ah geez it's great [now] you know. EC15:1025-1029, 1078-1079, 1083

At the beginning I mean, even, because we're not married. They wouldn't like any of that either. But very much accepted now. LO38:616-620

BOX 6.3 Time required for local acceptance

Others felt that in order to belong you needed to bring the right attitude or contribute something to the community.

Well, I think you have to be friendly with people, you know, and talk to people. If you don't want to talk to people, they're not going to talk to you. You're going to be stuck here on your own, aren't you? LO6:799-805

You're accepted here once you're not looking for anything. Once you have your independence. But, you can do your own thing and go your own way and pay your bills, you're fine. LC15:803-808

...you weren't an asset to the community like by just signing on. Indirectly you were because you were bringing money to the local shop. But I think they will have more time and respect for you if they thought you were working you know. EC19:1433-1440

BOX 6.4 Acceptance through right actions/attitude

A small number felt that they did not belong in their new communities, but attributed this to their own lack of desire, or ability, to adjust.

You feel like you're a stranger all the time, no matter how long you're down here. You feel that way inside you know. EO7:2722-2725

I think the biggest problem is the cultural one. When you come to the West of Ireland you think 'oh sure I'm still in the same country.' But you may as well be emigrating. In some cases it's worse. Because if you emigrate you get the recognition for moving from a different country and people realise you're different...the difference in people, the humour and attitudes to everything was so different. It was an enormous adjustment wasn't it? I still haven't adjusted to be honest. LC1:915-924, 927-932

BOX 6.5 Not fitting in due to own attitude

The above quotes, in boxes 6.3 – 6.5, demonstrate that there is variation in how RRI participants experience acceptance in the local communities. Although there will undoubtedly be variation among the communities themselves and how they react to newcomers, Boxes 6.4 and 6.5 stress that each migrant's own approach to the issue is perceived by them as a strong determinant in whether or not they describe themselves as accepted. This can best be illustrated here by examining migrants' reactions to one widely acknowledged aspect of rural community life—the intimate and intricate knowledge residents possess about one another.

In the Irish village he studies, Peace (1986) makes a strong case that the community is bounded and reinforced by the "...residents possessing a vast fund of intimate knowledge about one another and putting this resource to work in a variety of socially responsive ways" (p. 107). He shows that this is not only historical knowledge, but current and constantly updated, "It is in the possession of this broadly-based and ever-changing knowledge of the social architecture of the whole that a sense of belonging is rooted" (p. 115).

Cohen (1982) supports the importance of this community knowledge and specifically contrasts it with urban lifestyles, stating that,

> *In the local community the personal characteristics of the member are much more like public knowledge, and such knowledge provides an essential currency for social interaction. The publicness of knowledge...has profound consequences for the conduct of social life. It characterises the elaboration of culture, the organisation of social structure; it pervades all the ways and circumstances in which people confront each other socially. (p. 10)*

In applying these ideas to RRI and the rural communities in which they settle, we must first look at whether or not such social intimacy is noted by participants. The answer to that is a simple "yes" and can be seen from the comments below in Box 6.6.

'Cos everybody knows everybody and everybody knows exactly what everybody else is doin'....They're unbelievably nosy...They know everything. LO30:1833-1835, 1851, 1859

In Dublin they don't talk about you as much. Down here they would go to the ends of the earth to find out everything about you. Once you can accept that [you're okay]. EO3:531-535

But they are definitely very inquisitive. They are more inquisitive down here than I've met anywhere. LC1:960-963

Now don't get me wrong. The people will do anything for you. I swear you could knock down the house five o'clock in the morning and they'd invite you in and, 'come in and have a cup of tea and tell me what's wrong' like. But they're so nosy. They knew everything about us before we left Dublin! They knew where we lived, who we

were. Who our parents were, for Christ sake....There's gossips in Dublin but this is unbelievable! LO19:80-91, 137-138

Everyone knows your business....Nobody knew anything about you in Dublin because nobody had the time. EO19:2028, 2038-2040

BOX 6.6 Local knowledge about one another

Unsurprisingly they do not describe their experience of this in terms of social intimacy or community cohesion; they use the language of gossip and nosiness. However, most of these comments were made in tones of matter-of-fact acceptance or exasperation. Some people also stated that they had expected this aspect of rural life or noted that it was a two-way process.

I was told when I came here, they like to know who you are, where you are, what you're doing. LO46:572-57

Up in Dublin you wouldn't know who your next door neighbour was. Down here you know everybody, so it's only, it tends to go with the way of life down here....You know everybody by name...It's one-to-one basis down here. I'd accept that as part of life in the rural areas. I think even coming from Dublin we knew coming to a small area people were going to be nosy and want to know your business. So I wouldn't reckon it would come as a shock to anyone coming down to the country really. LO44:758-763, 773, 777-786

Down here they'll say, where'd you come from? Where'd your people come from?...and did you come from a good family? You know, I mean they'd be dead straight with their questions, but they're not being bad. (woman)
Yeah, people think they're being nosy and being bad, they're not! They're just inquisitive, just want to know. Because I mean, you'll know everything about them, because they fucking tell you anyway....They'll tell you where they're from where their relations are from, cousins in Dublin, cousins here, brothers here, whatever they have. (man) EC24:2200-2202, 2206-2210, 2212-2218, 2222-2226

BOX 6.7 Prior awareness or understanding of local inquisitiveness

Crucial, however, to the question of social acceptance is the fact that not everyone appreciates this level of intimacy.

...that's one of the, as I'd see one of the drawbacks of living in a close community. People are very inquisitive. And unfortunately there's a lot of inquisitive people living in rural, small areas like this. LO44:708-714

Sometimes it bothers me. Sometimes I just say, Jesus, would you believe I only went up to the shop and... 'I heard you was here' and I would say 'how did you know I was there?' LO30:1869-1874

...I was working yesterday...And this old woman come up and she said, 'oh, a new face behind the counter.' .I was talking to her. She goes 'where are you from?' I come to town I said from ____ 'Who are you from?' You know and that kind of just...That's what they're really interested in. 'Who're you from'...I said, 'I'm from nobody, I'm down from Dublin' and she walked off. LC21:981-989, 995-997, 1004-1006

BOX 6.8 Dislike of local inquisitiveness

In each of the three examples in Box 6.8, the families were in their first seven months of rural life. It would be interesting to follow this up and see if they continue with replies such as "I'm from nobody" or if they come to terms with this type of question, or if those questions simply stop being asked of them.

These different reactions to a similar situation—local inquisitiveness—demonstrated by Boxes 6.6-6.8 also occur for other aspects of rural life such as the perceived lack of anonymity.

I like the close community feeling. You go down to the local for the drink and you're not watching your back to see who's coming in. Like anybody who walks in the doors, you know who they are. LO44:211-216

...we would miss like going out and losing yourself...because when you go out now, there are just ears and they're just too close to kind of sit back and kind of speak your thing.... Whereas [in Dublin] you go out and maybe 200 people could come in and out of the pub and you wouldn't know any of them. LC1:1466-1471, 1475-1478 (man)

BOX 6.9 Reactions to perceived lack of anonymity in rural communities

A similar difference can be seen in reactions to the amount of visiting that can take place in these local areas.

Everyday we had [local] people coming in and out, it was great. LC9:634-635

People are inclined to visit each other a lot around here, we don't do that. You know they're inclined to walk up and sit with you for a couple of hours or that sort of thing. And then people kind of think we're a bit weird 'cause we don't do that....We keep to the city way as much as we can. It's just our life. But people kind of think you're anti-social. LC1:1333-1340, 1350-1353

BOX 6.10 Reactions to custom of local visiting

The second quote in Box 6.10, is the only time that a family specifically talked about feeling a need to "keep to the city way". They went on in the interview to talk about their belief that no one notices, expects, or cares, if country people change when they move to the city.

And I think an awful lot of people seem to feel that the Resettlement people should blend in. But what they don't realise is an awful lot of country people, from all areas of the country, go to Dublin and they can set up a farmyard in the back garden, or they can do whatever they like, nobody bothers them, each to their own. LC1:1562-1572

With the above statement as justification, they assert that they have decided:

So we say well we're going down [to the country] and we're going to do our thing and to hell with it. Because you can't just drop your whole personality, and your whole culture, your whole idea of life and everything, just because you move to a different area in the country. We don't expect [country people] to do it and we're down here we're not going to do it. LC1:1572-1582

This was, however, very much a minority viewpoint among RRI participants. Several other families explicitly stated that the migrants should change to fit in and that this was a necessary step.

I think you've also got, if you go into a different area, be it a different country or just a different, you've got to sort of, YOU'VE got to change. Don't go in and expect them to change, you've got to change. You've got to compromise. EC14:2032-2050

...the first thing I'd say to them is to make an effort to get involved in the community you know. And to make friends with people and...observe their kind of customs and kind of thing you know, like going to funerals! EC31.2054-2058, 2060-2062

...don't come down here trying to bring your Dublin ways with you. Come down here and enjoy the people...You come down here and want to know 'well we have supermarkets, why haven't you' and 'we have deliveries and why haven't you,' you're going to run into some serious problems. But...come down for the space and the relaxation of not having to lock your doors and not having to be out constantly guarding the children and you'll be fine. EC24.2916-2919, 2924-2929, 2930-2935

BOX 6.11 Need for migrants to make an effort to fit in

It would be wrong to state that a family who chooses to keep to themselves and not participate overtly in community customs has necessarily failed in their move. Nor are they necessarily damaging the community to which they move. Despite a surface appearance of sameness, rural communities are socially heterogeneous; it would be easy to point to some families near where I lived during the fieldwork who were not part of the visiting rota of other local people, and these families had been born in the houses in which they now lived. They play their own role in the construction and maintenance of community locally. Only time will unveil how an "anti-social" migrant family will come to be viewed and to contribute, or not, in their new local context.

Although we have seen that the majority of RRI families feel accepted in their new communities, either because of or in spite of the intimate nature of community knowledge, there do remain a few who do not feel this way. A small group of families felt strongly that they had not, and would not, fit in socially in their new homes and attributed this to rural attitudes, rather than to their own approach.

...you're viewed upon as a stranger and you'll always be a blow-in. And no matter how nice people are to you, you'll always be a blow-in and that's something that'll never ever change. LO19.1291-1296

But it can be difficult to get to know people too. Some places they're very cold and you're a stranger for twenty years. It takes a long, long time to get accepted. GB1.1531-1535

Oh they're friendly but to a point maybe. And we're still strangers really, blow-ins as they say you know. LO77:616-619

BOX 6.12 Lack of acceptance

However, several participants challenged this idea that rural communities are particularly closed. This also calls into question the earlier-noted view that country people are always easily accepted in Dublin. They point out that the issue of belonging cuts both ways and the idea of cities as accepting places where belonging is not an issue, is a false one.

...people are the same all over the world...If you approach the country 'I'm a Dublin man and I'm not going to fucking change,' you know what I mean. And 'youse are all thick.' Well then you won't fucking get anywhere and you won't get anywhere in Dublin by saying 'I'm a cultie, the rest of you are thick Dubs.' EC24:2177-2178, 2181-2189

Those kind of things....It is on both sides. And there's a country couple...in Dublin, they were never accepted....they would talk to them and all that. But they were made a laugh. Like they wasn't normal people, there was something wrong with them. LC21:1346-1347, 1348-1351, 1355-1359

We went up [to Dublin] at Christmas. Her [10 year old's] hair was pulled at the shop van and she was told, 'go back to [rural county] you [rural county] bitch.' LO57:331-314

City people have a terrible negative attitude towards country people. And even my brothers and sisters would make jokes about me living down here. Which I find very annoying in a way. But it comes from education really. LO38:1094-1100

BOX 6.13 Acceptance is an urban issue too

Finally, some local residents mentioned, in the Community Survey, how well families have been accepted. There were no negative comments made about families in this area.

...maybe if a different group was placed it might be a disaster but they seem to pick families that are interested in rural life. MR:632

One of our families is nearly a year with us now. The other family has been with us for six months. They both want to stay with us. One family has got RRI mortgage arranged and hopefully will be starting work on a new house on a donated site in the

Parish, shortly. I myself, and my son are giving a site to the second family, provided that they obtain Planning Permission from the CC here in [county]. CR:s664

I have a little more work because of the RRI, but that is only a minor detail when I see how happy these families are and how well they have fitted into the communities they came into. CO:662

BOX 6.14 Local opinions on RRI families fitting in

Overall, this section indicates that most RRI families feel both welcomed and accepted in their rural communities. That a sizeable portion (51%) still did not disagree with the statement in Table 6.4 *"Most country people resent city people moving in"*, appears somewhat contradictory. It is perhaps related to the phenomenon, noted by Shucksmith et al (1996) and cited before in Chapter 2 that, "...there was disparity between the rhetoric about new rural residents and their effect on rural communities and the apparently high levels of community spirit, integration and social well-being" (p. 476). Personal experiences with regard to acceptance was overwhelmingly positive, yet the popular image of unwelcoming rural communities is seemingly too pervasive to shake off entirely.

6.4 COMMUNITY WELL BEING

Noted previously in Chapter 2 is the possibility that counterurbanisation can catalyse social and/or cultural change in local communities. This is not necessarily negative change on any objective scale, although that too is possible, but rather an overwhelming of local traditions and attitudes by a more urbanised approach to life. This process is encapsulated in the following quotes from three other studies of counterurbanisation.

> *...the picture that emerges from our study is of a Cornwall swamped by a flood of middle-class, middle-aged, middle-browed city-dwellers who effectively imposed their standards upon local society. (Perry et al, 1986, p. 129)*

> *I think [Ford] will continue indefinitely as a living, not a dying community. But I think it will change socially and culturally. Indeed, I believe that much of the pessimism of residents about the future has in fact been caused by the confusion of change with death. (Stephenson, 1984, p. 161)*

> *Despite the incomers' expressed desire to preserve the Stormay way of life, their very presence is helping to destroy it. Although individually the incomers are generally pleasant and well-meaning additions to the island community, they are also contributing to a cultural revolution in which ethnic, regional and national differences are being eroded away, to be replaced by a more standardized and homogeneous way of life. (Forsythe, 1982, p. 89)*

The Community Survey did not give any suggestion that change at this sort of level is being catalysed by RRI. However, it did elicit somewhat mixed, if mild, responses with regard to expected effects of RRI socially in local areas. In Chapter 5, Table 5.22, 22% of community survey respondents noted some type of unspecified negative social change as a concern of theirs about new people in the area (n=37). In Table 5.23 it was shown that only 19% of respondents (n=42) felt that new residents were likely to change local customs. Furthermore, in Tables 5.20 and 5.21, it was shown that community hopes for RRI included general rejuvenation of rural communities, and specifically an improvement in social life.

In terms of "general rejuvenation", two authors writing on rural Ireland have supported the idea that new people in an area can have a positive impact on local peoples' sense of self-worth. Brody (1973) states that "What the tourists do most surely bring to these communities, however, is reassurance and approval" (p. 40). More recently, writing about both tourists and new residents, Casey (2000) says "Significantly then, it is the influence of the outsiders that is creating the community feel. They uphold the uniqueness of Ballygannive; they vindicate the lifestyle pattern and choices of the locals...Through them, locals have come to value Ballygannive and their own lifestyle" (p. 264).

Furthermore, Peace (1986) demonstrates that returned out-migrants reinforce a sense of community with their negative stories of cities. Arguably RRI participants may not be in a position to reinforce the "symbolic boundedness", of which he writes, as they are not "of" the place originally. However, many bring with them the same

negative urban stories and so "...highlight others' appreciation of the advantages to be gained from living in a community which is as unified as it is diverse" (p. 121).

Community Survey respondents did not offer any specific examples of social changes actually taking place, either positive or negative, but RRI participants did bring up this sort of positive impact in interviews.

You have to make the effort too you know....my wife is involved in the ICA...She's on the Board of Management at the school. I'm involved in the athletic club and I play music myself as well...the community games. EC31: 547, 570-571, 575-578, 581-582

New people coming in. New blood coming in and it's just changing the whole way of life for them. And they enjoy it. I mean they love new people coming in, because they kind of realise themselves, you know even between fellas and girls, there's somebody new coming in....It's really, you're bringing the country like into the 20th century now. It's moving very fast. I think it's great for it. LO11:1767-1775, 1777-1780

But the community are a little bit apathetic. They could have a lot more going for themselves here if they all got together. They need I suppose new blood as well. They've had the same people for generations. To add a bit of interest to the place, and they're tired of these people maybe. LO38:287-295

[I'm teaching] art classes down in the village....They asked me....And I've been asked to do them over in another village. LO46:160-161, 166, 170-171

BOX 6.15 Social impact of new families in area

In terms of possible specific negative change, in Chapter 5, Table 5.15, Community Survey respondents stated that one concern they had was that RRI might increase rural crime rates. With the information available, it is not possible to prove whether this has or has not been happening. Crime statistics as compiled by the Garda are not broken down in such a way as to make possible the illustration of any change that might be attributable to urban/rural migration (An Garda Siochana, 1999). Indeed, when interviewed, a member of the Crime Statistics Unit was adamant that this could not, and should not be attempted (pers. comm., 1999).

What is worth flagging up is the high percentage of RRI participants who noted the goal of escaping from urban crime and drugs as an important reason for moving. There is nothing to suggest that this was somehow a false claim.

Also worth noting is that it is a fallacy to portray rural areas as free of crime and drugs in themselves. There may be a huge difference of degree, but they still exist as forces. This was acknowledged in three participant interviews.

...I was talking to the headmaster and I was saying 'it's grand, there's no drugs around here'. He said 'if you believe that you're a very foolish woman. There is drugs in [rural area], there's drugs everywhere' he said. LC15:1340-1346

Plus the places for actually obtaining [drugs] and for it getting pushed are very sort of, few and far between. I mean that sort of sounds naive because there's drugs everywhere, but it's not as prevalent, let's put it that way. LO11:225-231

...moving to [rural area], it's not going to say the kids don't do drugs. But at least it's not on their doorstep and they've a better chance to get away from it. LO74:96-100

BOX 6.16 Drugs are already present in rural areas

The entire issue of social and cultural change is an area where further research would be useful once more families are in place and this issue can be more effectively considered. Although present indications are that RRI is not catalysing this sort of change, the currently limited numbers and wide geographic spread of RRI make a definitive analysis of this issue unfeasible at this point in its development.

6.5 MIGRANT'S SOCIAL LIFE AND FREE TIME

Related to families' estimation of local acceptance is their sense of whether they are now socially isolated. Also connected is their evaluation of how their social life and free time has changed with the move.

On a scale of 1 to 5, please state the strength of your disagreement or agreement with the following statements.

	"Strongly disagree"	*"Disagree"*	*"Neutral"*	*"Agree"*	*"Strongly agree"*
I feel socially isolated here	31%	34%	18%	11%	5%

TABLE 6.5 Social isolation (n=83)

How does your social life compare now with before you moved?	
We go out less often than before	35%
We go out more often than before	26%
There has been no change	39%

TABLE 6.6 Comparing frequency of going out (n=88)

Whichever answer you gave above [Table 9.6], are you happy with this?	
No	15%
Yes	83%

TABLE 6.7 Satisfaction with frequency of going out (n=88)

Supporting Sections 6.2 and 6.3, Tables 6.5, 6.6 and 6.7 illustrate an overall satisfaction with rural social life, but with variety in where satisfaction stems from

(e.g. going out more or less). These tables also show a minority unhappy with their current circumstances. Here again, interviews offer further insight.

You don't get a chance to be lonely in the country. Actually, I think I was often lonelier in Dublin than I am down here....Unless you have neighbours [in city] who you're close with, the rest just don't bother you, and if the other neighbours happen to be out and you're feeling down you are alone there...[here] the phone is on the go, there is somebody always coming by, always. EO3:496-499, 503-508, 508-509

I like the close community feeling. You go down to the local for the drink and you're not watching your back to see who's coming in. Like anybody who walks in the doors, you'd know who they are. And, if you went out for a drink on your own, you wouldn't be on your own when you went into the pub. You'd know people in there and just the general atmosphere is a friendly one. LO44:221-222

Oh it is [better], yeah. It's more relaxed, more easy going you know. EC15:1351-1352

...you might as well be in the city, because there's so much going on about you that you're never stuck for something to do or boredom or anything like that. It's just great. LO11:417-422

But like when we came down here first like, people were talking about you'd be bored silly. We were here about 3 or 4 months, I remember this particular night...I crawled into bed and I just, "Bored, I wish I could be bored! Socialising! Oh!....I mean if you want now, I mean there's a dance on every night, I mean there's set dancing on, there's cards, there's darts, the winter down here is unbelievably all go. And then the summer's all go because you have all the tourists. EC24:1852-1856, 1871-1873, 1876-1883

...all go out together...go down to the pub or somewhere like on a Saturday night, when the kids wouldn't have to go to school the next morning like and we can sit down there...or go to a dance or something... EC31:1272, 1273-1277, 1277-1278

Well, we walk a lot. And go to the music night up in the local pub....I used to call it diddley-di music, I never thought I'd be into any of that. But it's very good. LC9:1043-1045, 1052-1055

BOX 6.17 Aspects of satisfaction with rural social life

In contrast, other people expressed dissatisfaction at what they perceived to be the limited options for socialising in their rural community.

I like the quiet life, but sometimes you wish something would happen. You just wish something different would happen instead of someone's cow's got TB or something like. LO19:279-284

So, we were used to going, not that we went very regularly, but we liked going to night-clubs and listening to the latest music....or 60's, 70's, you don't seem to find that type of music down here at all. It's all traditional Irish music. LO44:865-868, 872-875

It's a different type of social life...People go to the pubs or something don't they? Which we don't normally do. We don't do that so much. I think it's much quieter here...it bothers me sometimes. Because I used to go out to courses when he would go out to the pub and things like that. And they don't seem to do that so much here. I used to go to art classes. LO68:469-475, 479-484

The only social life you have down here is if you go into a pub. And then you, it's not that good, the social, there's so much social life down here like it's different like you know. You go into a pub like you know, it'd be hello and that'd be it like you know to people. You couldn't congregate the way you would in Dublin like you know. EO7:628-636

It's uh, I don't know, like say, our tastes are a lot different [from the local ones]. Say socially what you'd like...the difference is it's pub orientated. Now, that can be great in it's own right....if you like it....But then it's not all the time either....You know our thing used to be in Dublin that we'd go to a gig or something and into town. EO12:1074-1076, 1119-1122, 1126, 1129-1130, 1132-1134

BOX 6.18 Dissatisfaction with limited options for rural socialising

However, as with the people in Box 6.13, who pointed out that urban areas are not always accepting of different people, some interviewees brought up the point that urban areas are not always good for socialising. In particular, this was highlighted by those from less well-off urban areas.

I'd say, we have a great social life now. In Dublin we didn't....Couldn't afford it....We didn't go out in Dublin....Couldn't afford it one, two, it was very hard to get a baby-sitter you could 100% trust, three, when you did go to the pubs, the pubs that were around us that were close by, there'd probably end up a fight at the pub. And if not, when you were coming home there was gangs all over the place which was really nerve wracking. So we just really didn't go out that much. EC24: 1790-1792, 1794, 1798-1808

We never really went out [in urban area] because of it being a bit rough and that in the pubs, then the children weren't allowed anyway. Where here it's the whole family goes. It's just like a party. LO6:799-805

...now when I was living in Dublin we didn't get involved very much with the neighbours or anything now....like in a housing estate...nothing that you can get involved in really....That's what I found anyway....I mean there might be a football club or something of that kind of thing, but it'd be a vast area....You wouldn't know anybody probably in it...we didn't do much in Dublin really... EC31:1301-1304, 1311, 1313-1314, 1315-1316, 1316-1319, 1319-1320, 1321-1322

Never been out so much. I never used to go out in Dublin....Used to be afraid to go out. Didn't like to leave the kids on their own. Here it's great. LC9:648-649, 653-655

BOX 6.19 Examples of how an urban lifestyle can be socially isolating

Another area that people contrasted to their urban experience was how, aside from socialising, they now spent their free time.

...we usually all dress up if it's winter...and we go out across along the beach there. We walk over first and find all the wood along the side of the road and then bring over the car and load it up, come back and light a big fire....And we do an awful lot more playing board games. Like we used to play some board games in Dublin, but the television took over you know....We now have quality time! EC24:3787-3793, 3801-3804, 3811

...this is great, you know, where have I been for forty or whatever it is years? But it's that's completely different. Yes it is. I love going out and watching the ducks. I mean, they don't lay anything but just watching them! It's a pleasure you know. LO68:880-887

In Dublin I used to be on a FAS course down there and when that finished I'd go home and I'd sit in front of the box and vegetate. But down here I go out for a walk. LO21:590-595

Another thing that doesn't bother us is that we only have 2 stations on the television. Here we hardly watch television. In Dublin you couldn't get away from it. LO46:1222-1226

BOX 6.20 Use of free time

Finally, those who are dissatisfied, and even some among those who are happy with their new social life and free time, can point to specific aspects of urban life they miss.

...I miss markets. You know market stalls? I miss shops, not that I used to buy, I just liked to go and look. I miss chicken breast off the bone roghan josh, pilau rice, poppadums... EC14:2434-2439 (woman)

...I miss fish and chips. Good English, north of England fish and chip shop....From a practical point of view, what I actually miss is...that I can go to a great big B&Q, DIY place in England and you can see all the tools and the timber and everything. Everything you can possibly want is there. EC14:2455-2457, 2465-2466, 2467-2472 (man)

The only thing we miss about, like in the city, is the big shopping....the variety of shops... LO11:1019-1021, 1022-1023

I think I miss bookshops and I enjoy museums and I enjoy exhibitions. That sort of thing I'd miss. LO68:1257-1260

BOX 6.21 Specific aspects of urban life which are missed

6.6 GENDER

In Chapter 5, Table 5.9, it was shown that gender was not an important factor in terms of whom in a couple pushed hardest for the move to a rural area. Here, we can look at the way gender may impact on the social experience of moving to a rural area.

Survey respondents were questioned as to whether gender effected their experience of adapting to their new communities.

Is there a difference between men and women in fitting in to a rural community?	
No, there is no difference	64%
Yes, it is easier for a woman to fit in	16%
Yes, it is easier for a man to fit in	20%

TABLE 6.8 Gender and fitting in (n=85)

The manner in which this experience can vary with gender is addressed by the following quotes.

There's loads for women to do. Unless the man is working...there's nothing for them to do. LC21:1132-1134 (woman speaking)

I'd say it's easier for men...Men are more willing to accept another man in the village. The women, they're fairly close knit and it's very hard for an outsider to get into... LO44:800, 809-813 (man speaking)

...I play darts and I play soccer. So I would go out, go into the bar, I know I'm playing darts, 'cause you knew them all, start playing a game of darts or something. Start chatting. A woman can't do that. Maybe in Dublin they do it, but down there, kind of, you wouldn't do that. She found it a bit harder now to meet people, make friends. Now she's more of them than me! EC15:140-151 (man speaking)

There are [women's groups], yeah, but they're all over 50 or into knitting and Irish dancing and cake sales and things like that. I'll have to wait a few years (laughs). LO44:841-845 (woman speaking)

BOX 6.22 Gender differences fitting into a rural community

Within this data, there was no unequivocal gender division on this issue. Possibly when there is a larger sample size available more differences might become apparent. However, it seems equally likely that individual personalities of participants have a greater impact here than gender.

A specific area where gender might have an impact is possession of a driver's license. This is particularly important due to statements such as, "By its power to reduce, if not to abolish altogether, the feeling of rural isolation, the motor-car is perhaps the most important influence to sustain the population in remoter areas" (Mitchell, 1976, pp. 218-129). In Chapter 8 we will look at car ownership rates for RRI migrants. In the meantime, we can examine who in the household is able to drive any available car, as that has the potential to impact strongly on the isolation or independence of household members.

Category	Driver's license before	Driver's license today
Man only	49%	37%
Woman only	6%	8%
Man and woman	24%	34%
Man provisional, woman provisional	2%	1%
Man, woman and at least one child	2%	5%
Man full, woman provisional	---	5%
Woman provisional	---	1%
No one	16%	9%

TABLE 6.9 Household drivers' licenses by gender (n=86, n=86)

Table 6.9 shows clearly that numbers of women with full licenses, or learning to drive, has increased with the rural move. The following quote stresses the importance of this to many women.

I just learned [to drive], when I knew I was moving I said I'm not going to be dependent on him....it's best if two of youse can drive. 'Cause most of the women who we know, who came here, and can't drive, are learning. EC24:1965-1967, 1976-1980

Beyond the issue of access to transportation, which many women are addressing through obtaining licenses, participants in the course of this study rarely referred to gender.

All survey responses were analysed by gender of respondent, with no important differences noted.

6.7 RELIGION

Whether families would feel under pressure to conform to any local expectations of religious observance was addressed both in the postal survey and in interviews.

Has how often you attend religious services changed since you moved?	
No change	64%
Yes it changed, I go less often now	16%
Yes it changed, I go more often now	18%

TABLE 6.10 Change in attendance at religious services (n=87)

Table 6.10 shows the move did not impact upon religious attendance for most respondents. Where it did change, interviews suggest that most often such change was completely voluntary.

Oh no, no, no pressure or anything like that....No, no. If you want to go you go, if you don't you don't go. LO77:641-642, 653-654

Same sort of thing you know really. EO7:965

No, that's [any problem with their marriage being between a Catholic and a Protestant] finished, that's finished. I mean, there's more people living together around here now or, and children born you know out of marriage and that like, it doesn't bother now. I mean it might have 20 years ago. EO9:1256-1262

BOX 6.23 No sense of religious pressure in rural area

Only rarely did anyone feel there was pressure brought to bear on them.

The church in Dublin, right, the priests have been put in their place okay. They're told, you're working for us right. And the priest won't, very little'd get up and judge right....You come down here, the Priest says what goes. He rules the roost. Straight away they know if you don't go to Mass. EC24:2570-2575, 2582-2585

...but that's one bit I find very offensive, because I don't think it matters what religion you are down here, the Catholic religion is just forced down your throat...and people presume you're Catholic. And if you're not Catholic you're kind of frowned upon. LC1:1258-1263, 1264-1267

BOX 6.24 Sense of religious pressure in rural area

In 1981, 93% of the population in the Republic of Ireland was Catholic (Pringle, 1989). Eighteen percent of RRI participant families interviewed were not Catholic[1] (n=33). Only one of the interviewed families noted that being of a different religion from the majority was a source of concern to them (Box 6.24, 2nd quote).

6.8 STATE OF MIND AND BODY

A final specific way in which families judged their move was the effect it has had upon their health, both psychological and physical. One "measure" of the psychological side of the experience was to ask for participant's assessment of how happy they are since the move.

On a scale of 1 to 5, please state the strength of your disagreement or agreement with the following statements.					
	"Strongly disagree"	*"Disagree"*	*"Neutral"*	*"Agree"*	*"Strongly agree"*
I am happier since moving	1%	---	7%	30%	63%
Everyone would be happier if they moved to the country	17%	38%	31%	7%	7%

TABLE 6.11 Ratings of happiness with moving (n=88, n=87)

93% in Table 6.11 agree, or strongly agree, that they are happier since moving. That this strong response is "real", not simply one of enthusiasm in the moment, is supported by the second question in Table 6.11. 55% of respondents disagreed, or strongly disagreed with the statement "Everyone would be happier if they moved to the country." This demonstrates a more realistic view of positives and negatives that have been faced through the move, than if most respondents were supporting this bold statement.

[1] This does not indicate that the rest were necessarily actively involved in the Church, simply that their background was Catholic.

In interviews, and on the "open comments" section of the survey, some participants addressed this question of general happiness.

Well now we've never been happier now than here really....Oh God we have not. EO9:2380-2381, 2383

Since we moved down my wife and myself and my kids are more happy with our life and would encourage people to leave the big smoke and move to the country. LO8:sbp

The first year was tough, everything is a struggle, but once I became acclimatised it fulfilled all my expectations. It has been the most creative and fulfilling time of my life. LO32:sbp

Oh yes. Things don't matter. You know they don't honestly....just got my priorities right at last. Things don't matter. EO3:681, 683-686

BOX 6.25 Happiness discussed

In interviews, when participants went into more detail about their state of mind since moving, the comments were overwhelmingly positive.

...I definitely feel more, I think I definitely feel more at ease now you know. Less stress you know. EC31:1336-1338

It's all free time! To me it's just, it's a different, it's a completely different way of life, it's a different life altogether. EC14:2411-2415

I feel more basic now. I don't go into the supermarket and get our vegetables. I go outside there and cut them. Or you know, we actually have geese and we might be able to kill it. And when we had the geese at Christmas, you plucked them. Spent hours plucking them. And so the time that one would spend going shopping or whatever you actually spend preparing or looking after....I feel I am different because of it. LO68:799-810, 813-814

I was very nervous [in Dublin], I didn't sleep very well. And since I came down to live in [county] I have no problems sleeping. LO44:204-207

There's no stress or tension. I suppose the things that we notice in ourselves are the tension has gone....I think it helps you to find yourself. Don't ask me really what that expression means, it's just a feeling of being much more relaxed and together, more in touch with yourself, and really with feelings and stuff like that. LO46:545-547, 1222-1226

...you put the grub on the table and after that you hope for the best, if there's anything over you go out, if there's not you must, you'll never have enough for luxuries unless you're working , but your peace of mind, and I think that's better than anything else...The luxuries can wait. But you have peace of mind and I'm not on edge any more and I was always on edge, you know, I was always worrying and watching and worrying... LO30:2053-2060, 2060-2065

BOX 6.26 Effect of move on psychological well-being

Only the occasional qualifying comment was made about the effect of the move on this aspect of life.

I think before I come down, I thought it would be, it would be a lot more romantic than, you know like my whole idea, my whole fantasy about the country was gonna be real romantic and just wonderful, every day. But it didn't take me long to realise that a lot of pressures or problems you have in like, just still exist...down here. And you don't leave them behind. LC1:2171-2180, 2184-2185

One specific area that families credited with removing stress, was their improved sense of physical safety.

On a scale of 1 to 5, please state the strength of your disagreement or agreement with the following statements.

	"Strongly disagree"	*"Disagree"*	*"Neutral"*	*"Agree"*	*"Strongly agree"*
I feel safer in the country	---	3%	9%	38%	49%

TABLE 6.12 Sense of safety in rural area (n=87)

I wouldn't walk outside the door [in Dublin] after 5 o'clock. Terrified....Yeah, hardly leave the house. Now I walk up and down the road up to [village] and all in the dark and it doesn't bother me. LO44:955-956, 961-964

When we first came over here...we called at a house once and there was a key in the front door. [She] knocked and I said 'you've left your keys in the door.' 'Yeah, we know, but we're in, we only take the key.' WE couldn't believe it! And people leaving the cars unlocked and children leaving, I mean you couldn't leave a bicycle outside where I lived! Mountain bikes by the side of the road! EC14:3260, 3262-3272

...we go off and leave here and leave the windows and the doors open, unlocked and head off. Like head off for the day. And you've no fear of it, if somebody's going to break in... LO11:83-89

At the back of my mind I have a lot more peace of mind. I was getting very nervous in Dublin with crime basically. LO38:696-699

BOX 6.27 Lack of crime rurally

Some interviewees also felt their physical health had improved since moving.

[Health is] a lot better. You know I mean, there's absolutely no pollution at all around here. You can go, I mean I, [wife] usually does about 8-10 miles walk a day...I go out and it's just great, you there's no smog. You know in Dublin now...you couldn't walk down the road. With the smoke from the houses. LO11:1123-1127, 1129-1131, 1135-1137

...I used to suffer with asthma badly when I lived in Dublin. But since I've been down here I've only had one attack. When I was in Dublin I maybe had 2 a week. The air is a lot cleaner down here. LO21:640-646

I think probably it's better. I think in some things, I think it's better in the summer. As I say, I'd go out, pick some herbs, make a salad, all these things just there...And I think from the health point of view just eating things that you pick. LO68:903-908, 919-921

...I run a lot, in Dublin I remember I'd be running like, maybe doing 4 or 5 miles, and you could feel the atmosphere...you'd be coughing up afterwards...I'd get colds and flues and all that kind of thing. Nothing down here now. I'm definitely more healthy here. Must be the fresh air and that... EC31:341-344, 345-346, 347-349, 404-406

BOX 6.28 Change in physical health since moving

No adults stated that their health had declined with the move.

6.9 HOUSING AND THE FAMILIES

The house RRI participants enter is an important aspect of their overall experience of moving to a rural area, with the potential to impact on many aspects of their lives. "The quality of housing is of crucial importance in determining personal well-being, and the provision of satisfactory accommodation is essential to a satisfactory quality of life" (Sims, 1996, p. 18).

Interviews suggested, and then the survey confirmed, that 45% of respondents (n=82) feel that the quality of their housing went down as a result of their move to rural Ireland. The causes and consequences of this finding are explored below in Sections 6.9.2 and 6.9.3. First, though, it is helpful to look in more detail at the actual contrasts between their urban and rural homes.

6.9.1 Changing circumstances

The first, and most obvious change in housing circumstance is the number of people who now live in detached houses, where before the majority were in housing estates.

Housing Type	Urban Home	Rural Home
Estate[2]	64%	8%
Flat	10%	---
Terrace	13%	5%
Semi-detached	8%	7%
Detached	5%	80%

TABLE 6.13 Housing type contrasted urban home/rural home (urban n=83, rural n=83)



PHOTO 6.2 "Typical" detached house that RRI families might move to. This one is in good condition (source: author)

[2] Although seemingly inexact, "estate" was the term respondents were most comfortable with here. It usually indicates a row house, or semi-detached house, in public housing developments.

House size, as opposed to type, is another important aspect of housing that could have changed through participation in RRI.

Number of bedrooms	Urban Home	Rural Home
1	3%	2%
2	11%	17%
3	72%	58%
4	12%	20%
5	1%	3%
Over 5	1%	1%

TABLE 6.14 Number of bedrooms, contrasted urban home vs. rural home (urban n=115, rural n=118)

Based on this data, the mean number of bedrooms both pre- and post-move is three. This indicates that the people who feel their housing quality has gone down, are not basing this on house size.

6.9.2 Initial housing satisfaction

One of the more frequent complaints about their relocation experience from families, both in the interviews and in the survey, was the quality of the house to which they first moved. 74% in interviews brought up this topic (n=33), and 22% of survey respondents referred to this (n=83). The discrepancy in these percents lies in the fact that in the survey, the section where respondents would mention this was asking for suggestions "to improve RRI". In interviews, most of those who were not satisfied with the housing stock did not "blame" RRI for the situation. They saw it as a reality of the kind of older rural houses most likely to be available, compared to their urban homes, and so would not have been likely to note it down as an issue in that section on improving RRI.

...the quality of the housing in the city and I'd say most cities, is 10 times, I'd say 100 times better than any of the houses that you'll rent you know down in the country. EC24:4365-4369

The [urban] house was fine. If you could have lifted and planted it out in a field somewhere! LO6:1118-1120

...we walked out of a lovely [urban] house, a comfortable home. LO74:730-731

BOX 6.29 Participant comments on urban housing

Therefore, it is thought that dissatisfaction with *initial* housing stock was underrepresented by the survey. This assertion is further supported by the earlier noted 45% of respondents (n=82) who stated that their current rural home is not as good as their urban home had been.

The following housing complaints which families brought up in interviews, illustrate the quality issues they face.

...we took this house immediately, we didn't realise in the winter how bad it was. Can't tell in the summer....Very bad, we would be flooded in some days. The floor would get soaked, it's miserable. LC9:469-472, 481-483

[The house] gets very cold in the evenings. Very cold now. At the moment we're actually sleeping in here in the night time because it's too cold to sleep out in the back rooms and I've the kids doubled up in their beds. LO30:137-143

...most of the houses like, when we moved down I remember, were very poor.....the dampness is very bad now. Especially the first house we had now, compared. Very cold...The houses were very good in Dublin...If you could bring the house with you...They were very well built and, they'd got heating you know. EC19:1187-1189, 1990-1993, 2003-2004, 2012-2013, 2015-2016

...the windows are falling apart and um, the dampness, you know, it's definitely, the dampness is coming through all the walls in the bedrooms and that kind of thing you know. EC31:164-169

BOX 6.30 Housing quality issues

In three instances, families blamed problems with their children's health on housing quality issues.

Our house is very cold and damp the children are always sick. LO1:sbp

He suffered with his chest, the first year we moved down. But it was put down to the damp and mould growing on the walls of the bedroom. LO19: 1355-1359

...the bathroom had only recently been put in and it was very primitive. You know, stone floors and only after the children got sick we got a septic tank put in. Because they'd been playing in the ditches in the summer and didn't realise they were running around in waste. EO12:11-19

BOX 6.31 Poor housing and children's health

This is obviously a serious issue[3], and one which RRI, as noted in Chapter 4, has tried to address through more thorough house inspections in recent times, so these statistics may be expected to change for the better over time. Nevertheless, it is unlikely that overall, the majority of rental stock made available to RRI will ever be of the same quality as that left behind.

6.9.3 Mobility and eventual satisfaction

Despite the above noted challenges, 54% of RRI families (n=82) do feel that the house they are now in is better than their urban house. However, 55% of all respondents (n=87), and 60% of all those who prefer their current rural house (n=44), have moved to a second, third, fourth and in one instance a 5th house since their initial move to the country.

[3] For a wider discussion of the impact of moving on RRI participants' children's health, see Chapter 7 *Children and Rural Resettlement.*

Number of rural houses	Year moved to rural area									
	1991		1992		1993		1994		1995	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
One	2	17%	3	25%	6	43%	6	37%	22	67%
Two	8	67%	6	50%	3	21%	7	44%	11	33%
Three	1	8%	2	17%	3	21%	3	19%		
Four	1	8%	1	8%	1	7%				
Five					1	7%				

TABLE 6.15 Number of rural houses lived in, by year of move (n=87)

The above figures show that families who moved earlier in the programme are most likely to have made at least one further move. This can be argued to be partly a result of the lower housing quality in the early phase of the programme. However, it is also the case that the families who have been *in situ* longest obviously have the most opportunity to have moved, so the importance of this finding should not be overly stressed.

Changing houses from the first rural house was due to the condition of that house in 45% of cases (n=49). In a further 20% of cases, or 10 families, it was due to the landlord not renewing the lease, or selling the house, or to a disagreement with the landlord (n=49). It would be useful for research to be done specifically with these landlords in order to follow up this finding. However, in this study they were not approached and this cannot be elaborated upon. A variety of other reasons made up the remaining explanations for moving house.

Although the emotional and physical upheaval of repeatedly moving house is anything but ideal, several families expressed their ability to locate new housing as a sign that they were integrating into local life. Despite the fact that RRI is willing to, and often does, assist families in finding new housing after their first move, many

families take this step themselves. Since many families are clearly able to make subsequent moves on their own, this could open up to question the earlier stated reasons in Table 5.5 as to why families need RRI in order to make the initial urban-rural move. However, when questioned on this, families are clear in their response.

The initial move gave them, and the local community, time to grow acquainted. Locals, with empty houses at their disposal, who might not have been willing to rent to an unknown family moving with RRI, are more than happy to rent to their new neighbours who first did move with RRI. This pattern has the impact of opening up houses to other RRI families, as past families move on to new rental arrangements in the area, new RRI families can move into their vacated house.

While it may appear nonsensical to offer a new family a house that has been vacated, at least in part, due to quality issues, it is not so simple. In some cases, a house is not of high enough quality for most families to move to, and today will not be re-let via the RRI programme. However, more common is that a house may not meet modern urban standards, but it is perfectly adequate for a family to live in for a year or more as their introduction to the area. Once given this entree into the local community, many are well placed to find future housing through their own social network.

6.9.4 Housing tenure

Another area which shows significant change with the move is housing tenure.

Tenure	Urban Home	Rural Home
Council/Corp.	61%	9%
Private rental	19%	65%
Mortgage	18%	16%
Own outright	3%	10%

TABLE 6.16 Housing tenure contrasted urban home vs. rural home (urban n=118, rural n=119)

Housing tenure of participants changes substantially, with the majority in Council or Corporation housing in the urban area, and the majority in private rented accommodation in the rural area. The number of people who own their home outright has more than tripled. Mortgage numbers have dropped slightly, but this statistic was taken before the new mortgage partnership (see Section 4.7) was in place. That scheme should cause the percent of families with mortgages to increase over time.

Looking at *whom* in Table 6.16 has a mortgage, supports the prediction that the figures for home owning will increase over the next few years. Some families who were renting an urban council house now own their rural home. Others who had a mortgage in the city are now renting as they look into purchasing. As these purchases occur, the percentage of mortgage holders or outright owners will increase. Table 6.17 further supports the prediction that ownership will increase.

If you are not a home owner, do you have any plans to purchase a house in the country?	
No	20%
Yes	80%

TABLE 6.17 Plans to purchase a rural home (n=66)

Notwithstanding these high aspirations toward future home ownership, the current rate of home ownership is another sector where RRI participants stand out from other studies of counterurbanisation. Table 2.4 gave housing tenure information for migrants from five different studies. Out of these studies Findlay et at (1999) recorded the lowest rate of migrant home ownership at 78%.

The relatively low rate of RRI participants' home ownership shown in Table 6.16 could, however, simply reflect Irish housing tenure norms. This possibility is refuted by Shinnick (1997) who states that owner-occupation in Ireland overall is over 80%. By looking at Census figures for Clare, we can see that owner-occupation is also high in largely rural counties, not skewed by urban figures.

Nature of occupancy	Number of households in conventional house[4]	Percent
Local Authority rented	1,465	6
Other rented	1,094	4
Mortgage	8,347	33
Own outright	12,314	48
Being acquired from Local Authority	1,482	6
Rent free	590	2
Not stated	273	1
TOTAL	25,565	100

TABLE 6.18 Housing tenure in County Clare (source: Central Statistics Office, 1994)

Table 6.18 shows that across Clare, owner occupants make up 81% of relevant households, right in line with the national average. Below, the Small Area Statistics for Kilballyowen Parish illustrate housing tenure in the very rural areas to which most RRI families move.

Nature of occupancy	Number of households	Percent
Local Authority rented	2	2
Other rented	0	0
Mortgage	1	1
Own outright	112	97
Being acquired from Local Authority	0	0
Rent free	2	2
Not stated	0	0
TOTAL	116	102

TABLE 6.19 Housing tenure in Kilballyowen Parish, prior to RRI (source: Central Statistics Office, 1981)

[4] The Census also provides figures for flats and bedsits, but these are not relevant to this study and only make up 2% of all households in Clare.

Table 6.19 again exemplifies how a more detailed look at local conditions can change the analysis of RRI family circumstances. 98% of Kilballyowen Parish households are owner-occupied, of which all but one do not even owe a mortgage. Tenure figures in Table 6.16 showed only 26% of RRI families owning their own rural home. Even more striking, though, is the contrast between the 65% of RRI families in privately rented accommodation, and the 0% renting in Kilballyowen Parish before the programme began. Of course, some other very rural parishes will have a few renting households, but the general pattern shown here is not unrepresentative.

With 65% of RRI participants renting privately in their rural area, the conditions of these rental agreements have the potential to strongly effect many families' experiences. One concern in the beginning years of the programme was that written leases were not required. However, as was noted earlier, this is now a requirement for anyone renting out a house.

Possess written lease?	Urban Home	Rural Home
No	11%	23%
Yes/Council/Corporation	89%	77%

TABLE 6.20 Lease possession contrasted urban home vs. rural home for those renting (urban n=66, rural n=60)

The above figures showing a lower number in rural areas with a lease is a result of some families who moved before this requirement, and others whose lease has lapsed as they have come to an "understanding" with the home owner. Although starting out with a lease was felt to be a good thing, mainly for the initial sense of security it gave, several families pointed out that in a rural area a one-year lease was of limited use anyway. The important point was to have a supportive landlord, regardless of your legal status. This fact means that some families with no lease feel much more secure than other families with a one year lease. Thus, "security of tenure" is a more useful way to look at this issue than simple possession or not of a written lease.

Length of lease	Urban Home	Rural Home
Less than 1 year	---	4%
1 year	10%	42%
Over 1 year, under 10 years	2%	15%
10 years and over	3%	2%
Unlimited/Open/Council/ Corporation	75%	21%

TABLE 6.21 Length of any written lease contrasted urban home vs. rural home (urban n=61, rural n=52)

Insecure tenancy in the rental market in rural areas is not unique to Ireland. In her study of rural New York state, Fitchen (1992) states that, "Low-income tenants are at the mercy of sudden changes in the local rental market...[some tenants] report that the most frightening insecurity they face is the 'For Sale' sign out front" (p. 185). The time-limited security experienced by some RRI families is seen as one of the drawbacks to the decision to move to the country.

We didn't want to move from this area. Because one, we've got a business which is now becoming established in the area...The children are very happy in the small local school. So you don't want to uproot them, even though Rural Resettlement would house us again, somewhere...So you have to start the whole process up of becoming part of a community, which you've already achieved and you don't want to go away from so, there is that drawback to it as well. LO7:506-508, 512-516, 517-522

Very unsettling I think for most of the families that are down here. 'Cause there's no, you can't see any farther than a year down the, down the line....So it's very unsettling like for children as well as parents. 'Cause kids are asking you, are we still going to be here next year Daddy?...And, will I have to change schools?...Until such time as, as we get our own houses, it's only then we can relax. And be accepted as well. And be part of the scenery... EC19:2451-2455, 2456-2460, 2476-2479

I had kind of mixed feelings moving down. I didn't want to leave the house, to become homeless. And I didn't like the idea of renting a house off somebody I didn't know. LO44:276-284

...families need longer leases than a year to feel secure for their future life in rural areas. LO41:sq16

At this moment in writing, I am not particularly happy with my situation, as our first move lasted a year, with the landlord not renewing our lease and this present lease is 6 months, it is possible we'll have to move again, it is not very good for our children being upheaved once again. LO4:sbp

BOX 6.32 Comments on insecurity through changed tenure

However, this issue of security is one force motivating families to try and purchase a property, then viewing themselves as having benefited from the experience of initial insecurity.

...we came here with the idea that once we got here and got into a Rural Resettlement house, it would be secure.....in one way it's been more, unsettling than we would have bargained for. But the very fact that we have had to get out of places, we'll hopefully end up as more secure than we would have been... LO7:903-906, 1067-1073

It should be pointed out that by far the most common moves made by families did not involve changing either communities or schools, and so the level of disruption was not as great as it might have been.

A final issue to do with tenure is raised in Byron and MacFarlane (1982) where they note that migrants who rent their property are considered to "...have the least social investment in the community" and those who own have "the most" (p. 107). This specific point was never raised with regards to RRI, but in a local context where ownership is so strongly the norm, it seems reasonable to suggest that acceptance would at the least not be hindered through home ownership.

6.9.5 Housing costs

Another potential change for participants is their housing cost after moving to the country.

Amount of weekly rent/mortgage	Urban Home	Rural Home
£ 0	1%	3%
£ 0 - <10	15%	---
£10 - <15	22%	1%
£15 - <20	9%	6%
£20 - <25	6%	10%
£25 - <30	4%	9%
£30 - <35	6%	23%
£35 - <40	3%	13%
£40 - <45	3%	22%
£45 and over	30%	13%

TABLE 6.22 Amount of weekly rent/mortgage contrasted urban home vs. rural home (urban n=78, rural n=78)

Table 6.22 shows that the mean weekly rent or mortgage for RRI participants goes up slightly from £30-<35 before their move to £35-<45 after their move. As many of the families are on relatively low fixed incomes (see Chapter 8), this difference may not be unimportant. However, many RRI families qualify for, and claim, housing allowance from the government. This amount must also be considered in order to calculate any real change in housing cost for families.

Amount of weekly housing allowance	Urban Home	Rural Home
£ 0	81%	41%
£ 0 - <10	1%	1%
£10 - <15	---	8%
£15 - <20	---	8%
£20 - <25	---	12%
£25 - <30	4%	16%
£30 - <35	3%	9%
£35 - <40	1%	1%
£40 - <45	---	---
£45 and over	8%	3%

TABLE 6.23 Amount of weekly housing allowance contrasted urban home vs. rural home (urban n=78, rural n=78)

It is clear from Table 6.23 that more families receive housing allowance in their rural home, than did when they were urban based. However, the statistics are only meaningful in showing contrast if we look at how overall housing costs, rent/mortgage less any housing allowance, have changed for participants. By taking the exact amounts respondents listed for their charges and allowances, both before and since their move, we can see if and how these costs have changed.

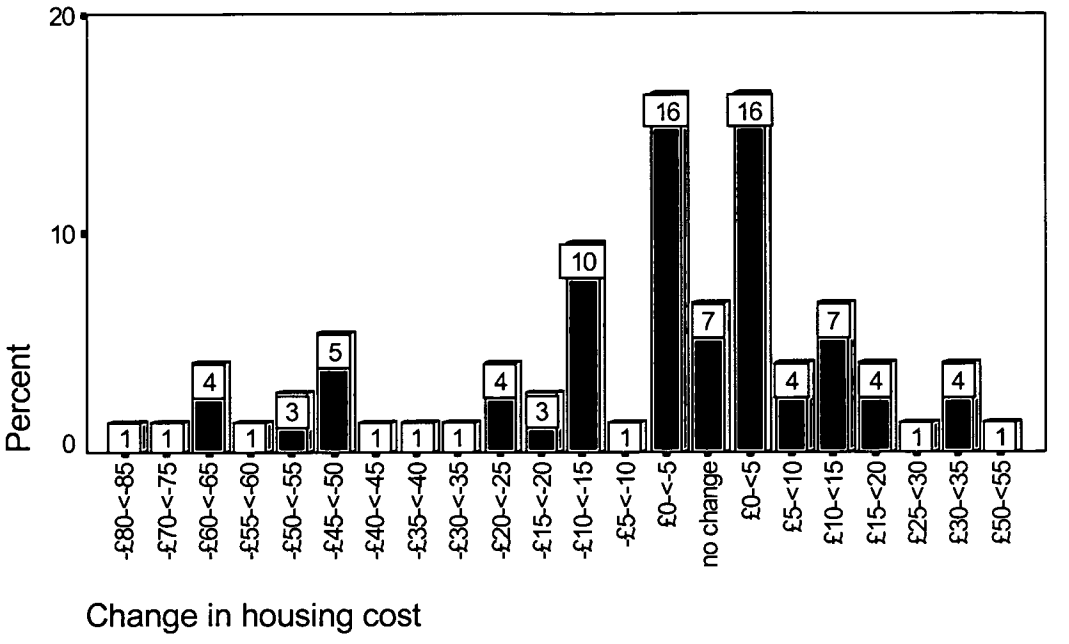


FIGURE 6.1 Amount of difference in total rent/mortgage outlay between urban and rural home (n=73)

According to Figure 6.1, 52% of respondents are paying less on their rent or mortgage since they moved, 7% pay the same amount and 37% pay more. However, some of these differences are due to a change in status (e.g. from mortgage holder to renter), not just to the different home. Of the 40 respondents who are paying less today: 4 of these are now renting and they had an urban mortgage, 3 now own their house outright and they had an urban mortgage, 2 now own their house outright and were renting public housing in their urban area. Change in status also influences the 28 respondents who now have higher costs, as 6 of these now have a mortgage where in the urban area they were renting public housing.

Finally, it would be wrong to assume that the 52% paying less on their rent or mortgage necessarily now spend less overall on their housing. This is wrong because so many of these people previously lived in modern council/corporation houses where they spent very little on maintenance. In contrast, in their rural homes they have much more responsibility for daily upkeep, and sometimes for more major repairs. This cost was not quantified during this study, but should at least be acknowledged here as a potential further factor in household finances.

6.10 RRI HOUSING AND THE WIDER COMMUNITY

Chapter 2 made clear that in some areas one impact of urban migrants in rural communities was to increase local housing costs to such an extent that indigenous families were effectively priced out of the market (Fitchen, 1992; Hunter, 1991; Shucksmith, 1991; McLaughlin, 1990; Rogers, 1989; Newby, 1988; Weekley, 1988; Blunden and Curry, 1985; Byron and MacFarland, 1982; Shucksmith, 1981; Baviskar et al, 1980; Forsythe, 1980). This occurred because a high proportion of the migrants had more income at their disposal than the majority of local families, and so could out-bid them in the housing market.

RRI families present a different profile, given that so many were claiming benefits prior to moving (61%, n=88), and given that it is thought 100% claim benefit immediately after moving. Also, they are still primarily moving to rented accommodation rather than entering the market to buy. Section 6.2.4 noted how this differed from the studies noted in Table 2.4 and from the tenure of most local families as shown in the Census. Although it is predicted that through the Mortgage Partnership and continued take-up of Shared Ownership mortgages the numbers of RRI families purchasing will increase, this will be gradual and they will still necessarily be buying into homes at the lower end of the price scale.

The small numbers that have moved to date, and the wide spread of families throughout Ireland, make it impossible to show whether they have or have not affected costs and availability of private local housing. However, for the reasons stated above, it is reasonable to posit that this is not a likely impact of RRI in the foreseeable future. Table 5.17 certainly indicated that this was not a common worry of community survey respondents. Only 9% expressed concern that city migrants will take housing that local people need. This is in sharp contrast to studies which specifically state that some locals resent incomers taking up housing when locals need homes themselves (Jedrej and Nuttall, 1996; Byron and MacFarlane, 1982; Newby, 1979).

Given that the housing stock RRI families move to does not appear to be in competitive demand, what are the reasons motivating or preventing house owners renting out their "spare" property?

6.10.1 Why and why not offer a rental through RRI?

One of the most obvious ways in which people can support or hold back the work of RRI is in the hands of those who own the empty houses that dot the landscape of rural Ireland. This may seem an obvious comment to make yet,

> *...the ownership by one or a few landowners of the land around and property within a settlement together with a policy of restricting sales or tenancies would restrict population growth. This is an effect which has hardly been touched upon in the literature of rural geography....In contrast, many studies have shown that landownership in urban areas has influenced most strongly all aspects of settlement growth. (Rowswell, 1989, pp. 93-94)*

This effect can be just as important even with a wide geographical spread, if enough small landowners--predominant in the pattern of land tenure in rural Ireland--choose to keep homes empty.



PHOTO 6.3 Abandoned traditional home in rural Ireland (source: RRI)

Financial remuneration is one benefit of offering a house for rent. There must, however, be other and negative influences at work, or one would expect to see more houses being put forward to RRI. What are the reasons upon which potential landlords base their choice whether or not to make spare houses available to RRI families? Conversations with rural residents show the answer to this question is tied into the current cultural, economic and legal realities of rural Ireland, as well as the past migration patterns of the Irish people.

In the first instance, some people state that they are reluctant to participate by offering a house for rent because it would impact upon their tax situation by increasing unearned income. Some are willing to rent their spare house, but only on an "unofficial" basis. This means that anyone renting it would not be able to claim the government housing allowance, causing too much of a financial burden for most "beginning" RRI families.

A further legal complication is fear of litigation. Laws in Ireland surrounding liability for landowners mean that it is possible for a tenant to sue a landlord if, for instance, their child was to break a leg while climbing the landlord's fence. To date there has been no such litigation involving an RRI family, and it is possible that the legal basis for such litigation is greater in perception than in reality. In either case though, it is stated as a contributing factor to the choice not to rent out a house.

Past immigration and internal migration of rural people is another limiting factor. A number of empty rural houses are owned by people now living in the UK, North America, urban Ireland, or elsewhere. Others are owned jointly by several family members who are scattered throughout the world. In the first case, some of those people have ambitions to retire to that house at some unspecified future date. This ambition is also relevant in the second case, with the added complication that it can be very difficult for several co-owners to agree on a course of action for the house.

Most of [the houses] are left to nephews or sons or whoever are away and they're keeping them or will retire there... GB1: 2654-2657

Another determinant is one alluded to in 6.9.3, namely that culturally many rural people find it an odd idea to rent a property to strangers.

[The landlady] was sticking her own nose out too by taking in a Dublin couple because you hear so many horror stories like, you know, she was thinking drugs and drink and 'are they going to come down, are they going to rob us?'.... LO30:2151-2157

And problem comes with persuading a farmer, who doesn't need to rent his old house on his land, to rent it. Or to sell it. To strangers from inner-cities maybe, or from England or from Dublin, who are unemployed. That means have a whole family, generally speaking a strange family, right, because it wouldn't be a family from just down the road who he's known all his life, who he could trust. It involves him in saying to a strange family, you can come and live on my, in that house, on my land. LO7:1405-1420

BOX 6.33 Reasons RRI participants perceive that homeowners might not rent out their "spare" rural house

This reluctance is even less surprising in light of the very low frequency of renting exhibited in the type of local areas where RRI often places families (Table 6.7). It is further compounded by the fact that some of the vacant houses are in close proximity to the owner's current home.

Finally, the fact is that many empty rural homes need at least some work done on them to make them habitable and some of this cost is likely to fall on the owners. For many people the perceived or real risks surrounding renting the property may not be outweighed by the limited financial rewards of renting.

...they've all got so much money that they don't need the hassle of someone renting somebody something for £40 a week and half of it going in tax....I mean lots of people will pay lip service to it, to keeping their own school open, their own post office open, etc. but it comes down to, you know, individual cases, making some money out of holiday accommodation or whatever, or...renting the house which is close by you, you know, difficult. There's lots of things to consider. LO7:197-201, 1559-1568

6.10.2 How to enable housing availability?

The people that do rent then, are often doing so out of motives beyond the purely financial. Some are influenced by their own belief in the idea of bringing people back to the rural community. Others are more influenced by friends or wider community opinion in favour of the project, or they simply like having the house cared for.

...[the landlord] was delighted there was a family in the house, because it was being looked after... LO6:698-703

One approach RRI has taken to encourage the offering of rental houses, and to generally promote the project, is to hold public information meetings in communities where they try to educate local people as to the advantages new people bring to an area. Much of the press and popular coverage of RRI has focused on the benefits that accrue to the families through moving, with less being said about what existing communities have to gain. Therefore, some people do not realise that RRI is a two-way process with families and communities both potentially benefiting. As an example, the most tangible benefit focused on is the very real possibility of RRI families keeping up pupil numbers in local schools (for more on this, see Chapter 7).

There also has been some effort put into trying to change the tax status of landlords. In an interview with Donal Carey, then Minister of State for Western Development and Rural Renewal, he stated that he had been prevented from designing tax incentives for people renting to RRI participants. His idea was to have been modelled on an existing scheme for encouraging appropriate use of housing in the Gaeltacht regions of Ireland (pers. comm.).

Ultimately, RRI believe that the most effective way forward will be through increasing home ownership of participants and not depending so heavily on the rental market as it stands. This is why they have developed the Mortgage Partnership outlined in 4.7.

Another programme which has helped many RRI families is an extant government policy known as Shared Ownership (SO). This is described in the Department of the Environment's "Housing Choice" (1991) pamphlet as "designed to assist people who are not able to afford full ownership of a house straight away but would be able to buy a half share now and the remainder at a later stage" (p. 4). It is specifically geared towards those in local authority housing and/or on a low income. However, many RRI families still do not qualify as their income is too low, there is great variation between counties in its application, and the regulations on house quality and price mean that few properties qualify.

Even with these qualifications, this programme has been extremely useful. Of the 24 RRI families who own their house, 11 have a SO mortgage. Of the 55 families who plan to own a house, 21 are in the process of applying for SO. Another 12 families have been approved for SO, but have not yet located an appropriate house. The strength of these figures is further indication that the new Mortgage Partnership is likely to be a very popular option.

6.10.3 Empty houses and the community

The presence of empty and decaying houses is common throughout large sections of rural Ireland. These houses are one of the resources which RRI is designed to tap. Clearly they offer an opportunity for newcomers, but what do these empty homes represent to the local community?

In one section of the community questionnaire, people were asked whether they had knowledge of a positive impact of RRI on them, their community or their work, and 63% answered "Yes" (n=41). Of this 63%, 12% specifically stated in the open comment section that one benefit was seeing once empty houses now lived in (n=26).

Helped keep houses open which would otherwise be closed and falling into disrepair. MS:619

This desire to see the houses used was also expressed to the researcher by locals during her time in rural Ireland. It seemed to stem partly from an aesthetic sense of

what the countryside should look like, and proper resource use. This feeling, distinct from the desire to simply have more people around, was best expressed by the following quote from RRI participants:

We've had said to us that the people just immediately around us, it means SO much to them, to have somebody move in...into a house and put life back into a house...It's so nice to see the lights on to see the chimney smoking, to see life back into one house in their immediate area. It means so MUCH to them, doesn't it? EC14:3282-3285, 3289-3290, 3295-3300

Other studies also have noted that locals sometimes express appreciation at having once-empty houses lived in again (Jones et al, 1986; Forsythe, 1982). However, this attitude toward empty houses is not shared universally. One family, in the process of having their own house built, made the following prediction about the future of their poor-condition rental house.

...I think maybe when we go he might just leave it you know. Probably in a couple years we'll come over and the roof'll be gone off it and the cattle be in around the place... EC31:458-462

This is a source of frustration to some RRI participants who see the empty houses as a waste, knowing first hand that there are families like themselves who want to fill them.

I mean when I see these lovely houses going to ruin, beautiful houses, some lovely houses, I can be disgusted almost. LC9:1286-1289

...it's a sad thing there are probably 90% of the people on [RRI's] list that will never get the opportunity....there's some people in rural Ireland that have houses that will never ever offer those house to Rural Resettlement. EC14:2889-2892, 2897-2900

BOX 6.34 Frustration at rural houses being allowed to deteriorate



PHOTO 6.4 Left too long, some older houses are put to alternate use (source: author)

6.10.4 Rural council houses

One issue that has been brought up by people with concerns about the idea of RRI, is the potential impact this influx of housing demand might have on council house availability in rural areas. Box 5.12 gave quotes from two County Councillors worried about this possibility. Here is the first clear case of a local resource, perceived as limited, that some people fear newcomers might overload.

During interviews three families noted that they were made to feel, by local officials, that they were not welcome to public housing resources. In two of these cases they were not actually looking for council housing.

They said when we went in...they couldn't have all these families coming out from Dublin taking the houses from the Council. (woman)
She was right out of order. (man)
We didn't want a council house. (woman) LO46:966, 967-969, 971, 973

...as a family that had been imported in here and they shouldn't have the responsibility of housing us. LO27:1348-1351

Because they felt as though, we left a good home in Dublin and why should they house us here? And if they house us, they have to house all the Dublin people, all they Dublin people who come down. That was somebody's attitude. EO7:2780-2786

BOX 6.35 Tensions around council house availability

By no means did all RRI families experience this, and it appears as if different counties and personnel expressed different attitudes on this issue, although nothing concrete can be proved on that within this study.

In the early years of the programme, it was true that nearly every RRI family was on the waiting list in their area for council housing. However, this fact was simply a result of the then law, stating that anyone claiming Housing Allowance (most RRI families when they first move), must be on the Council housing list. Therefore, families who had no interest in being in a council house were forced to sign up to this list.

One of the earliest families to move eventually found themselves at the top of the list and so they were in a position of declining offered council housing because they had no desire to leave their privately rented house. This was worrying for them, as they knew that if they declined three offered council houses they would lose their Housing Allowance. By default, RRI families were in a position of adding to the numbers of people waiting for council housing.

After some hard lobbying, RRI was able to get this regulation changed. Today, families no longer need to put themselves down on the council list and the false appearance of most of them wanting this housing has been eased.

By and large, RRI families are not interested in moving back onto estates. As shown in Table 6.4, over the course of the programme only 9% of families have moved into council housing[5]. This is in contrast to the 61% in public housing before their move.

[5] This could appear a large percent, against the backdrop of Table 6.19 which showed only 2% of Kilballyowen Parish in council-owned accommodation. However, this 9% of RRI who are in council housing rurally is mainly composed of families who have moved to small rural towns where rates of council housing are higher.

We don't want to live in a council house. I would stay here rather than moving to [rural town]. I wouldn't live on another estate ever in my life again. I think that's what Rural Resettlement has given us as well. LO46:975-981

Well, we could get a council house on an estate. But we told them obviously that we wouldn't want that. I mean we haven't come all this way to go and live on an estate. LO7:492-496

BOX 6.36 Participants' negative feelings toward council estate housing

6.10.5 Urban council houses

Every time a Dublin-based RRI family "gives up" a Corporation owned house, the housing waiting list in Dublin is eased by one. In terms of any financial impact this may have, it is difficult to be precise, as families move from different areas and different sized houses. However, in 1999, an official from the Department of Environment, which has responsibility for Housing, estimated that an appropriate amount to "value" such returned properties at would be IR£90,000 (pers. comm.). Multiplied by the 62 study participants who moved from Dublin Corporation housing, this represents a potential capital "savings" of IR£5,580,000 in the five years covered by this study. Although these figures are indefinite, the Mortgage Partnership discussed earlier is in part a result of the fact that the government does see a clear financial gain in this "transaction."[6]

6.11 RESETTLERS AND THE LAND

Given that housing quality often has not been as high as the families desire, does that mean that the overall *physical*--as distinct from social and economic--results of their move are seen as negative by the families? The answer to this is a resounding "no," and lies in their perception of the benefits of *where* that house is located.

I wouldn't move back. When I go back to Dublin I find it filthy...coming into Dublin it was just masses of houses. I mean MASSES of houses. And I remember looking,

[6]As new houses are built through programmes such as the "Village Renewal" scheme, the savings in capital costs overall will fall, but should still be appreciable. Recently, a house was built under this programme, costing IR£70,000.

saying "Jeez, they're like dog boxes." Beautiful houses but millions of them. LO19:1140-1141, 1157-1162

6.11.1 Access to land

Many RRI participants deeply value the space around them and their children, and the access to land that many of the houses provide.

Size of garden/land	Urban Home	Rural Home
Small	63%	15%
Medium	19%	10%
Large	8%	23%
None	10%	---
Under ½ acre	---	3%
Under 1 acre	---	16%
1 – 2 acres	---	29%
Over 2 acres	---	2%

TABLE 6.24 Size of garden contrasted urban home vs. rural home (urban n=83, rural n=86)



PHOTO 6.5 Agrarian scene fairly typical of the landscape surrounding many RRI participants' homes (source: author)

45% now produce some of their own food compared with only 14% before they moved (n=86). Of this 45%, 41% provide at least 6-months of their year's supply of chicken eggs. Smaller percentages provide at least 6 months of their needs in potatoes and other vegetables. A very small number produce goat's milk and some meat. Many more aspire to growing food, but state they are waiting until they own their own place, or move to a house they perceive as a long-term rental.

Some families have no intention of growing vegetables or raising livestock. This was noted in Table 5.11 where 52% stated this was unimportant in their decision to move. However, for many RRI families, even those who have sometimes had mixed results, this has been an important and positive aspect of their experience of rural living.

I love like picking the potatoes and watching them grow....I'd be walking around with these cockerels sitting on me head like. And the kids would have them up in their bedroom like you know! LO19:810-811, 814-817

But that's the whole thing of country, you have to, if you have a big garden make it work. You have to use it. There's no point in having fields there sitting doing nothing. What's the point of being in the country then? LO77:825-831

...there's a lot of satisfaction of your own spuds there now you know. Or like, for instance somebody comes there now, you give them a stone of spuds and he come over and he give you cabbage, or what he have you know. It's your own, you know what I mean? You're after growing it like... EO9:2114-2122

We are all doing things we have never done before and country life seems to suit us...we all seen a calf being born for the 1st time in Feb., and now we are all involved in getting our winter fuel. Everyone helps out with the vegetables and weeding and we never had laying hens and ducks before. LC22:s459

BOX 6.37 Comments on landuse experiences

6.11.2 Physical isolation

Larger immediate garden space is not the greatest landscape change for most of the families. As we have seen, the majority are moving from urban estates to rural detached houses. Some of these are miles from any village, sometimes miles to the

nearest neighbour. Does this physical distance cause problems for the families? Figure 6.2 illustrates their answer to the question of physical isolation.

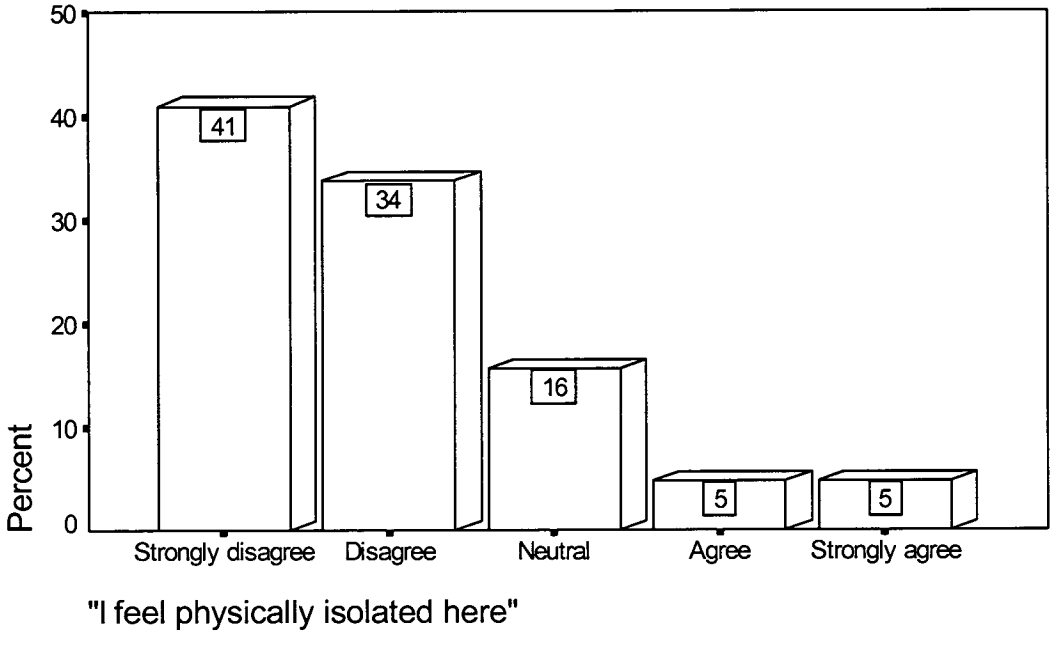


FIGURE 6.2 Sense of physical isolation (n=83)

This shows that physical isolation is not an issue for 90% of the RRI families, intimating that there must be factors compensating for what some people would view as a negative. Photos 6.4, 6.5 and 6.6 illustrate the type of countryside many participants find when they move to rural Ireland. Families' own descriptions of the physical differences in their surroundings give deeper insight into how they experience these landscapes.



PHOTO 6.6 Sea view a short walk from one RRI family's house (source: Susan Rosegrant)

I think it's great. I think it's great to get up here in the morning, pull back the curtains, and there's nobody looking in at you...You know, you've so much freedom. LO6:852-853, 855-858, 864-865

I hated the, you walk out o' your door in Dublin and the next door neighbour's just down there...That's horrible, too closed in. LO30:1942-1945, 1945-1946

There was a most beautiful sunset in Dublin that day. And I couldn't see it...because all the buildings hid it. And when you're here you're in it. You're in it. It's a completely different thing of light, a thing of weather, of how you feel here. LO68:843-845, 846-851

When I was in Dublin I used to get no idea of the seasons. And that upset me. Like I felt I needed that. It didn't matter what month you were in, you got up at the same time and it was dark when you left and dark when you came home in the winter months. You were protected by everything. Because you had your car. And you had your house. And if there was a storm or you know if it rained it didn't matter to you. Whereas here if it rains you're realising well you can't go out you can't dig the ground. LO38:1031-1046

But I tell you one thing, you appreciate the stars, oh Jesus! We could stand at our house at the door and you could kind of feel like you could touch them like. EO7:1231-1235

I'll tell you what I do love. The birds....I could stand at the door and watch them all day. We had finches and all here now last year and wagtails and everything...And

watching the trees, I actually love watching the trees. This one in particular I love....And you can see it changing then from the spring and that. Little things like that now, where you'd never notice anything like that in Dublin. EO12:1948-1949, 1953-1956, 1962-1964, 1966-1972

Before we moved here we never knew stars were different colours. LO7:cover

There's deer running about here. You know, something you wouldn't, I couldn't believe it. I mean there was actually deer running about, you're driving down the road and they hop across the hedge in front of you! You know, see them, see the foxes....But I mean just the wildlife is you know, it's great....Wild birds, see the different types of hawks, you see them hunting and that. It's just, you don't see it in the city. Especially, well especially for children now growing up, they actually grow up along with animals. LO11:1155-1162, 1163-1165, 1170-1177

BOX 6.38 Experiences of rural landscapes

The dispersed nature of this housing may also play a part in the high levels of local acceptance families report. Byron and MacFarlane (1982) found that where migrants were grouped together there was much less contact with locals, and where they were thinly spread, integration was improved. Jedrej and Nuttall (1996) quote a local man who notes that incomers tend to group themselves together (p. 80). Even if RRI participants wanted to do this, and there is no evidence to suggest they do, it would be a practical impossibility given the distances involved.

6.12 THE COMMUNITY, THE LAND AND RESETTLEMENT

An issue that sometimes came up in conversation and interviews was that the newcomers are more aware of the beauty of the rural areas than are the indigenous people. A similar claim was made by some respondents in Shucksmith et al (1996, p. 427), while McIntosh (2001) notes of his Lewis childhood, "In fact, our attitude to the [Calanais] Stones differed little from our attitude to the environment in general. We were often cavalier in our treatment of the countryside" (p. 8).

However, demonstrating the truth of this within RRI, or whether local attitudes may change as a result of the new neighbours, is not yet possible. The numbers of RRI participants still being relatively small, and their thin spread across 11 counties[7]

[7] 11 counties at the time the fieldwork took place, this has since increased.

make measuring their impact upon local communities' attitudes towards the land impossible to quantify. All that can really be done at this point is to note that this is a topic that would merit further research.

They don't appreciate what they have as far as I can see. More people have said to us you know, we say 'oh it's a beautiful place,' 'ah, we take no notice.' And that's the exact words. 'We take no notice of it.' Couldn't care less. LC1:2410-2416

I've said to people...You know maybe to one or two of the locals who just happened to pass during the summer, they stop and chat. And I said look at that view. And they said oh we don't notice that....I said but LOOK at it, look at the sun, look at the colours. EC14:2123-2124, 2125-2131, 2135-2136

BOX 6.39 Perceived lack of landscape appreciation among "locals"

Another issue to do with local consciousness of landscape and place is in the naming of local places. It was outwith the remit of this study to look in detail at the importance place-names can have in promoting a sense of belonging to locality. However, it is still worth mentioning that this is an important area, and one which counterurbanisation has been blamed with weakening. In particular, Jedrej and Nuttall (1996) point out that in the Highlands the influence of incomers and/or tourists, whose first language is English, serves sometimes to weaken the usage of traditional place-names. This can create a situation where "...the loss of place names ...in Highland communities means the loss of a distinct sense of place" (p. 128). It is likely that in the case of RRI, where most participants are from Eire and so have been schooled to a certain extent in the Irish language, this is unlikely to be an issue.

6.13 CONCLUSION

An overwhelming majority of RRI participants feel both welcomed initially, and accepted over time, in their rural communities. It was noted that some respondents still felt there was a degree of local resentment towards new residents, although this mainly seemed to belie their personal experiences. It was suggested that this contradiction might be due to the strength of popular representations on the unwelcoming nature of rural communities. This is also supported in the work of Findlay et al (1999) and Shucksmith et al (1996).

Most respondents expressed satisfaction with the social life in their rural community, although some did complain of a lack of options beyond the local pub. Several participants made the point that in their experience socialising in urban areas can be more difficult than is generally expected. This was particularly the case for families who were living in less well-off urban communities.

Although there was some variation in responses, gender was not considered to be either a major help or hindrance in adjusting to rural life. Similarly, religion was not depicted as an obstacle to acceptance by most respondents, although there was a minority who felt some pressure to conform to local expectations.

Overall, participants portrayed themselves as happier since moving. This included a general sense of improved health, both psychological and physical.

In terms of the material changes that accompany their move, RRI participants generally enter lower quality housing when they first move from their urban homes. In three extreme examples, parents felt this was responsible for health problems in their children. For most, the hardship was less severe. Once better integrated into their new communities, many families move on to a higher quality house. Although RRI has now set higher standards for accepting houses, the reality, acknowledged by many families, is that many available rural homes are not likely to be as comfortable as much urban housing stock.

However, in interviews many families stressed that the gains they have made in landscape and access to land outweigh housing quality issues.

Housing tenure was found to change from a majority in urban public housing, to a majority in rural private rentals. As a group, RRI families exhibited much lower home ownership rates than the national norm of 80% as calculated by Shinnick (1997). In the rural parish examined, this rate was 97%, with 0% renting prior to the RRI programme starting up (CSO, 1981). In this measure RRI participants again

stand out strongly from other studies of counterurbanisation and, in this instance, from the local pattern.

Over time, with the various mortgage programmes available, the percentage of RRI families as owner-occupiers is likely to rise. However, the overall tenure pattern and the fact that those RRI families who do buy enter the lower end of the housing market, indicate that they are unlikely to be inflating housing costs to the detriment of local people. Here is another strong contrast against the pattern of much counterurbanisation literature.

There is, however, local concern in some areas that RRI families may want access to rural public housing. Some families have even been told that they should not be entitled to such housing. Here is the first example of a limited resource that some seem to want to "protect" from incomers. This is despite the fact that few RRI families have moved into, or want to move into, rural council houses.

CHAPTER 7

CHILDREN AND RURAL RESETTLEMENT

7.1 INTRODUCTION

As noted in Chapter 5, Figure 5.4, 38% of family survey respondents (n=84) stated that creating a better life for their children was the single most important reason for their move. As the highest response given to this open-ended question, it is particularly important to look at the overall effect of the move on RRI families' children.

Additionally in Chapter 5, 30% of respondents (n=40) to the community questionnaire stated that one of their main hopes for the effect of new people in their area, would be keeping the local school open (Table 5.13). When asked specifically about this issue, 95% of respondents (n=43) either "strongly agreed" or "agreed" with the statement that new people would help keep local schools open. How experience of RRI to date supports or contradicts these aspirations is also discussed here.

7.2 CHILDREN'S ATTITUDES, EXPERIENCES, CHANGES

Ninety percent of interviewees and survey respondents had children living with them at the time they participated in the study (n=121). Family size of RRI was noted in Chapter 5, Table 5.6. Elaborating on this, the age and gender breakdown for these children is shown in Table 7.1.

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Male <5	22	7%
Male 5 – 12	96	29%
Male 13 – 16	28	9%
Male 17 – 18, at school	6	2%
Male 17 – 18, left school	4	1%
Male >18	8	2%
Female <5	28	9%
Female 5 – 12	55	17%
Female 13 – 16	33	10%
Female 17 – 18, at school	7	2%
Female 17 – 18, left school	4	1%
Female >18	7	2%
No gender given <5	5	2%
No gender given 5 – 12	16	5%
No gender given 13 – 16	2	1%
Other	5	2%
TOTAL	**326**	**101%**

TABLE 7.1 Age and gender breakdown of children living in RRI families (n=122)

The profile in Table 7.1 gives useful information on the numbers of children attending local schools. These will be discussed in Section 7.4.

An interesting result above, particularly in light of rural Ireland's gender imbalance, is the higher number of boys over girls in the 5-12 age bracket. No gender issues for children were ever raised in interviews or otherwise during the research period. Although intriguing, no causal explanation can be offered for this outcome based on this study.

Despite the fairly young ages of many children at the time they moved, parents were aware of, and concerned with, their children's attitudes to the venture.

When you told your children you were moving to the country, how did they react?	
They did not want to move at all	7%
They were not too upset	25%
They were happy to move	62%
Other	7%

TABLE 7.2 Children's initial reaction to move (n=77)

In interviews most parents expressed that their children were very settled in their rural area and would not now move back to the city. Posing this question in the survey confirmed the frequency of that opinion held by the adults.

Would your children like to move back to your former area now?	
No, they would not want to go back	88%
Yes, they would like to go back	9%
Other	3%

TABLE 7.3 Children's reaction to move today (n=76)

7.2.1 Positive change

Table 7.3 shows that parents mainly believe their children are pleased with the family's move to a rural area. Here we will look at how the parents feel the move has actually effected the children. The idea of rural areas as "right" for children is strong in popular ideology (Valentine, 1997; Forsythe, 1982; Shoard, 1980), and it was noted earlier that the belief it would improve their children's lives was a prime motivation for moving with RRI. Therefore the possibility exists that if this aspect of the move did not meet expectations, this could have a particularly strong impact on participants' overall evaluation of their experience.

If the children are happy, you're gonna be happy. If they're not happy it's going to be hard for you two to be happy. LC15:1645-1651

They love it down here... They've settled better than us, they have. They wouldn't go back. We would (laughs). EO7:60, 62-63

BOX 7.1 Family repercussions for children's experience of move

To understand where the parents' sense of their children's satisfaction stemmed from, and to get a clearer picture of how parents perceive rural living has actually affected the children, a set of questions on this was included in the survey. A semantic difference scale was used, with the categories based upon comments made during interviews.

On a scale of 1 to 5, how much do you disagree or agree with the following statements about your child/ren since you moved?

Since moving my child/ren:	*"Strongly disagree"*	*"Disagree"*	*"Neutral"*	*"Agree"*	*"Strongly agree"*
Are more shy	38%	53%	4%	1%	3%
Are more self-confident	---	4%	17%	46%	33%
Mix better with people	1%	5%	12%	53%	29%
Are outside more often	---	4%	4%	24%	68%
Are inside more often	60%	31%	6%	1%	1%
Have to be watched more closely	45%	34%	12%	1%	8%
Have more freedom	---	---	1%	18%	80%
Are more ambitious	3%	5%	20%	28%	43%

TABLE 7.4 Statements comparing aspects of children's lives since moving (n=73, n=76, n=76, n=76, n=70, n=74, n=76, n=74)

These responses show a very strong overall satisfaction from parents comparing their children's lives before and after moving. More detail is given in excerpts from interviews. There were a few themes that came up in several interviews. For instance, some parents noted that their children now spend their time differently then they did when living in an urban area.

...you asked did it effect [the children]. Only for the better you know. I mean, when they were in Dublin they were always, constantly in the house, and they used to have those computer games and you know, all indoor toys you know. And then they came down here and they were afraid to go as far as the gate because they were so far away from us you know!...But now they go, you mightn't see them from one end of the day to the next you know. EC24:41-50, 51-54

And they spend, certainly spend, how much more time would you say outside? They're always outside....The thing is you see, I mean even now, it's dark and they could go for a walk...looking for badgers or whatever...and they'd be perfectly safe with it. On the back road you know what I mean. Whereas [in the city] you would never...you would never let them out the front gate...Yes and their actual, the fresh air and that that they get would be a lot. I mean they don't watch very much television at all....LO7:754-756, 758-760, 760-761, 766-768, 769-770, 782-785

Oh, in Dublin they'd sit looking at the television, looking at computers, videos. All day, every day. They're just happy here running around fields. They built an old tree house down the bottom of the garden. Things like that. LO74:575-580

...in Dublin too they had...10 stations on the television....The kids would have it on from 6 o'clock [in the morning] and he'd have it on 'til 3 o'clock [a.m.]....it's went completely out of their heads like. They think "out" like a lot more. EC24:3387, 3388-3389, 3392-3394, 3400-3402

Especially, well especially for children now growing up, they actually grow up along with animals. LO11:1174-1177

BOX 7.2 Contrasts in how children now spend their time

Other parents stressed the importance of not worrying about the children so much and being able to give them more freedom, mainly because they perceive rural communities to be more supportive places in which to raise children.

...you know they're safe. You kinda let them out and you've no worries...they come in from school, they get their lessons done and they're gone and you've no worries because everybody looks out for everybody else you know. LO30:296-297, 439-444

There's more community spirit down here. It's 'mind thyself' up in Dublin, where down here it's, if the kids were out playing you could go out to the door, if they weren't there you could ask the person 'did you see [son's name]?' And you know, 'he's over with such and such.' Where up in Dublin, if a child was gone out of view you'd be panicking and if you asked anybody where he was, 'oh, I didn't see him.' LO44:691-702

They have great fun, they go to discos and everything you know and we can actually relax....Whereas I think if we were living in Dublin I wouldn't let them outside the door after 9 o'clock. EO12:947-949, 955-957

Kids are accepted much more down here than what they are in Dublin. Even kids in restaurants in Dublin aren't really tolerated. Whereas down here if you bring the kids in you know into a restaurant or anything like that...They'll come down and help you out. LO19:196-202, 204-204

...everywhere they go they see the local faces you know. And they all automatically feel part of it you know. EC24:225-227

BOX 7.3 Rural communities as supportive of children

Finally, some parents portrayed the move simply as having transformed their children into different people.

[The kids] are so different [from in Dublin]. They're not as hyper and as, they're much more serious. But not in a dry sort of way. They're more level-headed. You know and I think it's great. EO12:942-947

Oh [the kids] love it. Jesus they love it...Just seeing them and how different they are. LO19:302-303, 311-312

And the children [in England] have no childhood as well. I mean [child's name], she doesn't, the last perhaps year she hasn't had any, but she had letters from children that were, that she was at school with. And I mean, you'd think they were about 20 compared to her. It's really like, it's given them back a childhood hasn't it? LO7: 798-807

...the kids all seem to be, all seem to be nicer kids. You know the country kids seem to be more, just seem to be nicer you know. Not as brash now as the kids in the city... EC31:1108-1113

[In urban area the kids] were like old women with young bodies, they were thinking ahead all the time, boys and all that. You'd never hear them talking about fellas now, or that kind of thing. But you don't get that here. The lads and the girls are all together, but they're all children, they're not old heads on young shoulders. LO6:945-954

BOX 7.4 Children as different people now

These depictions of an improved quality of life for children through moving to a rural area closely echo comments in several other studies such as Findlay et al (1999), Valentine (1997) and Forsythe (1982).

7.2.2 Negative change

Table 7.3 states that 88% of parents feel their children would not want to move back to the city. However, it also showed that 9% of parents felt their children would want to move back. In interviews some parents expressed this in terms of specific advantages to their children being in the city while others stated that their children simply were not happy with the move.

They're stuck in the house really. LO57:456-457

[The children] don't like it at all. [My son] moved back [to Dublin], this is his 4th time back to us...the minute they're out of school, no, they don't like it at all. [In Dublin] their friends are nearer. They can walk down to the shops, they can walk down to the church. LC15:270-272, 303-305, 1354-1356

BOX 7.5 Children's negative experiences of moving

Statements such as "[The children] don't like it at all" are difficult to analyse further here. However, Table 7.4 made more explicit some contradictions in the experiences of families. For instance, 91% of respondents "disagreed" or "strongly disagreed" that their children "are inside more often", while 2% responded to this question with "agree" or "strongly agree." Why one family might experience the same "variable" so differently from most others will be discussed in Chapter 10.

7.2.3 Children's health

Another aspect of the move raised initially in interviews was the physical health of the children. This was an important point to follow up in the survey, particularly with regard to the variable early housing quality and its impact on some children's health, noted in Chapter 6.

Since you moved to the country has there been any change in your children's health?	
No change	41%
Yes, they are less healthy since we moved	9%
Yes, they are more healthy since we moved	49%
Other	1%

TABLE 7.5 Perceptions of change in children's health since moving (n=78)

Most commonly in interviews parents referred to respiratory conditions when comparing their children's health to before the move.

[In Dublin] we were in and out the hospital every couple of weeks, antibiotics, on ventilators, the whole lot, and thank God he hasn't had one [asthma] attack since we came here. LO30:475-479

Well, [son's name] had asthma didn't he in England. And he doesn't have it since we came over. Even though it's damp (laughter). He doesn't suffer the same, he had terrible catarrh didn't he and we were saying that the other day weren't we? And he doesn't have that. LO7:745-752

But the minute he moved down here now, he's only been sick once in two years with a sore throat. LO19:1353-1355

Actually it was 3 years since [child] had an [asthma] attack and he had one just two weeks ago and that's when the weather was so cold again... EO3:107-110

Better health. The eldest now suffers for asthma, the eldest boy. But he's been great since we moved down. He gets the odd one but. Not the way he was in Dublin, it was every week we were round at the doctor's. He's a lot better. LC9:776-782

Not one of us have had the flu or a cold or anything since we came....I mean kids, usually you know, when they go off to school they're getting colds and coughs and they're sick. There hasn't been a cold in this house since we moved. LO46:609-610, 614-620

BOX 7.6 Comments on moving and improving children's health

Table 7.5 and Box 7.6 show clearly that a majority of parents feel the move has not effected, or has improved, their children's health.

7.3 EDUCATION

A further way of looking at children's experience of resettlement is to examine the parents' critique of rural education.



PHOTO 7.1 Small village school attended by RRI children (source: RRI)

The educational experiences of RRI participants' children are a particularly interesting area in light of research on class background and educational achievement in Ireland. Looking at data from 1998, Tovey and Share (2000) state that "Over half the children of those in the 'higher professional' social group leave school with five or more Leaving Certificate honours; only 4 per cent of those with parents who are unskilled manual workers enjoy the same outcome" (p. 177). This is a good example of what Bourdieu and Passeron (1977) termed "the educational mortality of the working classes" (p. 156). Tovey and Share (2000) further note a 1997 study that,

> *...reports large differences between children who attended schooling in outer-suburban Clondalkin and inner-city Dublin*[1]*, where 19 to 35 per cent of children were two to three years behind in reading ability, and those at school in Rathgar, a wealthy suburb, where no children were below their expected ability for age. (p. 179)*

[1] These are both areas from which RRI participants have moved.

Achievement in school, or the lack of it, translates later into the likelihood of employment. Clancy (1995) cites work showing that "While the overall rate of unemployment of persons aged twenty-five to sixty-four in Ireland is twice the average for the twenty [OECD] countries, the unemployment rate for those with university education in Ireland is actually below average..." (p. 483). In this way,

> *The process of social reproduction is complete; education mediates the relationship between origins and destinations. Future occupational status (destinations) is determined by educational attainment which in turn is determined by social class of origin. (Clancy, 1995, p. 483)*

Bourdieu's own work on social reproduction reinforces this belief, but does not focus exclusively on parental class or occupational background. "Bourdieu finds that children's academic performance is more strongly related to parents' educational history than to parents' occupational status" (Swartz, 1977, pp. 547-548).

Whichever of these related roots one focuses upon, Chapter 5 demonstrated that the majority of RRI children are not coming from backgrounds that mark them out for high expectations of scholastic achievement.

7.3.1 Contrasting urban and rural education

When asked in the survey whether education was better in the country or city, 81% felt their children were getting a better education in the country and 10% felt it was better in the city (n=73). Interview explanations for improved education commonly noted small class sizes and social expectations of succeeding in school as the reasons for improvement. Also, school in the rural community was portrayed as being a more positive social experience for children and one better integrated into many aspects of the children's lives.

...in school in Dublin, and they weren't allowed to run in the playground...It was all tarmac and they were only allowed to walk...there was a little bit of grass and they weren't allowed on that, it was reserved...They wanted to let the kids know what green looks like! So when she came down here...they were told to get out there and run riot you know...straight away they were loving the school.....she was a top student in Dublin. And when she came down here, the first year, now she was top of the top of the class in school in Dublin. And when she came down here she wasn't

even mid-way....Because the standards were that much higher....Now she's still top of the top of her class again. She's worked off and has got there again. EC24:56-58, 62-63, 65-67, 69-72,. 74-76, 79-80, 315-321, 327-328, 337-339

The education is unbelievable. [She] was getting 'A's' in everything she was doing up in Tallaght. 'Excellent'. And down here she's way behind all the rest. I think they're basically learning you how to read and write up there. LO57:115-121

[The quality of education] is much higher. Um, because, initially anyway because it's smaller. Smaller class. And in England [child's name] had a lot of trouble with his reading...So his teacher here...put a lot of time in with him and within 3 months, we, she made him work didn't she? Which he didn't have to do in England you see. LO7:606-610, 625, 627-631

It's a better way of learning, I'd much prefer him to be in school down here than up in Dublin. LO44:96-98

And a lot of the families say you get a better education in the country. Up from National school right up. The teacher has more time for them I suppose. Classes are smaller. EC22:251-256

BOX 7.7 Positive descriptions of rural education

As with the various measures of children's experiences of moving in Table 7.4, there were also some parents who described both positive and negative aspects of the change to rural schools, or who felt they were basically equal, or who were dissatisfied with the change.

Well I tell ya it can work both ways....There's so few of them in a classroom. They get a hell of a lot more attention than he would down in Dublin...On the other hand if you have a child with a disability, dyslexia, the teacher hasn't got the time....It works both ways you know what I mean. LO19:317-318, 323-326, 327-330, 335-336

...they get much more attention in school in the country. I mean they might not be able to do so many things aside. Like she would like to go to ballet classes, or, and it's too far to go, or it wouldn't work out. It's too expensive, then it's driving there, things like that would be easier in a city or town, but, just they can go out and play and they are together with nature and still I mean they have computers in school here as well, it's still up to scratch with other schools. It's not backward or anything. EC22:217-232

Yeah, we've no complaints about the schools in Dublin I have to say that. Like this, it's when they come home, it's what's outside like you know? They were safe in school you know....They're good down here too. EO7:263-267, 288-289

They moved down here, they were top of the class in some subjects in Dublin and when they came down here, it was a big shock to them. They hadn't a clue. [Daughter] she was into gymnastics when she lived in Dublin....Nothing in the line of gymnastics [here]. They have no equipment, no gym equipment. They've a big, big gym hall with nothing in it, only a few mats. EO12:259-263, 2042-2044, 2047-2051

Well obviously you're restricted by choice. I mean there is only one second-level facility in [county]....But you know, it's adequate. LO11:142-146

School in England fabulous, broader scale of education for the young kids. LO14:p1

BOX 7.8 Mixed or negative perceptions of schooling change

The most common negative comment was a perception that facilities were more limited in rural schools.

7.3.2 Long-term schooling

The perceived shift in educational attitudes is most concretely demonstrated by the changing expectations parents have for the length of time children will stay in school. The following graphs illustrate that parents expect most children to stay on for higher qualifications than they would have attained if they had remained in the city.

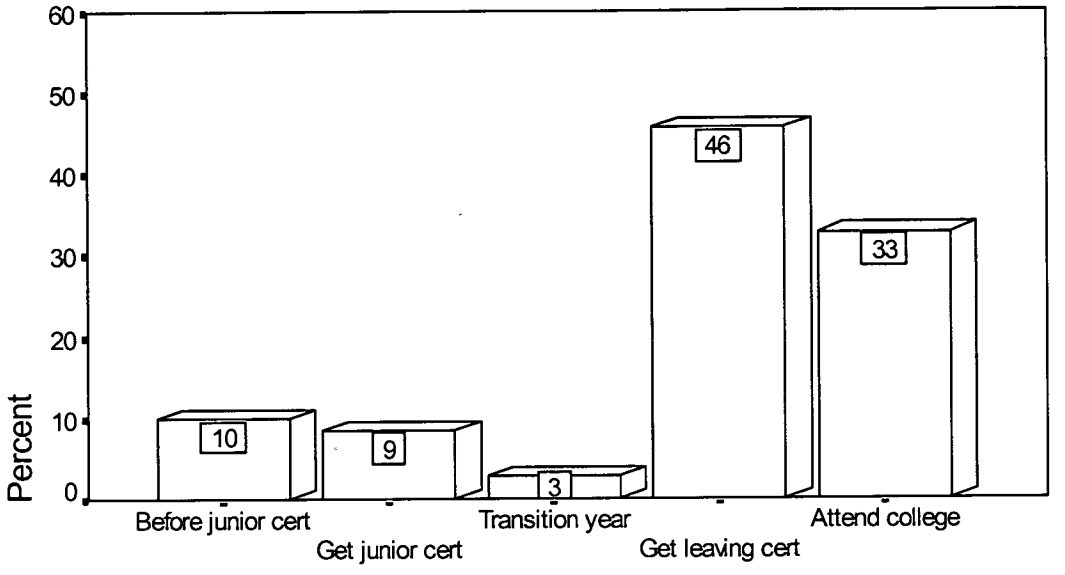


FIGURE 7.1 Length of time parent expected 1st child to remain in school before family moved to the country (n=70)

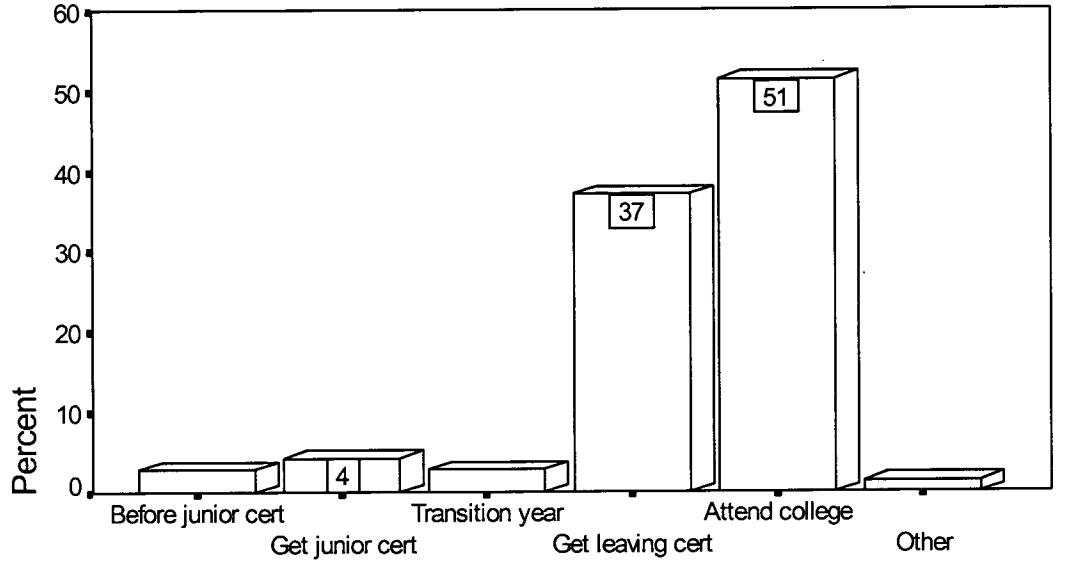


FIGURE 7.2 Length of time parent expects 1st child to remain in school since family moved to the country (n=70)

Similar profiles can be shown for subsequent children, but their numbers are fewer and their ages younger, so the usefulness of the data declines.

During interviews parents generally credited the different social expectations and peer pressures of their rural communities for changes in long-term school expectations.

...certainly their outlook on staying at school would be different. They, 'cause there's a different attitude to education here, isn't there...here most children don't think of leaving [school]. So the actual mental attitude would perhaps be different. LO7:703-707, 718-721

...down here college is the big thing, it's the thing you do. There's no such thing as leaving school at sixteen, fifteen, you know what I mean, without an education....It's primary then secondary and then straight to college....Which is a great thing because I am a firm believer in education. LO19:362-367,378-379, 382-383

I'd say they would go on further....They'll probably have the opportunity to go on further down here than in Tallaght. LO57:274-275, 276-279

...college is on all their minds you know....our fella now is in college in Limerick. And I don't think he'd of ever went to college if [we had stayed in Dublin]....up there if you do your Leaving Cert, that's it. It's a big achievement you know? Like that's the ultimate thing up there, well if you live in a housing estate anyhow. Leaving Cert., and I'd say the majority of them just go past, as far at the Junior Cert. EC19:484-485, 486-489, 500-507

...I expect them to go to college please God....but I don't, I think in Dublin it went down...there was no individual attention given to anyone. The teachers' seem to, you can't blame them, they seem to come in, in big cities and just want to get through the day. If you want to learn, well and good, if you don't want to learn, well it's just left that. I think that might have worked inevitably against them. EC15:190-191, 202-204, 207-216

...I think most of the country kids, go on to college. More country kids will tend to go on to college.... EC22:248-250

I think country people are more education orientated and that, more than Dublin people are. Stay on and get good jobs. LC15: 323-327

BOX 7.9 Explanations for change in schooling expectations

The quotes in Box 7.9 illustrate a strongly-held belief of RRI participants that educational attainment is highly valued in rural Ireland and that high educational goals are frequently met by students there. This perception is upheld by research that has been done into Irish farming communities and education. Tovey and Share (2000) state that "One part of the Irish population that has been particularly

successful at accessing education, especially third level, is the farming community, where participation rates are higher than for all other groups except for the managerial and professional class" (p. 172). They also note that "By the early 1980s over two-thirds of farmers children were completing the Leaving Certificate, compared to little over half this for the children of the urban working-class..." (p. 173). O'Hara (1998) reports on more recent research, stating "In 1992 an estimated 49 per cent of farm children went on to full-time higher education..." (p. 137). Clancy's (1995) work on the Irish school system further explains these findings, stating that,

> *While it is clear that the differential performance of the various types of schools reflects differences in individual pupil characteristics at intake, it would also appear that the social class composition of the schools has a significant effect on student aspirations and achievement, independent of the social class background of any individual student. (p. 490)*

Box 7.9 also credits rural areas with high quality schooling, a variable in educational experience that Bourdieu believes does matter and which can help students compensate for relatively low levels of inherited cultural capital (Swartz, 1977, p. 548).

Finally, in considering whether higher educational aspirations are realistic in this circumstance, we should acknowledge not only the positive pressure to achieve that appears to hold sway in rural areas, but the active negative pressure that may have been present before.

Well there would have been a chance that he would've [stayed on in school in Dublin] but he would've been sort of ...an outcast like you know where we were?... It was where we were there was no such thing as going to college where we lived down in Dublin. Like there's some of them don't even go to secondary school you know. And it's kind of, leave school as early as possible, if you can get a job, fair enough. But if not you just walk the streets. EO7:301-303, 307-308, 1059-1067

...in Dublin...we just didn't talk about [college]. I mean now they're talking about where they're going to go to college...We never dreamt of college...If you got them past their...Junior Cert...Still have over 50% of the children leaving at Junior Cert...And they go from there to doing nothing. I mean just hang around the street.

And like I worked in the Youth Club in Dublin and you know you say 'well what do you want to do now when you leave school?' They'd look at you! 'Huh?! Like me Dad, on the dole.' Nothing else, nothing else there. EC24:498, 500-503, 545, 550, 551, 563-564, 612-620

...looking at kids and that from Dublin and the way they've dropped out. But I, personally feel that even if I was living in Dublin, the kids would still be in school, I'd insist on it....[But] I don't think [college] would've probably entered their heads. Because I don't think, well it's not talked about, it's not encouraged in [Dublin] schools. Where all their friends in school are talking about what they'll do when they leave school, what college they'll go to. You wouldn't get that in Dublin. You know, they'd be wondering would they get a job or would have to do a FAS course or something like that you know. EO12:384-390, 439-450

BOX 7.10 Low expectations of school achievement in Dublin

These quotes illustrate a process of "levelled aspirations" (MacLeod, 1995). Bourdieu and Passeron (1977) describe the mechanics of this process thus: "The subjective expectation which leads an individual to drop out depends directly on the conditions determining the objective chances of success proper to his category..." (p. 156). Or as Swartz (1977) interprets Bourdieu, "A child's ambitions and expectations with regard to education and career are the structurally determined products of parental and peer or reference group educational experience and cultural practice" (p. 548).

If time proves RRI parents to be correct in their higher aspirations, this shift has obvious long-term implications for future opportunities for these children.

7.4 COMMUNITY EXPECTATIONS

As noted in Chapter 5 and in this chapter, Section 7.1, one of the firmly held local hopes for the impact of RRI was a positive effect on local schools. More specifically, community survey respondents felt strongly that RRI would help rural schools remain open.

On a scale of 1 to 5, please state the strength of your disagreement or agreement with the following statement:			
I think city people moving to the country will:	*"Neutral"*	*"Agree"*	*"Strongly agree"*
Help local schools stay open	5%	35%	60%

TABLE 7.6 Community survey response to predicted impact of RRI families on rural schools (n=43)

Shucksmith et al (1996), Jones et al (1984) and Forsythe (1982) all make note of instances where migrants' children have maintained or gained a teacher for rural schools. That the hope expressed in Table 7.6 is realistic in this context is supported by the community survey. Eight respondents specifically noted that they knew of a local school that had been kept open or gained a teacher through RRI. There were also comments from the community survey and family interviews supporting this.

The number of children attending our local school had come down to 18. We were about to lose our assistant teacher. Two families have come to us from Dublin. Our assistant teacher's job was saved. CR:664

It has kept open a school and rehabilitated a small village centre. CR:667

...they only got, they're having the new school built because ours were there, made up the number... LO7:1503-1505

Someone was saying that's from here, "take all the children away that's after moving down with Rural Resettlement and we'll see one teacher less in the school." LC15:1613-1617

BOX 7.11 Quotes on RRI impact on school/teacher numbers

This perceived impact of RRI is made concretely possible by the rules governing teacher numbers and school maintenance in Ireland. At the time of this fieldwork, the "staffing schedule" for National Schools was as outlined in Table 7.7.

At a school with one head teacher, in order to **appoint**: **One** more teacher, need **28 pupils** **Two** more teachers, need **61 pupils** **Three** more teacher, need **94 pupils** **Four** more teachers, need **127 pupils** At a school with one head teacher, in order to **retain**: **One** other teacher, need **25 pupils** **Two** other teachers, need **58 pupils** **Three** other teachers, need **91 pupils** **Four** other teachers, need **127 pupils** If pupil numbers fall below 7 or 8, look at whether to keep the school.

TABLE 7.7 Staffing schedule for National Schools (source: Pers. Comm. Dept. of Education)

This approach to determining school staffing, accounts for how even 2 or 3 children moving to an area can make a crucial difference in teacher numbers. Unfortunately, with the records available it was not possible to cross-reference the families who have moved with pupil numbers in specific National Schools, and thus determine exactly how many teacher jobs have been influenced by RRI. However, Table 7.1 indicates that 151 children of RRI families were of National School age at the time of this research. By no means all of these children were attending at-risk schools, but clearly, from Box 7.11, some were making an impact.

Targeting areas with at-risk schools or teacher jobs is now a priority focus of RRI and, as noted in Chapter 4, need for school pupils is a determining factor for them in which villages are chosen to participate in the "Village Renewal Programme". As an example, in September 1999, two families moved under this programme to a village area where the one-teacher school was at risk due to falling pupil numbers. With the new children enrolled, not only was the school saved, but another teacher was added.

7.5 PREDICTING THE FUTURE

The long-term impact of Rural Resettlement must be effected by long-term choices of family members about where to live. Accordingly, parents were asked for their predictions on where their children might live as adults. Some felt that their children were too young, or it was too uncertain, and did not answer the question. For those that did answer, they gave responses mixed evenly between moving on or staying rural.

They'll probably go back to Dublin anyway. When they get older you know. But at least there's always a stable base down here you know. LC21:305-309

That's the main problem with the rural areas. They don't have any jobs for the kids and they'll have to leave... LO74:601-604

...this is the only thing now I find that they probably will have to go off...Because there's nothing here, I mean what can they do you know? A lot of the kids, a lot of the [local] youngsters that I knew of last year did their Leaving Cert and they're gone now you know....[if had stayed in Dublin] Well these days...I think it's the same. These days I don't see what you could expect really either...there's no, employment in Dublin either. You know, for kids coming out of school. EC31:1142-1144, 1144-1149, 1160, 1161161-1163, 1164-1166

They have to go. I mean there isn't a college, and there isn't, I mean there isn't that employment....Anyway, I'd prefer to see them travel a bit. You know. I wouldn't like, I mean it's a great place to grow up, but they, they're given a fantastic start, but if they don't get out and explore they're going to be completely cut off from the rest of the world. And think that this is life. And it's too easy-going here for it to be "life" you know. EC24:741-743, 784-793

You can't, you can't guarantee that [the children will stay in the rural area], but even if you lived in Dublin, most people of 18 could disappear, go off somewhere. It doesn't make any big difference I don't think. EC22:302-307

BOX 7.12 Parents predicting their children will leave the rural area when they grow up

They seem to [want to stay rural when grown up]. Their plans are all for, they're very much animal and that sort of, and [name] is interested in things that he does with his hands, isn't he? LO7:834-838

...she's always loved the country and she's always loved horses....And she wants to work with horses, that's what she's going to do in course in college....Maybe end up in a rural setting... LO11:165-167, 175-177, 183

Well, I think basically it would very much have to depend on doing one's own work. Getting one's own thing going. You see everybody here has a day job. But they have so many fingers in so many pies. It's a completely different way of life here. You know, someone has a big farm and teaches in the school. And other ones, I don't know, they seem to have all sorts of jobs. And I think that's the way it would have to be. They might have a job but they'd probably want to do other things. Keep sheep maybe. LO68:407-422

Well I'd say [son's prospects for regular work in the country] are fairly all right because...The thing he's doing if he does any well at it, computer programming, you know, there's a lot of that happening at the moment you know....All the jobs are centred mostly on Dublin, but they're kind of branching out a bit more I think. EO7:372-378, 386-389

I think [our kids will stay] probably for the same reasons we would. Peace and quiet. I'm not saying that they might never go to live in the city or work in the city, I would imagine that they would come back. LO46:1069-1074

BOX 7.13 Parents predicting their children will remain in a rural area as adults

Two points are especially important to note from Boxes 7.12 and 7.13. The first is that for parents predicting that their children will leave the rural area, some indicated that they would not have expected their children to "stay put" even if they had grown up in an urban setting. This anticipated fluidity has implications for the overall impact of RRI on families and, especially, on rural communities. In Chapter 10 this issue will be discussed in more depth.

The second point, seen in Box 7.13, is that parents expecting their children to stay in a rural area, often flag up employment as the determining factor. This offers an interesting contrast to their own lack of prioritisation of employment as a determinant in moving to the country, as will be analysed in *Chapter 8, Making Their Way.*

7.6 CONCLUSION

Many families chose to move to the country through RRI in the hopes that it would provide a better life for their children. This chapter has shown that overall, they feel this goal has been met. Most feel their children are well settled and describe them as more confident, more ambitious and having access to greater freedom since their move. However, a minority of 9% felt that their children would prefer to move back to the city. In interviews they cited isolation and lack of access to activities as negatives effecting the children.

An added "bonus", not necessarily expected by the parents, is the increased expectations many now have for the educational qualifications their children will obtain. "Better" schooling is attributed to smaller class sizes and higher standards, while increased ambition is especially attributed to changed peer and wider social expectations of educational attainment. This predicted change in schooling aspirations is supported by other research on rural vs. urban working class school achievements in Ireland.

Community survey respondents noted the goal of keeping local schools open as a main hope for the impact of RRI families on their community. It has been shown that, due to the way the government determines teacher numbers, this is an achievable goal and one that RRI is focussing on meeting.

CHAPTER 8

MAKING THEIR WAY

8.1 INTRODUCTION

One query frequently made about the concept of RRI is whether it is encouraging people to live on state benefits by taking them away from the areas where they may have the best chance of finding work. Sixty-one percent of survey respondents (n=88) were claiming benefits as their main source of income at the time they moved to the country. Chapter 5 showed that finding employment was not a major factor motivating families to join RRI. Is it the case that through this move they have lost any chance of coming off benefit? And what of the other 39%? Is this move causing them to join permanently the ranks of the unemployed? In the period immediately after they move, it is thought that 100% of families claim benefit. What is their experience over time? In order to describe the perceived effect of the move on this aspect of their lives, there are four elements at which we will look: employment, income levels, expenses, and financial ease.

Additionally we will look at what, if any, impact Rural Resettlement is thought to have had on the existing local economy. Competition for jobs is an area that could be a source of conflict between locals and incomers, and this possibility will be considered here.

8.2 EMPLOYMENT

This section looks at participants' urban employment and how that compares to their actual experience of employment since moving.

8.2.1 Urban employment profiles

As stated above, 61% of survey respondents (n=88) were living primarily on benefits immediately before their move. This group was varied in terms of the length of time they had been making a claim.

If your family's main income was Social Welfare just before you moved, how long had you been claiming it?

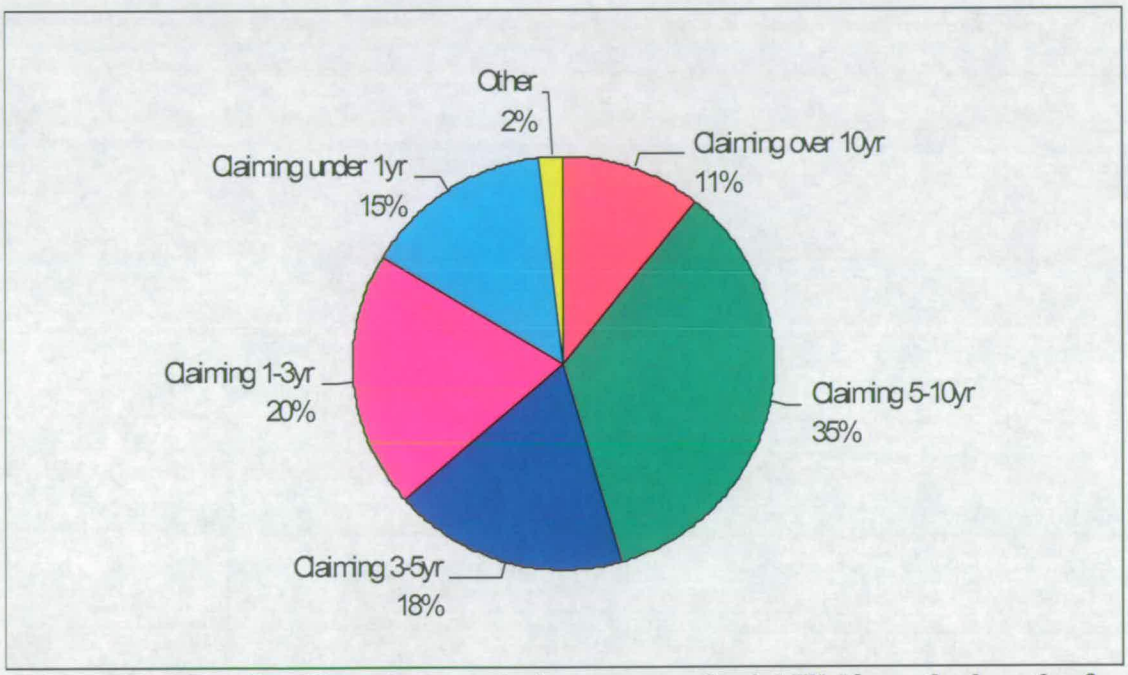


FIGURE 8.1 For families whose main income was Social Welfare, the length of time they had been claiming before moving (n=54)

Figure 8.1 demonstrates the persistent nature of unemployment of many RRI participants. 64% of claimants (40% of all respondent households) naming Social Welfare as their main income for over 3 years prior to moving.

Other studies generally do not explicitly address this issue, leaving the implicit inference that the unemployed do not figure largely in the migrant groups they studied. A notable exception is Bolton and Chalkley (1990) who found that 10% of

respondents "...left their former residence because of unemployment and poor prospects of obtaining a job" (p. 38). Others in their study could have been unemployed and not listed that factor as a main motivation and so remained hidden. There is no reason, however, to suppose that these numbers would be high, certainly not approaching RRI's 61%.

During interviews no one specifically referred to their long-term unemployment as a reason to move. However, several families whose employment circumstances had recently changed, or looked likely to change, did point to this as a catalyst for moving.

I had [my business] go bust on me...so really it was the combination of circumstances that just left us free really. You know, in a way to do this I mean. It's not something that I would have ever thought about probably a couple of years beforehand. Because things were going okay really, you know. EC14:725-734

The place where we were running the business from, in England, had sort of indicated that they were going to put my rent up and in the end they said...go up double. And uh, that sort of decided me to actually take a chance in the place in [Ireland] you know. LO7:135-142

And then [he] was out of work for a year. And life just got very difficult. And so we thought, at least this way, I mean it mightn't be easy but at least we're getting more in control....I mean if we'd been comfortable and if we hadn't had the thing of being unemployed I don't know if we would have done it....life got very bad. There wasn't a future. You couldn't see in Dublin that there was a way that we could sort of empower ourselves again. LO68:72-77, 87-91, 107-111

We had a small business in Dublin, you know, a small shop. And it run into terrible trouble. We had our own house and everything. And uh, we lost the business and we sold our house, lost our house, so we were in a council house then....Which means we had no mortgage. Just a council house, I wasn't working, and it was much easier, you know to move. I mean if you're, if you have a mortgage in Dublin and you're rooted there and you've got a house there and everything, well you're tied really you know....So um, like I felt and I suppose with a lot of the families that moved, I think that they've nothing really to lose....we didn't have to sell a house...we didn't have any mortgage, the children were only young, I wasn't working. So, I mean, for the kind of thing we were thinking of, the quality of life and all that kind of thing, we might as well be here as there.....with me like the catalyst really was the fact that you know, I had no job, I'd no roots down anymore in the house, no mortgage or anything like that so, it was easy you know. EC31:40-46, 50-58, 63-66, 71-72, 73-79, 258-263

But it come to a crunch then because there was some voluntary redundancies cropped up in the place I worked in....So we sat down and we said, well that [money] could we possibly move and make this now because we'll never save [that]. It would always be beyond us. LC1:288-291, 300-305

BOX 8.1 Lost, or under pressure, urban employment as motivating factor for move

These quotes demonstrate the importance such a change in circumstances can have on a family's decision to take what some perceive to be a risky course of action. It is, arguably, one of the reasons why the majority of those who participate in RRI were not in full-time employment immediately prior to moving. For many families, the gamble inherent in giving up a secure job could tip the balance of costs and benefits in favour of not moving.

However, the fact that 61% of families' main income was Social Welfare just before moving does not mean that no other economic activity was taking place in those households.

Immediately before you moved to the country, was anyone in the household employed, self-employed, or on a training course?	
No	44%
Yes	56%

TABLE 8.1 Frequency of household employment or training activities before move (n=86)

Between Figure 8.1 and Table 8.1 it is clear that at least a small number of those claiming Social Welfare were supplementing that income through outside work or training. It is a difficult area of research to be precise about sources and amounts of such outside activity. "Self-employed" in this context was taken by respondents to indicate picking up work as and when possible and, generally, not declaring it. This definition became explicit through interviews and the survey testing period. The exception to this is when they describe themselves as self-employed, but working in a professional field, which specifically arises in the following table. Despite a certain amount of imprecision here, we can be confident that Table 8.1 is comprised of a mixture of earnings declared and those from the black economy.

If "Yes" [in Table 8.1], please state who (man, woman, son, daughter, etc.) and in what type of work or course.	
Man, unskilled	15%
Man, skilled	16%
Man, factory	3%
Man, professional	5%
Man professional, self-employed	5%
Woman unskilled	18%
Woman skilled	6%
Woman factory	2%
Woman professional	15%
Woman professional, self-employed	3%
Man, course	3%
Woman, course	3%
Yes	3%
Other	2%

TABLE 8.2 Breakdown of household employment or training activities prior to moving (n=62, 48 questionnaires)

The profiles in Table 8.2 will be referred to later in analysing if and how work patterns have changed with the move to a rural area.

8.2.2 Employment experiences since rural move

In looking at families' employment experiences since moving, we should first have an idea of what skills they are bringing to the rural job market. The terminology used in this section of the survey was based on the language and categories with which respondents self-assessed their employment and skills. This section was intended to track their own perceptions of employment change with the move, not to "grade" the jobs on an official scale. The categories are in no way equitable with official categorisations of occupation. For instance, use of the term "professional" must not be confounded with the "professional" classes referred to in Social Class and Social Class by Occupation scales. Likewise "skilled" and "unskilled" are self-chosen, not graded on any official scale. This is why, as noted in Chapter 5, interview data, rather than the survey, was relied upon for categorisation of participants into the Social Class Based on Occupation scale.

What skills or qualifications do you and members of your household have?	
Unskilled labour	18%
Skilled labour	32%
Professional	17%
Creative	13%
Formal qualification	13%
Higher degree	5%
Other	2%

TABLE 8.3 Skills in participant households (n=112, 60 questionnaires)

It is likely that the above table is relevant to the majority of respondents before they moved, and so is also strongly connected to the responses in Table 8.2 (work before move), but this cannot be stated definitely.

Tables 8.4 - 8.14 report survey responses to detailed questions on current household employment, training or tertiary educational activities[1].

Is anyone in the household picking up occasional work?	
No	44%
Yes	56%

TABLE 8.4 Frequency of occasional work (n=81)

"Occasional work" was the phrase used to denote time-limited, usually unskilled or skilled labouring jobs, and nearly always indicated a cash in hand arrangement.

[1] Testing of the survey showed that asking both for current welfare claims and current employment status would result in many respondents leaving one or both questions blank. It was decided to focus on employment questions. Unfortunately, this means a direct comparison of benefit claim frequency pre- and post-move cannot be made.

If "Yes" [in Table 8.4], please state who (woman, man, son, daughter, etc.) and in what type of work and how long after you moved[2] this type of work was offered. Please include the entire household.	
Man, unskilled	27%
Man, skilled	7%
Man, professional	2%
Man, unspecified	11%
Woman, unskilled	19%
Woman, professional	8%
Woman, unspecified	3%
Son, manual	7%
Son, unskilled	2%
Daughter, service	7%
Daughter, unskilled	3%
Son or daughter, unspecified	5%

TABLE 8.5 Breakdown of occasional work (n=63, 44 questionnaires)

Is anyone in the household on a FAS, VTOS, or other similar training course?	
No	74%
Yes	26%

TABLE 8.6 Frequency of attending training courses (n=84)

These type of training courses pay participants slightly more than they would receive from Social Welfare. Participants work one week, then have a week off. During the "off" week, they are allowed to pick up other work without jeopardising their basic pay.

[2] The time element requested here, and in Tables 8.7, 8.9, 8.11 and 8.13 broke the data into too much detail, and so has been disregarded.

If "Yes" [in Table 8.6], please state who (woman, man, son, daughter, etc.) and in what type of course and how long after you moved a training course was joined.	
Man	53%
Woman	22%
Son	4%
Daughter	4%
Family member	17%

TABLE 8.7 Breakdown of attendance at training courses (n=23, 22 questionnaires)

Is anyone in the household in official part-time paid employment?	
No	83%
Yes	17%

TABLE 8.8 Frequency of part-time employment(n=83)

Use of the word "official" in the question for Tables 8.8 and 8.10, indicates that the work to be included was declared on tax forms.

If "Yes" [in Table 8.8], please state who is working (woman, man, son, daughter, etc.) and in what type of job and how long after you moved part-time work was found.	
Man, unskilled	7%
Man, skilled	7%
Man, professional	7%
Woman, unskilled	34%
Woman, professional	7%
Son, manual	7%
Daughter, service	7%
Man, unspecified	7%
Woman, unspecified	13%
Son or daughter, unspecified	7%

TABLE 8.9 Breakdown of part-time employment (n=15, 14 questionnaires)

Is anyone in the household in official full-time paid employment?	
No	76%
Yes	24%

TABLE 8.10 Frequency of full-time employment (n=85)

If "Yes" [in Table 8.10], please state who is working (woman, man, son, daughter, etc.) in what type of job and how long after you moved full-time paid work was found.

Man, unskilled	5%
Man, skilled	24%
Man, factory	15%
Man, professional	10%
Man, unspecified	10%
Woman, unskilled	5%
Woman, factory	5%
Woman, professional	5%
Woman, unspecified	5%
Son, manual	10%
Daughter, unskilled	5%
Son or daughter, unspecified	5%

TABLE 8.11 Breakdown of full-time employment (n=21, 20 questionnaires)

Is anyone in the household self-employed?	
No	88%
Yes	12%

TABLE 8.12 Frequency of self-employment (n=86)

If "Yes" [in Table 8.12], please state who is self-employed (woman, man, son, daughter, etc.), in what type of work and how long after you moved self-employment began.	
Man, skilled	9%
Man, professional	18%
Man, creative	45%
Woman, professional	18%
Man, unspecified	9%

TABLE 8.13 Breakdown of self-employment (n=11, 10 questionnaires)

Although, in Table 8.1, the term "self-employment" was taken to include "occasional work" as well as "official self-employment", it was found that by first asking specifically about "occasional work" (Table 8.4), respondents then took "self-employment" to mean "official self-employment".

Is anyone from the household currently attending further education such as college or university?[3]	
No	97%
Yes	3%

TABLE 8.14 Frequency of further education attendance (n=87)

Contrasting Tables 8.4 - 8.14 (employment since moving) with Table 8.2 (employment prior to moving) highlights two main areas of change in employment profiles.

The first of these is gender. Before moving, the total number of respondents working, who noted gender, was evenly split 47% men and 47% women (n=62). After moving, the numbers change to 52% men and 30% women (n=133). The remaining 18% was made up of sons and daughters now working. A recent report

[3] Although asked for more detail, as in the preceding categories, no details were given for the three families answering "Yes" in Table 8.14. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the "Yes" responses probably referred exclusively to daughters and sons.

commissioned by RRI notes similar figures of 58% of men, and 31% of women, now working or in training (Harvey, 1999, p. 19). In interviews, no one ever alluded to this change, and it is impossible to analyse any impact it may have, beyond acknowledging that this shift has occurred.

The second change is in total numbers of people doing any work. Before moving, 62 individuals, in 48 households, were reported to be doing some work or attending a training course (n=86). After moving, 133 individuals, in 65 households, were reported to be working or on a training course (n=86). Of these, 22 are sons or daughters who largely were not included in the "before moving" question, as relatively few would have been of an age to work then. Thus, in a fairer comparison, 111 individuals are now involved in work/training, still a 91% increase on the pre-move figures.

It needs to be noted here that the degree of this increase may have been somewhat effected by the manner of data collection. For the "pre-move" work figures, only one question on what kind of work was being done was included in the survey. For "post-move" the questions were broken down into five separate categories. It seems possible that the detail of these questions may have elicited more responses, meaning that the "pre-move" figures may be slightly underestimated. Also, at the end of the section on employment, respondents were asked about Benefit claims pre-move. If some people read ahead, they may have chosen not to "admit" to any work, if they were acknowledging benefit claims. However, the strength of increase in rates of work/training is most unlikely to have been only the result of these factors.

It is, however, impossible to state that the various changes participants perceive in their employment rates since moving are due solely to the move. The most obvious variable that could also play a part in this is the wider Irish economy. At the time of this fieldwork, Ireland was just at the beginning of the "Celtic tiger" phenomenon where the economy took off according to a number of measures. This is illustrated below in Table 8.15.

Year	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
GDP	-0.4	4.7	5.2	5.8	8.5	1.9	3.3	2.7	5.8	10.0	7.8	10.8	8.6	10.8	11.5
Private consumption	2.0	3.3	4.5	6.5	1.4	1.8	2.9	3.0	4.4	4.4	6.3	7.3	7.3	8.2	9.9
Total employment	0.5	0.6	0.3	-0.1	3.3	-0.1	3.1	1.5	3.2	5.4	3.8	5.6	5.0	6.4	5.0

TABLE 8.15 Measures of the Irish economy, % change over preceding year, 1986-2000 (source: United Nations, 2001, pp. 151, 152, 159)

In Table 8.15 each of the three categories—GDP, Private Consumption and Total Employment—show rates of growth that are unmatched if contrasted to the other European economies or those of North America or Japan (UN, 2001).

In some contrast, the Standardised Unemployment Rate, although falling dramatically and by 2000 among the lowest, is not the lowest of the European economies (UN, 2001).

Year	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
Standardised unemployment rates	16.8	16.6	16.2	14.7	13.4	14.7	15.4	15.6	14.3	12.3	11.7	9.9	7.5	5.6	4.2

TABLE 8.16 Standardised unemployment rates in Ireland, % of civilian labour, 1986-2000 (source: United Nations, 2001, p. 160)

However, if not achieving the lowest rates, they were falling dramatically from the unemployment high of 16.8% in 1986 when only Spain, at 21.2% had a higher unemployment rate in Europe (UN, 2001, p. 160). By 1996, the year of this fieldwork into RRI, the rate had fallen to 11.7%, a 1.7% drop since 1990 when the first families moved with RRI.

This overall picture of economic prosperity, even if unemployment was still falling slowly, suggests that more jobs might have been available to RRI participants whether or not they had moved. Looking at some other statistics, however, indicates that, even with this boom economy, large local variations exist in employment rates and many RRI migrants are moving to areas of much lower unemployment.

Acknowledging first that RRI participants have moved from many different areas, and to many different areas, it is still valuable to compare two sample sites. The following table uses data from a Dublin County housing estate from which some families have moved, and Kilballyowen Parish, Clare.

Employment Status	Tallaght-Fettercairn				Kilballyowen Parish			
	Males		Females		Males		Females	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
At work	584	38	376	22	84	64	10	10
Unemployed	634	41	249	14	7	5	5	5
Student	204	13	225	13	8	6	13	13
Home duties	9	1	824	48	--	--	65	63
Retired	32	2	18	1	31	23	9	9
Other	67	4	36	2	2	2	1	1
Total	1,530	100	1,728	100	132	100	103	100

Table 8.17 Employment statistics contrasted between a sample Dublin County housing estate and Kilballyowen Parish, Clare (sources: Central Statistics Office, 1998a and 1998b)

Table 8.17 shows that at the 1996 Census employment levels in this rural parish are very high compared to those in the urban communities from which many families move. The economy might be booming, unemployment nationally at 11.7%, yet in a sample "feeder" community for RRI, male unemployment is still at 41%.

Migrants themselves did not question that it was the move that had changed their employment rates and, furthermore, the nature of the work being done. During interviews, participants frequently observed that the nature of potential employment had changed with the move to a rural area.

At the moment I collect dole, some dole during the week and I also play music at the weekends....I was working [FAS] with [local] guys there and they were on it now and some of them had a few cattle, they sold turf, they did this, that and the other. And I said to myself, well, that's the way to do it in the country....Bit of this, bit of that, whatever you know. You have to do it, 'cause there's no full-time work... EC31:787-790, 1007-1013, 1014-1016

I feel it's a move in the right direction anyway. There's loads of opportunities in the country you wouldn't have in the city. (woman)
There is, yes, loads, loads. There's so much scope in the country, much more so than in the city. (man) LO46:218-221, 223-225

It was a whole new scene when we come down, looking for work. You know like before [in Dublin] it was a case of you send off your CV and you know like you get a reply and you get a chance to sell yourself....[down here] there's a lot of casual work. A lot of straight into the hand kind of you know deals. LC1:539-544, 560-562

And I don't think there's such a thing as a long term aspect of employment as regards guaranteed work for a year or two years. These are all one off things. LO77:776-781

There's more opportunities of earning. I wouldn't say work as such, but there's more opportunities for me to earn money, living in Kerry. Like recently now I'm after starting picking winkles, which is a thing I'd never heard of in Dublin. LO44:1350-1357

Pretty difficult to get a 9 to 5 regular job in the country. But, I think you've got a better chance of picking up, either part time work or doing something yourself. EC22:325-330

BOX 8.2 Changing nature of work with rural move

Box 8.2 illustrates the way in which respondents perceive work opportunities have changed with their rural move. It also shows that this perceived change, away from seeking or holding an "official" job is not necessarily viewed as a negative. However, as the following quotes explain, the right attitude to finding this type of work is seen as an essential element for success.

If you come over here either a) you're gonna be on the dole, which could be a permanent thing. Or b) you've got to try and get yourself up and do something. There's no sort of...in between....Really, depressed you know, thinking right I'm here, what am I going to do now?! I can't find a job...cause there's no jobs. So you've got to stop thinking like that....That was what I found the hardest step, to make the break

of feeling down and pick myself up [to do own work].... EC14:2000-2006, 2668-2673, 2678-2680

I mean there is, there's definitely ways of making money out in the country. You know, even if that now is only one example like, chain saw and cutting timber. It all depends if you're willing to work. EO9:1167-1172

...maybe 2 years ago into this, I was having doubts. And I was saying 'Look. I need to get back into the normal, career orientated life'. So hard to pull yourself away from it. I want to get myself an ordinary job. And I was thinking of going back and doing a course in college, something environmental. And then I said 'No, I won't. I'm going to do the environmental thing. I'm going to do what they take studies about up in Dublin'. Either the organic growing. Or setting up a business here and making it work. So that was a choice. And I came to, okay, you're just going to have to make it work, action now, no more words, no more messing around like. LO38:913-933

[I] was willing to come and do anything to make money. I mean I done everything when I came down here, still do. EC24:2769-2772

BOX 8.3 Importance of attitude in finding rural work

There are, of course, exceptions to the perception outlined in Boxes 8.2 and 8.3. For instance, as noted in Table 8.10, 24% of households do have someone in "official full-time" employment.

I gave up a full time job in Dublin to move down here. So I stayed out of work for a year....I'd say you'd get equally a good job down here, if we were lucky enough. In the [nearby] town. Which I did actually, I got a better job than the one I left. LC15:1056-1058, 1079-1083 (woman)

Also, there are those who join in the new manner of work, but do not find it satisfying.

I'm fed up like not working you know? Properly working. I'm on a [FAS] scheme for the last 3 years, you know. EO7:80-83

The means of finding work in a rural area was another topic that frequently came up in interviews. Participants put a strong emphasis on the importance of getting yourself, and/or your skills known in the local area.

...she got [the job] through contacts, through she was in [a club] and...she's great friends there and...she got her a job...Probably wouldn't have got the job if only for she was involved with people....[finding part-time work in the country] it's easier for

me because I make some money playing the music...but I don't know about someone who would have no other sort of, interest like that...I don't know what they'd do really...Unless they get work during the summer or something with a farmer... EC31:760-762, 766, 767-769, 1034-1035, 1036-1039, 1039-1040, 1040-1042

And most people down in the country they don't advertise. It's all word o' mouth. GB1:2632-2634

...I used to go around to [place] and I'd try every shop and pub and everyone! For any kind of work! And every two weeks I'd do that. Eventually they just got sick of me, people started hearing then, oh Jesus, he wants work, he wants work. So then I'd start getting a day here and there. Once you do a bit of work...you get in with them. EC15:248-258

I mean when I came down here first, now I had no job or anything you know...and the bit of work I was doing on the house helped me enormous. You know what I mean, because then it shows other people you can do it....You know, and like if you're fixing your own car for instance...it's advertising yourself...whereas you can't actually come down to the country and tell them overnight that you can do this or you can do that, or you know. EO9:1044-1046, 1047-1050, 1055-1056, 1057-1058, 1064-1068

BOX 8.4 Means of finding rural work

Comparing responses from the Family and Community Surveys adds another interesting piece to this picture of the availability of rural work.

On a scale of 1 to 5, please state the strength of your disagreement or agreement with the following statements.					
	"Strongly disagree"	*"Disagree"*	*"Neutral"*	*"Agree"*	*"Strongly agree"*
It is easier to find work in the country (Fam. Survey)	23%	21%	31%	17%	7%
Work is easier to find in the country than in the city (Comm. Survey)	14%	63%	19%	---	5%

TABLE 8.18 Perceptions of difficulty in finding rural work (n=87, n=43)

This shows RRI participants feel the chance of finding work in rural areas is higher than it is thought to be by community respondents. Whether this is the result of differing ambitions for work, or due to other causes would be an interesting subject for further investigation.

There were, of course, RRI participants who were not able to find work. One group of interviewees, who had trouble finding work, felt that not being known locally or being inexperienced in rural work, held them back.

...I find the employment is, in rural areas in particular...there's a lot of nepotism. EO12:1542-1543, 1546-1547

But when it comes to work you've got no chance because it's all like families so everything's in the family. Any work that comes up they get it first. GB1:168-172

I had hoped to be working. Down here, coming down from Dublin you know, nothing but farms, farms don't want the people that they're gonna have to teach, they want somebody who can come in and do the work. LC9:317-322

It's very hard [to find work in the country]. Well for me and my husband it's very hard. Then again, like, you need education nowadays to get a job. LO6:303-306

It's this area in general now....you see certain areas that if there's work to be done in the area, they'll give it to one of the lads who's moved down. But here they don't, they keep it in the family. There's not one of them that would actually give you half a days work, never mind an hours work. I don't like them for that, that's one thing I resent. LC15:680-681, 683-692

BOX 8.5 Perceived barriers to finding rural work

A minority went so far as to say that they felt they were particularly held back from obtaining work by their Dublin connections.

I think it's because we're strangers, I don't know. Like they, as he said, he phoned up a good few jobs in the paper. He'd get the impression it's 'cause of his [Dublin] accent that he never got the job. EO7:2851-2857

It's a lot harder to find work [down here], the voice puts them off. You know? That's the only thing that....I rang him up about work like you know. And he says, 'oh, you're from Dublin.' And I'm so sick of hearing it like you know. I says 'yeah, don't let that put you off.' And he says, 'no, no, no, no, no.' I says, 'we're not all bad, it's only the chosen few like you know'...I'm sure they say, 'oh you're from

Dublin and you're down, oh Jesus. This fellow must have a gun or a knife.'... That's something we never thought before we came down, we never thought it would be anything like that. You know I mean everyone works in Dublin, people from the North and England and everybody works in Dublin. LC21:1289-1291, 1504-1516, 1523-1529

BOX 8.6 Perceptions of anti-Dublin bias

However, it was also pointed out that families can face this prejudice within urban areas too.

You're classed [in Dublin], you are classed. Because if we'd stayed where we were, you know, and [my son] went for a job, he would of had to give his aunt's address. 'Cause he would not have got a job with that address. EO7:1971-1977

[Our children], have a better chance of getting a job in Dublin coming from [rural county] than you would from Dublin....They don't want to know you once you're reared in Tallaght. They know you're automatically a scumbag. That's the way they look at it. LO57:102-105, 109-113

...if you put down say an address it looks, much more respectable than putting down another address...Rather than "I'm from [poor Dublin neighbourhood], yeah, unemployed, yeah I'm unemployed, me brother's in prison" Something like that. Fucking lovely! Yeah, you want the job? Fuck off! EC24:2470-2473,2484-2489

BOX 8.7 Barriers to finding work within Dublin

The above tables and quotes show that although perceptions of the nature of available work has changed, and not many will get full-time permanent employment after moving, many more people are participating in income generating activities than were before they moved.

8.3 INCOME LEVELS

Aside from changing conditions of employment, some RRI participants experience a change in household income with their move. Figures 8.2 and 8.3 illustrate the families' objective comparisons of their income levels before and since the move.

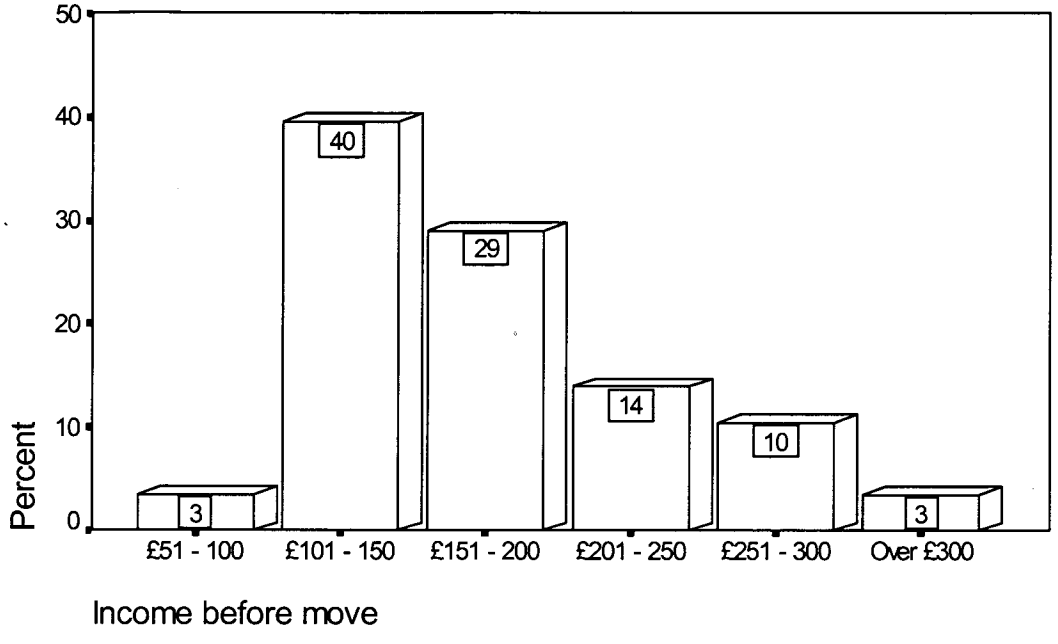


FIGURE 8.2 Percent of families by income category before move (n=86)

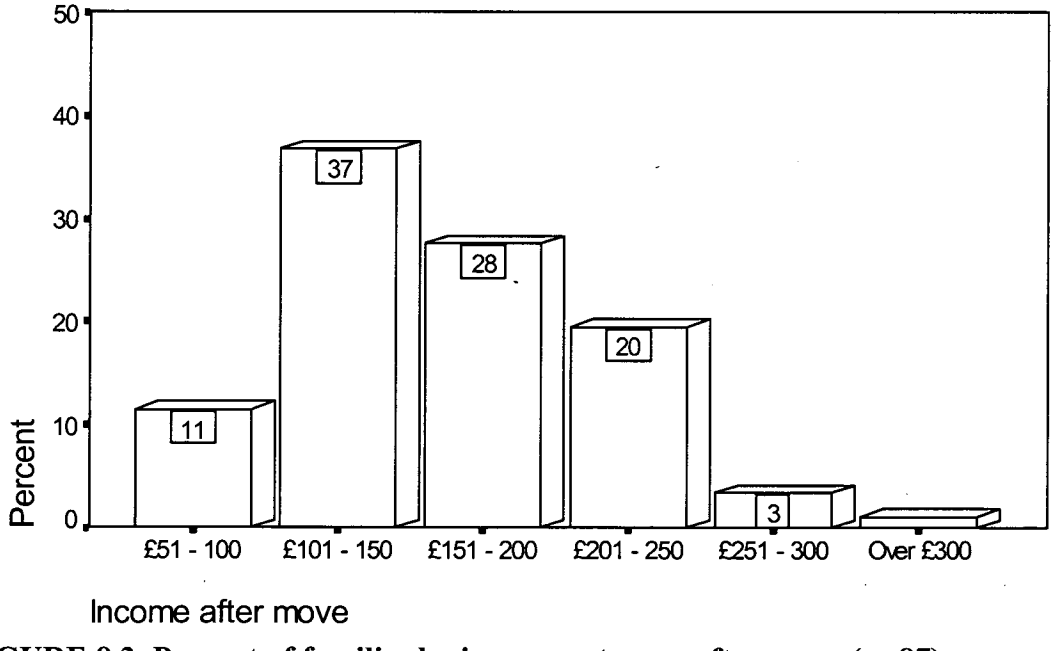


FIGURE 8.3 Percent of families by income category after move (n=87)

A before and after comparison for individual respondents generates the following table.

Division of respondents	Income down since move	Income the same since move	Income up since move
All respondents (n=85)	34%	39%	27%
Early phase of programme, before 7/1993 (n=27)	33%	30%	37%
Later phase of programme, after 7/1993 (n=58)	34%	43%	22%

TABLE 8.19 Income change with move (n's as shown)

There are two particularly notable points about the data in Table 8.19. The first is the impact that Social Welfare payments have on stabilising income through the move. 39% of respondents have the same income since moving and much of this is directly attributable to benefits. This contrasts with Jones et al (1986) who found that "...54% of respondents reported a significantly reduced household income after moving, compared with only 22% recording a significant increase in income" (p. 23). 63% of their respondents were from SC I and II prior to the move (p. 23), while 61% of RRI respondents were unemployed. This substantially changes the likelihood of income falling. Secondly, over time, respondents become more likely to have increased their income compared to those more recently moved. Given the comments in Box 8.4 about the importance of contacts in finding work locally, this may be a sign of integration within communities.

However, given that Section 8.2 showed that more people were involved in income earning activities after moving, it is interesting that only 27% claim to have increased their income. Here again, interviews lend insight into the factors behind this.

For five days in Dublin I'd earn about £260 before tax. For five days down here you're going to get about 150. So it's a hundred and ten at least I miss straight away there you know. LO77:760-767

Ah, you might get a bit in the summer, but like that money is not that good....Slave labour really. Doing hay and things like that, you work all day for pittance. Compared to, like you don't get a proper day's wages. EO7:109-111, 113-117

...[name] he says there's no work around--there's plenty of work around. He's not willing to do it. Sure [name] used to say, "sure I wouldn't work for 25, 30 pound a day." He thinks he's back in Dublin you know it's £50 a day. He won't get it. They're not going to pay anyone down here....You can't just pick and choose. We'd all like to pick and choose, work there, take tomorrow off, but you can't do that. EC15:314-324, 346-349

So I opted out [of FAS].....I don't mind work, but I'd say I was going to be working for nothing you know? LC15:1122, 1123-1125

BOX 8.8 Comments on changing rates of pay

In Box 8.8 the comments are centred around people who resent the changing pay rate so much, they give up on looking for work. However, as shown in Section 8.2, the majority of participants accept this situation and get on with picking up jobs here and there, if they do not obtain regular work. The influence of attitude on how such changes are experienced is even more strongly illustrated in Section 8.5.

8.4 EXPENSES

For many families, the first major expense faced is that of the actual move from their urban, to their rural house.

How much money did your household personally have to spend in order to move to the country?

Amount	Percentage
£0 - 100	24%
£101 – 200	17%
£201 – 300	8%
£301 – 400	13%
£401 – 500	10%
OVER £500	29%

TABLE 8.20 Amount spent on actual move (n=84)

The next big expense could be work needed done on their new home.

Once you had moved, how much money did you spend personally on fixing up your house in the first 6 months?

Amount	Percentage
NONE	35%
£1 – 100	26%
£101 – 200	9%
£201 – 300	9%
£301 – 400	1%
£401 – 500	3%
OVER £500	16%

TABLE 8.21 Amount spent on house in first 6 months (n=86)

Although Tables 8.20 and 8.21 show what many would consider to be relatively small amounts of money spent, they represent a sizeable outlay to those families on quite restricted budgets.

As a next measure of costs, interviews elicited a general sense that goods were more expensive in rural areas.

Food is a lot dearer [here]. We went back to England in January and I went to Sainsbury's and came out totally depressed at how cheap it was! LO7:1648-1652

Price differences too are major....And when you get your shopping then like it's a taxi home because we hadn't got a car at the time... LO19:601-602, 614-616

I find the food very expensive down here....And then you need a car all the time here. LO6:502-503, 503-504

Most of our money goes on food....Big difference from the city, it surprised me a lot. And then the quality....We thought we'd get the fresh vegetables really cheap and stuff like that. Got better vegetables and better selection and all in the city. EO12:1213-1214, 1217-1225

Expensive.... More expensive than Dublin.....More expensive. LC9:805, 807, 809

I think it is more expensive [here].....Much more expensive. LC21:1631-1632, 1636

BOX 8.9 Increased prices in rural area

A minority expressed the view that costs were much the same, or even lower, in rural areas.

Much the same [prices] in Dublin. Like you go to a supermarket, obviously it's cheaper, you go to a corner shop it's dearer. It's like Dublin you go corner shop or little small shop and it's going to be dearer. LC15:1169-1175

No, I find things down here cheaper....Food's all the same price. LO11:1039-1040, 1048-1049

BOX 8.10 Static/lower prices in rural area

8.4.1 Transport

Transportation is an important issue to rural residents. It can also be an increased household expense to those who are leaving behind relatively good urban public transport. 57% of survey respondents (n=86) stated that there was no bus service to their nearest town. 15% have a service that runs less than daily. The need for accessible transport is reflected in families' changing profile of car ownership.

Response	Urban home %	Rural home %
Yes, household owns a car	61%	79%
No, household does not own a car	39%	21%

TABLE 8.22 Percent car ownership contrasted while respondents were in urban vs. rural areas (n=121)

In this measure, RRI families seem to blend in with the rural norm. In his study of Irish villages Gillmor (1988) found that 79% of residents owned at least one car. Also that "Because of the greater need to have a car, ownership occurred at lower income levels than in urban households and the high cost of motoring in the Irish Republic was a major burden" (p. 63). 1991 Census figures for Clare state that in "Aggregate Rural Areas"[4] households with at least one car were 72% of all households (CSO, 1994). That this is slightly lower than the RRI response may be due to the inclusion of numbers from small towns where car access may be less crucial, and perhaps those who live close to relatives and share a car.

The importance of car access was attested to in interviews.

Motoring, by comparison with the UK is a lot more expensive. But it's essential, living this far out... EC14:3179-3181

And I understand as well, a lot of people that move are unemployed, have no car, which if we didn't have a car would be, I mean it would be very very hard. People don't really appreciate until they come how different...I mean there just aren't busses and that's a fact...If you're that poor and that you haven't got a car, most people have got cars, there are people that haven't and there are Rural Resettlement people that haven't got cars. It's a major inconvenience. Living in the country is a good life, but it can be a tough life as well. And really you should be mobile. There are no busses and that's it. LO7:1601-1607, 1609-1610, 1614-1624

You're kidding yourself if you move to a, a rural area and don't have a car. And you can't drive. And preferable, both of youse drive. EC24:1956-1960

[4] Aggregate Rural Areas are defined as towns with a population under 1,500 and Rural Areas (CSO, 1994).

Yeah we both drive. You'd have to have a car you know. You couldn't be without a car. Some people moved without having cars, I don't know how they do it. EC31:1925-1929

BOX 8.11 Importance of car ownership

Despite the importance of car access, the extra expense does put it out of the reach of some families.

We find it hard to even live, never mind run a car you know. EO7:421-422

8.4.2 Heating costs

Another basic need to meet is that of heating the house. With adequate insulation and double glazing uncommon, at least in homes first moved to through RRI, and the exposed nature of many rural homes, this has the potential to be an increased cost.

Prior to moving, 60% of survey respondents had central heating (n=83). After moving, 59% still had central heating (n=86). The change here is to be found in the heating source.

Heat Source	Before moving	After moving
Gas	40%	4%
Solid fuel	20%	57%
Electric	12%	4%
Oil	2%	16%
"Yes"	26%	18%
Other	---	2%

TABLE 8.23 Change in frequency of household heat sources (for those with central heating) with move (n=83, n=86)

The biggest change illustrated is the shift from gas and electric to solid fuel and oil. For rural residents, solid fuel heating offers the option of offsetting costs by working a turf bog oneself. However, most RRI families do not have access to a turf bog by right with their house.

Do you have access to a turf bog with your house?	
No	84%
Yes	17%

TABLE 8.24 Household turf bog access (n=85)

The percent whom make use of a turf bog is higher than Table 8.24 would suggest, as some families rent if they do not have one already.

Do you use any bog either by renting it or having one that comes with your house?	
No	72%
Yes	28%

TABLE 8.25 Household turf bog utilisation (n=86)

Use of a turf bog can make a substantial contribution to covering heating costs.

If "Yes" [in Table 8.25], how much of your heating needs do you meet this way?	
All	46%
A large part	46%
A small part	7%

TABLE 8.26 Heating provided by turf from use of bog (n=28)

However, the majority do not work a turf bog, citing that the time and effort involved is not worth the potential savings.

8.4.3 Changes in entitlement

Another area of increased expense for some families is that of changes in entitlement to specific government programmes of support. In interviews, sometimes off tape, several families noted that they now pay for certain things which in Dublin were covered by grants.

...down here we have to pay for the school for the lunches whereas we'd free lunches in Dublin. And then we have to pay for the collection of the refuse and we had that free in Dublin and you have to pay water charges down here and we had that free in Dublin. LO30:3247-3255

First of all...in Dublin you get £4 fuel allowance. (man)
...plus the milk, you know, for school going kids in Dublin, that was free...And a sandwich....in Dublin you got a grant for your school books but here you don't. (woman) LO27:630-631, 648-650, 1028-1030

BOX 8.12 Loss of financial support since moving

Here there seemed to be some variation between families and areas with this issue. This was not gone into further, but might be an interesting area for future investigation.

8.5 FINANCIAL EASE

This section examines the cumulative impact of previous financial measures. Given changes in employment, wages and expenses, what are the families' subjective views about whether they are living better, or struggling more, on the money they have?

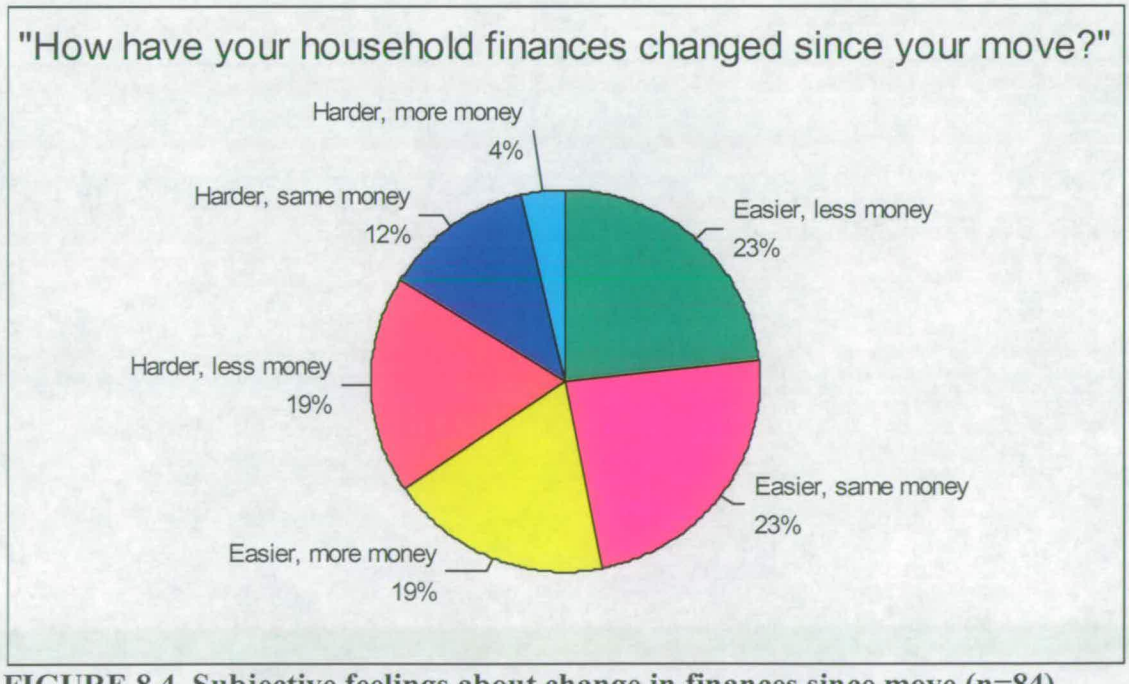


FIGURE 8.4 Subjective feelings about change in finances since move (n=84)

Sixty-five percent from Figure 8.4 state that their finances are easier since they moved. Intriguingly, this includes 46% of the total who state that they have less, or the same, money as before they moved, yet managing financially is easier. This is despite the majority view of increased prices and extra expenses such as running a car. Interview excerpts here give insight into this seemingly contradictory result.

We were unemployed in Dublin [too], at one time I was. And we have a better standard of life down here. Unemployed down here than we did up there unemployed. That's without a doubt really. LO57:1377-1382

...in Dublin, you go around the supermarkets. And you're buying things that you don't need just, you see them there, so you put them in the trolley...and every week and she was buying things whether you needed them or not, just buy this, because you're seeing things. You're spending you know. Where you don't see them around here. EC15:1304-1309, 1329-1334

You would manage on a lot less money here. (woman)
Even though things...are dearer here. We just managed. I don't know how we managed, but we got through it anyway. (man)
On the whole it is cheaper to live in the country. (woman)
If you put money on your agenda coming on the likes of Rural Settlement, forget about it you know, you may as well stay in the city. Because it's not about, I wouldn't say it's about money. I say, in the country, it's about finding myself, where I am to fit in life at the moment. (man)
If we'd been living in Dublin on what we're living one here we'd have gone under. (woman)
We would yeah. We would have sunk. (man)
We have found that when you live in the country you buy what you need, not what you want. (woman) LO46:1339-1365, 1371-1373

Well, I think I could sum some of that up [is it tighter money-wise?] by the other day we had cooked dinner. We had bacon, potato, cabbage and parsley sauce. The only thing we hadn't provided was the milk for the parsley sauce. We wouldn't have done that in Dublin. LO68:1061-1068

Well it's, I suppose money is tight all right, but it's easier...it's easier to manage...in Dublin you see it's, it's too handy, going shopping. Everything is handy to you. Everything is too close. Where here you get your messages every week, they have to last you a week. You wouldn't go into town everyday... EO19:1403-1404, 1409, 1424-1431

...if you've got a fella to scratch your nose in Dublin it's cost you a couple of pounds. EO9:1464-1467

A lot dearer [here]....Your shopping bill would be a lot dearer but then you've no, um, no other overheads...so after your shopping you're kinda left with what you're left with which doesn't be a lot but yet you can manage. Whereas in Dublin there was always little knicky, knacky things...Down here you haven't got that. LO30:2008, 2011-2013, 2015-2020, 2026-2027

...living here, as you can see like, you don't have easy access to a shop....Now when you were in Dublin, there was a shop right across the road from us....So you could be going across to that shop....Spending money on this, that and the other... EC31:1891-1893, 1894-1896, 1896-1897, 1899-1900

Well, it's much more relaxing. I don't have to keep up with the Joneses. You know, which was something I was never into doing. EO12:926-929

BOX 8.13 How finances can be easier on equal or less money

More specifically, several families noted that their children now put them under less pressure for consumer goods.

...yeah, it is dear [here]...But the actual, um, to live is cheaper, if that makes sense. Um, like in England my children wanted £40 trainers at the MiniMall. They'll go in their wellies here, I mean they just don't care. There's not the, there's not the pressure on them to wear styles. They just, they don't know what they're wearing half the time...So from that point of view it's a lot cheaper to live. LO7:1661, 1664-1673, 1679-1681

[In urban area] it was like all 'what kind of runners you have, what kind of games you have'. Down here the kids have a great laugh over it. LO6:905-909

Well, you know, it's things that you, you'd get, and you didn't really want them. You didn't need them. But it's just, like they were all over the place and then if you had the kids in town with you, you'd always say, well right look it, we'll go into the Pound Shop and get you something. So that's 3 quid gone straight away....If they were in Dublin now, their taste would be different. I mean they, I would be under an awful lot of pressure for them to have the named [football] boot, and the named, I mean they wouldn't go around in what they go around in at the moment. EC24: 3081-3090, 3167-3174

BOX 8.14 Reduced pressure from children for consumer goods

The view of rural life putting less consumer pressure on children—both incomers and locals—is supported by Valentine (1997). However, it is in sharp contrast to Forsythe (1980) who stated that,

> *The urban refugees' higher expectations with respect to housing comfort have helped raise the expectations of islanders as well, and their tastes in automobiles, food, drink, entertainment, and clothing have visibly influenced the habits of some of the younger members of the receiving community. (p. 294)*

Here, the different SECs of RRI families and the "urban refugees" in Forsythe's study would seem to have altered impacts both on participants and on local communities.

The above quotes speak clearly to the change in lifestyle and pressures that many families credit with making their finances easier, even when they are bringing in less money. However, Figure 8.4 also showed that 35% of respondents felt their finances were worse since moving.

...I find it very hard money wise, we're always broke, the only day we have money is on Thursday morning when we get paid. LO6:485-488

This situation was not expanded upon often in interviews, probably because it is the "obvious" assumption to make where people have said that costs are higher and income static or down.

8.6 LOCAL ECONOMY

An influx of new people into depopulating rural areas must have an impact on the local economy. Phillips and Williams (1984) found that the impact of incomers on local services could be negative, because they shop far away from local communities. However, given that RRI families have been shown to be less affluent than participants in many counterurbanisation studies and that they are not usually commuting to work and passing far away shops, this is not thought to be the case. Even the relatively modest income of many RRI families means more money for shops, post offices, pubs and other businesses. The rents families pay augment incomes of other rural residents. A proportion of their house purchases will also boost local incomes.

Perhaps more important, though, is the potential multiplier effect their presence can have for the maintenance of local services. Chapter 7 illustrated how RRI might prove to be effective at maintaining teacher's jobs. This is significant not only from an educational and community quality of life standpoint, but also economically. Many of these teachers are rural residents and their salaries can make an important contribution to the local economy. Although not precisely tied to numbers, as are teachers' jobs (Table 7.7), other services such as post offices, transport and health provision can only have their cause strengthened by higher population numbers.

Using a semantic difference scale, specific questions relevant to the local economy were posed through the community survey.

On a scale of 1 to 5, please state the strength of your disagreement or agreement with the following statements.					
I think city people moving to the country will:	*"Strongly disagree"*	*"Disagree"*	*"Neutral"*	*"Agree"*	*"Strongly agree"*
Bring new jobs to the area	15%	34%	39%	10%	2%
Help keep shops and post offices open	2%	---	14%	56%	28%
Take jobs away from locals	19%	55%	24%	2%	---

TABLE 8.27 Community survey responses on economic impact of migrants (n=41, n=43, n=42)

These responses show optimism for the impact of RRI on facets of the local economy. The open comments section of the survey only elicited one response germane to this issue, perhaps indicating that, although an area for hope, the economy is not the most obvious area of impact to most respondents.

I notice also that the relatives from the city come to visit also--also a boost for the shops etc. CO:662

Table 8.27 also shows that there is little concern that RRI participants will take away jobs from previous rural residents. There are differing depictions of this issue in the literature. Jedrej and Nuttall found that employment and housing were "most often cited as perceived common problems resulting from in-migration" (p. 168). Newby (1979) found this was not the case and explained it thus,

> *...the newcomers either retain their employment in nearby towns and commute to work or they have come to the countryside to retire. Both they and their children are also more mobile and, typically, more highly-educated, so they compete in an entirely separate...labour market from the local population. (p. 167)*

Given that the RRI families so firmly do not fit Newby's description, is this then an area where conflict will arise even though locals seem not to expect it? This study did not turn up any evidence to suggest that this will prove to be a problem in the near future. Also, by contrasting Table 8.17 with rates of employment listed in Tables 8.4, 8.6, 8.8, 8.10 and 8.12, it is clear that RRI participants are not obtaining jobs at a higher rate than local people. If anything it appears, particularly from the sorts of casual jobs being performed by many RRI participants, that they are filling a void in local labour markets. Forsythe (1980) described a similar situation on Orkney,

> *It is often said in explanation of rural exodus that people leave the countryside because there are no jobs. In Stormay, however, jobs are available to incomers because local people have left the island. Nearly all the positions filled by urban refugees could be performed instead by members of the receiving community - if enough young and middle-aged adults had remained in the island to do them. Few if any incomers have taken jobs away from Stormay folk; rather, the urban migrants have replaced labour and skills drained out of the community by rural exodus. Competition for jobs has not been a source of conflict between incomers and local people on Stormay. (p. 294)*

Another possibility considered, but generally disagreed with, in Table 8.27 was whether RRI participants might actually bring new jobs to the local area. Findlay et al (1999) did some work on this in Scotland, showing that 13% of migrant households actually employed someone else. This was considered separately from any jobs created by migrants' businesses. These tended to be "low paid service sector jobs" (p. 85), but still made a contribution to local employment. However, as has been repeatedly noted, the SES "ranking" of most RRI families means that none in this study were in a position to hire household help. Several are trying to start businesses, but the stage they are at means that the potential for employing others is, at best, in the future. This means that Findlay et al's (1999) "job multipliers" for the impact of new businesses created by migrants can not be applied to RRI.

Finally, it should be noted that Fitchen's (1995) work where she states, "as a rural community becomes a migration destination for poor people, it both regains population and become poorer" (p. 193), is not relevant here. She was studying contained communities where large employment losses had sparked out-migration followed by a large in-migration filling inexpensive housing. The pattern of RRI is entirely different.

It may be that the above, and other aspects of RRI's impact on the local economy and local employment, will be more usefully quantifiable when participant numbers are greater and, perhaps, more concentrated in specific areas. However, it can at least be stated that this is, overall, an area of potential benefit RRI can offer to rural communities.

8.7 CONCLUSION

Sixty-one percent of RRI participants (n=88) were claiming benefits as their main source of income prior to moving. However, 62 individuals in 48 households, making up 56% of households (n=86) were involved in at least some income-generating activities prior to moving.

After moving, 133 individuals in 65 households, or 76% of all households, were participating in income generation (n=86). When sons and daughters were removed from these totals, 111 individuals were involved in income-generating activities after moving. Despite noted difficulties in gathering and comparing this data, this shows a marked increase in frequency of work involvement. It was noted that these changing rates cannot be absolutely credited to the rural move. For instance, Ireland's economic boom could have played its part, although more local employment statistics cast some doubt on this option.

The nature of work was shown to have often changed with moving. Although full-time and "regular" jobs still exist, there is more part-time or occasional work, much of which is lower paid than urban work and much of it is in the black economy. It was noted that adjusting to this change was sometimes difficult, with some participants "failing" to accept this shift.

Actual household income is shown to fluctuate for many families with the move, despite the steadying effect of largely static benefit payments. However, households that have been in place longest, have the best chance of raising their income compared to their urban situation. This supports the idea that over time they are integrating into the local networks through which jobs are often found.

Interviews illustrated a general sense that "things" were more expensive in rural areas, although there was variation in this opinion. Transportation and household heating were particularly noted as areas where costs commonly increased with the move.

Participant's subjective view of "financial ease" flagged up a seeming anomaly. Sixty-four percent of respondents state their finances are now easier, including 47% of respondents who felt finances had improved despite income remaining the same, or even dropping (n=84). In interviews, this was attributed to less consumer-oriented lifestyles, particularly with regard to pressure from children to make expensive purchases.

Local survey respondents displayed a general optimism for the potential economic impact of RRI on communities. There was very little concern with regard to competition for jobs. It was suggested that the local economic effect of RRI would be an important issue to be studied in more depth when numbers of participants are higher.

CHAPTER 9

A MEASURE OF SUCCESS?

9.1 INTRODUCTION

RRI does not have set targets in terms of participant numbers or other concrete "markers" of achievement. Even if such specific criteria did exist, they would not be able to tell the whole story of the RRI experience. Are there broader criteria that can reasonably be used to test the success of the project? Should these be from the point of view of individual participants or from the communities to which they move? Taking the view that these are equally important "constituents" of the project, this chapter discusses the options for, and usefulness of, such criteria.

From the families' point of view, it is most consistent to continue with the phenomenological approach adopted throughout the research and ask for their own assessment of the overall experience.

From the community perspective we will particularly discuss the implications of participants' length of stay in rural areas.

9.2 SPECIFICS

First it is useful to display simply the specific, sectoral findings of this research. Chapters 6 through 8 presented research results on the impact of RRI on participants and local communities. Contrasting positive and negative outcomes, the following table presents the main points that were clearly illustrated—often in terms of perceptions—within those chapters. It does not include possible impacts that could not be definitely addressed by this project.

SECTOR	PARTICIPANTS		COMMUNITIES	
	POSITIVE	**NEGATIVE**	**POSITIVE**	**NEGATIVE**
Housing/Place	• Improved physical surroundings • Physical distance from neighbours • Opportunity to grow food • New recreational opportunities	• Lower quality of housing (particularly initially) • Limited security of tenure • Physical isolation	• Upkeep of current housing stock • Social benefit of "lived-in" houses	• Limited rural council houses, perceived conflict in some areas • Little local experience of renting out houses
Children/Education	• Children described as more confident, having more freedom • Improved health for some • Small school class size • Personal attention in school • Peer and community support for education • Children setting higher educational goals	• Fewer social activities • Fewer resources at schools • Poorer health (small minority)	• Schools kept open • Teachers' jobs maintained or increased	

continued

SECTOR	PARTICIPANTS		COMMUNITIES	
	POSITIVE	NEGATIVE	POSITIVE	NEGATIVE
Employment/Economics	• More work opportunities • Higher #'s working • New ways of finding work • Less pressure to spend on "unnecessaries"	• Fewer work opportunities • New ways of finding work • Lower wages • Increased costs of transportation, heating, basic goods	• Labour (esp. seasonal) available • New skills in community • Spending in local businesses	• Possibility of job competition
Quality of Life	• Good social life • Happier • More relaxed	• Lack of variety of social activities	• Bringing younger demographic profile • More participants for local activities, new skills to share	

TABLE 9.1 Overview of demonstrated and perceived impacts of RRI

Within Table 9.1, several items appear in both the positive and negative lists for Participants. With the exception of children's health, these discrepancies seem to be the result of different interpretations of the move experience, rather than definite differences. This assertion is discussed in more detail below in Section 9.6.

Table 9.1 provides a simple outline of principal aspects of the RRI experience. As such, it is useful as an overview of specific gauges of resettlement. However, it does not provide an overall assessment of whether the programme "works". To address this, in the following sections we will consider wider aspects of success and failure in rural resettlement.

9.3 PERMANENCE

One seemingly obvious way to attempt evaluation of the programme overall is to examine the length of time participants will remain in rural Ireland.

9.3.1 Participants "in place" during research period

In Chapter 3, *Methodology*, it was explained that there were a number of participants, listed as having moved through RRI, who could not be located. Of the 211 families on RRI's books at the time, 62 (29%) were not at a known rural address during the time of this research. Therefore, in a worst case scenario, 71% of all participants were still in a rural area.

However, it was RRI's belief that many of the "missing" families would simply have moved to a different rural address without maintaining contact. Chapter 6 certainly supports the claim that many families do move house after their initial settling in period. Attempts were made to find addresses for the "missing" participants in their urban areas of origin. This was unsuccessful, further supporting the likelihood that at least some of them were still rural-based. Finally, of the eight families who were known to have left rural Ireland, two returned to a new part of rural Ireland immediately before they were contacted for interview. Arguably, this is additional support for the contention that more of the "unknowns" were yet in rural areas.

Given the above arguments, it is reasonable to suggest that the correct total for families "in place" might be substantially higher than the worst-case total of 71% (n=211). However, it must be stated that this cannot be proven definitively through this study.

9.3.2 Predictions of long-term permanence

The question of permanence was further investigated by asking survey respondents to predict how long they would stay in their rural area.

How long do you plan to stay in rural Ireland?	
We will leave as soon as we can	1%
We will probably leave when the children are grown	2%
We will probably stay forever	66%
We don't know	26%
Other	5%

TABLE 9.2 Predicted length of stay in rural area (n=86)

Interviews and open comments on questionnaires lend more expressiveness to these responses.

Just, I always just sat down and thought about [going back] and compared what it would be like back there to what it is now, you know like for the kids in particular. I mean I always think you know the kids and that always makes me stop and think you know. It always would. 'Cause I reckon if I was to move back it would be purely selfish. EO12.2246-2255

Ah yeah, we'll go back because the two boys are not happy. I'd go back reluctantly but I'd say maybe when they're grown up I'll come back myself. LC15.1301-1305

BOX 9.1 Participants with mixed feelings about permanence of the move

More often, feelings were unequivocal and participants responded firmly about the strength of their commitment to remaining rural.

If I won the Lotto, honestly, I wouldn't go anywhere else. I still would be here. Because nobody has got anything I want, I've got everything I want. I'm not looking for anything else, it's something I've always wanted. The first time I've ever sort of, I can get up in the morning and feel I don't want to be anywhere else, I don't want to do anything else. EC14:1638-1649

...we would never live in the city again. LO22:sbp

You grow to love it. I think it would be hard moving back to a town now. We love the open space, and slower pace of life. LO71:sbp

No, we would never go [back]. I look forward to sitting down here, no kids, nobody, just the two of us. EO3:1241-1243

...if it was a choice between staying in this house for the rest of our lives or a palace in Dublin, we'd stay here. LO46:813-816

I wouldn't go back. If someone said to me the lottery is waiting in Dublin for you I wouldn't. I wouldn't go back to live. I absolutely love it. LO74:779-783

Wouldn't go back now if they paid me. If they gave me the lottery tonight I'd say youse can hang onto it, I'm happy where I am and I'll stay, if I never get rich, I'll stay on what I have. LO30:2855-2860

So we decided to make the move and that was it. We did it and it worked out great for us you know...we're building the house now...this is it for us you know, we're not moving back...no way would I go back. But even when I go back on a visit now...it's extraordinary to try and get used to all the traffic and the noise at night-time and all that kind of thing again. You know it's amazing really you know. I've no regrets. We're here for good now... EC31:84-86, 88, 89-90, 95-97, 98-103

BOX 9.2 Statements of permanence

Box 9.2 gives a clear sense of how strongly positive many participants feel about the question of how long they will be in their rural communities. There is little in the literature of counterurbanisation against which to compare Table 9.2 and Boxes 9.1 and 9.2. The closest is Jones et al (1984) who state that 79% of study participants "...thought there was no real possibility of them leaving in the three years following the survey" (p. 443). They were not in a position to try tracing any migrants who had already left. This does not exactly equate to the figures for RRI, but it can at least be said that RRI's rate of staying would seem to be in the same region as the participants in Jones et al's study.

9.4 HINDSIGHT

Another possible way to look at the success of RRI is to find whether participants would repeat the experience knowing what they do now.

If you had it all to do over again, would you still move to the country?	
No	6%
Yes	94%

TABLE 9.3 Family survey response to repeating the move (n=86)

Although a large majority stated that they would repeat the move if given the chance, there was great variety in the kind of advice different participants wanted to pass on to other families considering joining RRI. Some of this advice centred on specific, practical aspects of the move.

How much money have you got? Seriously. It takes, you should really have, you should definitely have a car and you should have money. And also you should need, you should have a skill where if the chips are down, you can make your own way. Essential. LO7:1982-1989

My advice is get transport. Some type of, even if it's a push bike...you do need that bit of say freedom. LO11:1413-1415, 1416-1417

The first advice I'd give them is to make sure that they have enough money to cover themselves when they eventually arrive down. LO44:1939-1941

Have to have a car. I think, it's, I mean friends of ours they don't have a car, no telly and it's survival. They go to the shops and everyday and everything but I think it's very hard to get around, like to go out at night or things like that. Because everything is so far away...It's very hard then to rely always on other people if you wouldn't have a car. Just almost impossible. EC22:1033-1041, 1044-1047

Make sure to check out the house. To check it out in the winter. To come down in the wintertime not in the summer. Always check in the bad weather for your house. And they need a lump sum behind them coming down. They need a good bit of money coming down....be prepared for the darkness and the quietness. You have to like it. And if they spend one winter..., they're here for life. LC9:894-903, 907-910

We'd advise people that there's a scarcity of amenities, there's practically no infrastructure here. LC19:1238-1241

BOX 9.3 Practical advice on moving

Others had more general comments, often stressing that although it was right for them, that does not mean it was not a challenge.

And to have a hobby as well, I think is very important. Or any kind of interest in doing, because it can be very isolated and lonely especially when you come from the city I think. Like you go just out everywhere, or even shopping, just going around looking at things. And here there's absolutely nothing. EC22:1053-1062

...the first thing I'd say to them is to make an effort to get involved in the community you know. And to make friends with people....To, observe their kind of customs and that kind of thing....I think if you move with RR too I think, you should make the effort to be as self-sufficient as possible too you know. To be as independent as possible not to be always getting on to RR you know. Because you could be doing that for the rest of your life really... EC31:2054-2058, 2059-2061, 2083-2090

I think I'd just say take each day as it comes. Someone does say something that you don't like, don't take it personally. Just take, put it down to experience and carry on. Just be aware, be sure it's what you want. LC21:1734-1740

I'd tell them definitely go for it, definitely go for it. Especially if they have kids, young kids, definitely. It would be the best move they ever made. Because that's what I feel. LO74:723-728

BOX 9.4 General advice on moving

The above tables and boxes demonstrate that, although a strong majority believe moving was the right thing for them, they are not saying it was always easy.

9.5 WHAT COST FOR A WRONG CHOICE?

Throughout the preceding chapters it was unsurprisingly shown that, for any given measure (e.g. housing quality, employment opportunities, community welcome), there was at least some variety in the responses received. However, the overall impression of the experience of RRI participants has been a strongly positive one. This is particularly supported by responses such as the 93% who state that are happier since moving to a rural area (Table 6.11), and the 94% who say they would make the move again if faced with that choice (Table 9.3).

9.5 1 Wrong choice

Unfortunately, a small group did stand out in their expression of strong unhappiness with their situation. Three percent of all study participants (n=125) declared deep dissatisfaction with the experience of moving. Their comments are given below.

Every one should stay in there own county or except the fact they are going to be called (blown-ins) for the rest of their lives, and its not very nice especially on the children....its too late now, all we can do is pray for a miracle. EC32:sbp (man)

Anybody living in a city stay in it, in Rural parts there is nothing. LO17:sbp[1]

We should never have moved....We should never have left [urban area]. GB2:279, 287

If no casual work turns up for me or my husband we'll have to seriously think about going home as we're finding it hard to manage on the dole money....If I'd realised just how hard it was going to be to live here I would never have come. LC13:sbp (woman)

BOX 9.5 Strong regrets

Just as the responses in Box 9.2 gave insight into the possible depth of positive feeling about the move, Box 9.5 shows how powerful negative feelings can be. Given the strength of feeling in Table Box 9.5, why do these participants not simply leave and return to an urban area[2]? The answer is that, as so many RRI participants come from lower SEC groups, they can be vulnerable in a particular way if the move does not work out for them. Just as we have seen that finances were a major reason why participants did not move to a rural area without RRI (Table 5.7), moving back to an urban area also can be financially prohibitive. For many RRI participants there is the added difficulty of needing to be accepted onto housing waiting lists.

We have no money to move back. EC32:sq69

Oh, we can't go back like the way, uh, you'd be put into an area, like, you wouldn't even get the area that we left. You'd be probably put into a worse area, you know. EO7:1278-1282

[1] The rest of this survey was left blank, so no other measures of this participant are included in figures or other tables.

[2] "GB2" had in fact left their rural area, moving to a West Coast city rather than returning to Dublin. This was mainly for reasons of housing availability.

I would say that somebody moving would absolutely have to be committed to it. One hundred percent or more....If you're not sure, don't do it, because you're kind of--it's a long way back....And you've lost your home at that stage...and it's very, very hard to go back. LO27:3316-3319, 3323-3325, 3329-3331

BOX 9.6 Warnings of practicalities in moving back to urban area

One of the interviewed "gone back" families, who successfully moved into private urban accommodation and now feel quite positive about their choices, acknowledged that they had been fortunate.

So we were very lucky in that we came back to my mother's house....We rented a mobile then for a while but if we hadn't had that backup it would have been very difficult....There's a 5-6 year waiting list for the Council. GB1:557-559, 565-568, 574-575

With the exception of family "GB2", none of the in-depth interviews turned up anyone who was dissatisfied, overall, with their move and feeling trapped in their rural community. Therefore, no more detail can be given on these few stories.

The fact that there are a small number of people who feel trapped in their situation, could raise the question of whether the programme should have some kind of "escape route" built into it. This is certainly something that could be considered, but comments made by several participants in interviews strongly suggest that any such option would need to have a minimum time requirement.

We're here 4½ years. It was very hard adapting to country life for the first couple of years. We could of gone back to Dublin then....We survived those tough couple of years, and are glad we stuck it out. We're settled now and happy. It was all down to our own hard work and courage and determination to make it work. EC30:sbp

The first thing I'd say to them--give it 12 months at least. Don't say, 'cause there's going to be days they'll be saying what the hell am I doing down here. And other days you say it's great. You have to give it time. EC15:1560-1566

If it doesn't work out you can always go back. But what's back for you? When you think about cities. You think about pollution, dirt, smog, people....if you feel inside you, give it a go, see what you think. And don't only give it a year...Give it a good two summers and a good two winters and if you survive it I reckon you'll stay, you

will not move back. You'll go back for holidays. And say 'well thank God I don't live down here anymore.' LO19:1278-1282, 1298-1311

Well, I'd tell them first of all, I'd ask them you know if it's really what they want. You know 'cause so many people have just had the idea to themselves, 'great we'll move to the country,' and when they got there they couldn't handle it and went back. You'd have to be committed and they'd have to give themselves at least 3 years in the country before making any decisions about whether to stay or not. Because it takes a long time to get used to it and everything. EO12:2200-2213

BOX 9.7 Idea that time was required to settle into rural life

9.5.2 Fluidity

The large majority who stated that they would repeat the move (94%), contrasts with the smaller majority (66%) who predicted they would stay in rural Ireland forever. This suggests that, to participants, permanence is not necessarily the main criterion for success. Box 9.8 gives an idea of why this might be the case.

'Do you feel like moving to the country was the wrong thing to do, or just it was the wrong time?'
No, no.
No, we learnt an awful lot. GB1:18-24

...if you move down and move back, that doesn't make...you any less a person....okay, you came down, you didn't like it. We could've come down, we could've just fucking turned around and said I hate this kit!...it's like moving anywhere...you might like it, you mightn't like it....you might move down and it might be a great eye-opener for you. You might say Jesus Christ, all the opportunities there is in Dublin and I never took advantage of them....so I think it...benefits you, whether you stay, or not stay. EC24:1722-1723, 1724-1725, 1729-1733, 1735-1736, 1736-1737, 1742-1747, 1748, 1749-1750

BOX 9.8 Positive possibilities from a temporary move

That individual participants can benefit from a rural move, even if it proves temporary, does not necessarily mean that the same holds true for communities. Obviously, in order to boost school rolls or contribute economically and socially, a family needs to be in place. In that sense, a permanent move offers more community benefits than does a temporary one. Permanence, and its potential knock-on effects, is addressed in the following family quote.

...just say 3 [of our kids stay rural], and they each got married and had 3 kids, that's another 9 kids, and in another 20 years time, or whatever, you could be talking seriously on a thing of 40 or 50 people. I think that is the base, I would say one of the things that Rural Resettlement is. It's not just one family, it's families staying and their children staying, and their children's children. That is my perception of what Rural Resettlement is. LO46:1030-1042

In relation to the above quote, it is worth noting that during the time of this study, grown-up children from two different RRI families had moved into rural homes of their own (with non-RRI partners) and begun families. In this way the "3rd generation" of rural resettlers is already being born.

Accepting that permanence offers particular local benefits, does it then necessarily follow that a temporary move is worse than no move at all? In considering this it is important first to differentiate between a move lasting six months and one lasting 5 years. If on no other criteria, a very short move takes up limited RRI resources and at least delays the move of another family who may settle longer. It is also possible that it would increase the probability of community members "standing back" longer from other new families.

In one instance a community member complained to the researcher about an "RRI family" who had left in a matter of months, thus (he claimed) making the community leery of welcoming others. When investigated it transpired that the family in question had not been part of RRI at all. However, it does demonstrate that length of stay can be an issue. In a similar vein, Shucksmith et al (1996) note that indigenous rural residents often felt new rural migrants were "unreliable" and "likely to move on" (p. 475). However, a move of some years may have different implications in terms of practical and social impacts. For instance, is it possible that boosting school rolls for even a few years might maintain teachers over a temporary "thin" patch? There is also the question of whether new faces, who may sometimes come and go, is a "good" or a "bad" thing for small communities.

It would require a longitudinal study to effectively address such questions. Here the most that can be done is to point out that permanence *per se* is not necessarily a prerequisite to positive community impacts.

9.5.3 Other community criteria?

Looking back at the concerns for depopulating rural communities highlighted in Chapter 2, and community hopes for the impact of RRI listed in Chapter 5, are there other criteria by which RRI could be judged? Two related phenomena, the closing of rural schools and the ageing of rural populations were flagged up in these chapters as important concerns. In Chapter 7 it was demonstrated that community members and migrants alike believe that RRI has kept schools open and maintained teacher jobs. In Chapter 5 the demographic tables illustrated that RRI was bringing a more youthful population to rural communities. These are the best measures demonstrating positive impacts from a community viewpoint. There were no equivalent measures demonstrating a negative impact within the scope of this study.

Other, less easily measured, hopes for the programme include points such as improving the local social life. Family interviews, and a lack of concrete negative comment on the community survey, give a positive impression of this, but there is not enough information to make a definitive statement.

9.6 PATTERNS AND PREDICTION

It would, of course, be best for individuals, communities and RRI itself to avoid moving families who become distressed by the move and/or those whose stay is very short. Therefore, it would be useful if there were some way of predicting which applicants are less likely to flourish in a rural setting.

None of the demographic data on families proved to have any connection to responses on satisfaction. Analysing survey data just for those respondents who answered *"No"* to the question, *"If you had it all to do over again, would you still move to the country?"* did not turn up any pattern. This is not particularly surprising,

given that this was only an "n" of 5 questionnaires. Only one respondent indicated that s/he was less happy now, or that s/he would like to move back to the city as soon as possible, so these divisions obviously could not be used.

Delving further for any pattern, surveys were grouped according to responses to the question, *"How long do you plan to stay in rural Ireland?"* One group was made up of those who answered "We will probably stay forever" (n=57). The other group was made up of those who answered either "We will leave as soon as we can", "We will probably leave when the children are grown", "We don't know", or "Other" (combined n=27). Even in this way, only three measures were found to be notably different between the two groups.

	Had you thought of moving to the countryside before you heard of RRI?		
Survey group division	***"No, never"***	***"Yes, once or twice"***	***"Yes, often"***
"We will probably stay forever"	14%	18%	68%
All other responses	32%	21%	46%

TABLE 9.4 Effect of when one first thought of moving rural on response to permanence question (n=56, n=28)

Table 9.4 seems to indicate that considering a move to the country for the first time only on learning of RRI, makes you less likely to think you will settle permanently there.

On a scale of 1 to 4, how important were the following hopes in YOUR household's decision to move to the country?

The hope that you would find more or better work.

Survey group division	*"Not at all important"*	*"Not very important"*	*"Important"*	*"Very important"*
"We will probably stay forever"	26%	35%	26%	12%
All other responses	11%	21%	43%	25%

TABLE 9.5 Effect of hope for finding work on response to permanence question (n=57, n=28)

61% of those who state they are likely to "stay forever" **did not** place importance on finding work in their decision to move. In contrast, 68% of those unsure how long they will stay, or wanting to leave, **did** place importance on finding work in their decision to move.

On a scale of 1 to 4, please state the strength of your disagreement or agreement with the following statements.

It is easier to find work in the country.

Survey group division	"Strongly disagree"	"Disagree"	"Neutral"	"Agree"	"Strongly agree"
"We will probably stay forever"	20%	18%	34%	20%	9%
All other responses	32%	29%	25%	11%	4%

TABLE 9.6 Effect of feelings about ease on finding rural work on response to permanence question (n=56, n=28)

Related to Table 9.5, Table 9.6 shows that 38% of the "stay forever" group disagreed that work was easier to find in the country. However, 61% of the "all other responses" group disagreed with this statement.

These connections, and possible implications, will be further discussed in Chapter 10. Here, it must be stressed that although these associations exist, they are far from absolute, with much "crossover" between groups. Also, as asserted in Section 9.5.2, responses relating to permanence in isolation are not necessarily the best measure of "success" from any viewpoint.

Another thing that mitigates against trying to develop hard and fast predictions, is the very individual nature of the migration experience. In interviews it was apparent that *response* to, and *interpretation* of, the experiences that came with moving, often had more influence on participants than did the fact of those experiences. In other words, one person's negative factor, was often another person's positive. This contrast can be seen in responses on the RRI organisation (Box 4.3), children's experience of moving (Table 7.4) and participants' experiences of changing work opportunities (Boxes 8.2 and 8.5). The following table pairs three other sets of quotes illustrating this assertion.

There's one thing not working in Dublin...you've always somewhere to go. Where if you're not working down here, you really have no where to go you know? LC15:1032-1036

I mean okay if you're on the dole in Dublin...You've nothing to do. You're stuck in a house, you can't go for a walk down the fields with a dog or, you know, I don't know how I stuck it there the times I was idle. EO9:2280-2282, 2287-2291

That's another thing we miss terrible, is having the stations for the television. We've only RTE1 and RTE2 and it drives me mental. LO44:1285-1288

Another thing that doesn't bother us is that we only have 2 stations on the television. Here we hardly watch television. In Dublin you couldn't get away from it. LO46:1222-1226

There is a little bit [of stigma to being unemployed here]...Yeah, a bit. You notice sometimes. EO12:1752, 1754-1755

And the one thing that took me a long time to accept was, coming over here, there's no stigma attached to being out of work. Not as it would be in [place of origin]. EC14:2605-2610

BOX 9.9 Contrasting individual perceptions of changes with rural move

The data supports that a wide variety of people can find satisfaction through moving with RRI. Box 9.9 shows that different participants can experience the same changes in distinct ways. However, some participants were willing to suggest that there are prerequisites in terms of attitude or motivation that will determine how families will cope with the changes.

They'd have to be sure. Everybody is not cut out for this. LO14:p3

'Is there a kind of person that you would say 'no, don't move, it's not the right thing?'
Oh yeah...people who rely a lot on you know, socialising or luxuries, comforts, videos, channels on the television...you wouldn't want to be relying on things like that, you know? EC22:1075, 1079-1082, 1087-1089

...they have to expect some hardships down. I mean a lot of people did move down and they think everything is going to be real easy. They think it's going to be a holiday. A lot of them think it's going to be a holiday when they move down. But, easy going people, they'd be no good. You have to be tough. You have to be tough. You have to be tough to live down in the country. LC9:933-944

...it won't solve problems but it could give you a different outlook on life....if you wanted a change, if you thought a change of were you were living might do something for you, okay, fair enough. But...it won't, it won't change if you're an alcoholic or a bleeding junky or anything like that. It's not going to change any of that... EC24:2872-2874, 2875-2882

...I gathered that the ones that went back were people that sort of, em, that might have thought about coming to the country to solve some problems that they had...I suppose you, well you're bound to get, you're bound to get people who won't like it... EC31:853-858, 867-870

...you've got the idea, you come over. But don't come over on a sunny day as through you're going on holiday, don't have that attitude, "oh, I'd like to live here." Come over in the winter, January, like today, exactly. And go and have a look, right, and if you still love it as much, as you would on a sunny day, I think that's the first step. The second step is I think you'd have to have, know what you're going to do when you get there....once you've moved, that is just the beginning....if they're in doubt, then don't come. You know, you've got to REALLY want to....I was willing to

swap high heels and me nail varnish for water proofs, wellingtons and woolly hats...we've done that. It's just, it's got to be the most important thing you want to do EC14:2766-2779, 2781-2782, 2784-2786, 2854-2857, 2858-2861 (woman)

...you've got to have a really positive attitude. If you haven't got that...You'll fail and you'll move back. EC14:2788-2789 (man)

I would think if they weren't interested in nature. If they had nothing to do with vegetables or animals, if they weren't interested in something, I'd say move to a village or town. Not to a house in the countryside. LO68:1305-1311

BOX 9.10 Families' description of people who "shouldn't" move rurally

As with Box 9.4, the above acknowledges that the move requires commitment and strength, even if most families feel the rewards make it worthwhile. It is not, however, useful in developing any sort of predictive criteria for success.

9.7 CONCLUSION

At the time of this study at least 71% of all RRI participant families (n=211) were still in rural Ireland. It was argued that the real figure "in place" was very likely to be higher. Permanence of the move to a rural area was shown not to be a prerequisite for "success" to all participants. Its significance to community benefit was also questioned, although length of stay was acknowledged as an issue.

Other possible criteria for community success were considered. In terms of supporting school attendance figures and adding younger people to community demographics, RRI has been shown to be effective. Less tangible impacts, such as enriching local social life, were not absolutely measurable within this study, but the impression given in interviews seems hopeful.

Families own view of the "success" of their move was gauged through asking if they would repeat it. 94% (n=86) responded in the affirmative. Furthermore, a majority of 66% (n=86) predicted they would remain in rural Ireland "forever." In interviews, many families gave passionate quotes describing the strength of their feelings about being happily settled.

A small minority of 3% of all study participants (n=125) expressed strong unhappiness with their experience of moving to a rural area. It was noted that the lower SECs of some RRI participants can make it difficult for them if they wish to move back to an urban area.

In terms of predicting whether a family would settle well, three survey questions were found to have relevance. However, it was stressed that individuality in response to moving appeared more important than any predictive criteria that could be imposed.

CHAPTER 10

IMPLICATIONS

10.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapters 4—9 presented interview and survey data gathered on RRI participants and local communities. Within those chapters the information was considered and discussed on a topical basis. However, fully addressing the research questions posed in Chapter 1 requires a synthesis of information from these different topics. Therefore, this concluding chapter draws upon these previously noted findings, and each of the following sections is addressed to answering one of the research questions.

10.2 IMPACT OF THE RRI ORGANISATION

- How does the presence and work of the RRI organisation impact upon the choice participants make to move and their practical experience of rural life after the move?

Sant and Simons (1993) assert that "In many respects it is the category of 'latent counterurbanists' that is most important to identify. What makes them latent and what converts that latency into action?" (p. 124). In Chapter 5 we saw that 80% of RRI participants had wanted to move to the country before they ever heard of RRI, yet they did not act upon this desire.

Writing on Bourdieu, Tovey and Share (2000) state that he believes "...society is organised around the distribution of economic and cultural capital and the structural position an individual occupies greatly influences their capacity to choose between and adopt alternative lifestyles" (p. 443). They use different terminology, but RRI

families identified the following limits on their own economic and/or cultural capital as main reasons for not moving on their own: lack of finance, lack of knowledge on how to proceed and specifically not being able to find an available rural house.

Although the RRI organisation has not been able to directly improve the finances of participating families, they have effectively addressed the other two categories through providing advice and support before the move and by locating houses available to rent. In this way they filled any "gaps" in cultural capital that left families unsure how to make such a move in isolation.

Thus RRI created the "opportunity structure" for rural migration that Adamchak (1987) posits, but one that was not predicated upon changed economic or employment circumstances (p. 117). Although only 211 families had moved at the time of this research, there were then over 3,000 on the RRI waiting list. Admittedly, it is doubtful that every one of those 3,000 families would actually move if enough houses were available. Even so, this large number who have sent in applications demonstrates that demand for places far outstrips availability. Before RRI was founded, it was not known that this group of Sant and Simons' "latent counterurbanists" existed within the urban Irish population.

After moving, families remain in contact with RRI for varying lengths of time and for different reasons. Some made use of the organisation for practical advice on issues such as transport or schools. Others noted the importance of psychological back-up and just knowing that RRI was available if needed. Particularly from the early phase of the project some participants were critical of the standard of post-move support, but more recently RRI has been able to devote more resources to this issue and criticisms from this phase are fewer.

10.2.1 Implications

Moving on from Bourdieu's theories some sociologists

> *...have argued that in contemporary society consumption patterns have become so disconnected from class divisions that they constitute a virtually autonomous source of social differentiation and identity. With the advent of relative affluence for large sections of society, consumption has become a matter not just of meeting needs and securing material comforts but of lifestyle...The choices that consumers make are now central to their self-construction of a distinct social and personal identity (Tovey and Share, 2000, p. 444).*

Such an analysis is fine on one level, yet through the phrase "relative affluence for large sections of society" it permits itself to ignore the many whom "relative affluence" has not reached. For many of these people class divisions are still powerful and relevant in their impact upon both economic and cultural capital.

Through the work of RRI it has become clear that there is some demand for opportunities to move to rural areas within less-well off urban communities in Ireland. For these people it is not the case that their taste, as engendered by habitus, does not aspire to a rural lifestyle. Rather they were prevented acting upon this desire by outside constraints and inner uncertainties. This illustrates one pitfall in relying too heavily upon analyses of consumption to categorise individuals; they are liable to presume choice on the part of individuals where none was made, or to ignore completely an entire section of society. Ignoring those outside of "relative affluence" is similar to those SEC scales based on occupation that simply ignore those who do not work, effectively "declassing" them (Drudy, 1995); and it is the same group of people whom are cut out in both instances.

This is not to imply that consumption-based analysis is not useful, many studies have used it to good effect and it was applied earlier to some of our RRI data. However, it is an example of how such analyses can be applied inappropriately, without acknowledging the underlying structures that continue to influence consumption

patterns, and the segments of society who simply may not be able to participate in whatever consuming is being studied. In this regard the main work of RRI has been to enable participation in the "consumption" of counterurbanisation.

10.3 MIGRANT PROFILES

- Do RRI participants differ demographically or otherwise from migrants in other counterurbanisation studies?

The question of whether, and in what ways, RRI migrants differ from migrants profiled in other counterurbanisation studies is fundamental to this research. If no clear differences were to be illustrated it would: call into question why the migrants needed a programme to support their move, make it less likely that RRI migrants might experience their move very differently from other migrants, and make it less likely the receiving communities might experience them differently. Therefore, careful analysis was carried out on several variables to make comparisons.

In the first instance, the scale for Social Class based on Occupation showed that RRI participants stood out clearly from migrant profiles in other studies. In the five studies that noted SECs of migrants, they placed 49 – 63% in categories I and II (or 1 and 2) while RRI families had only 6% in these categories. Later, in Chapter 8, it was noted that 61% of migrants were living primarily on Social Welfare prior to moving. Only one other study specifically noted a pre-move unemployment rate, which in that case was 10%.

However, as Drudy (1995) notes "Occupations are less than perfect indicators of class" (p. 305). Therefore, to add texture to the SECs noted above, areas of possible differential consumption were looked at as potential markers of social status. Although not definitive, each of the markers considered tended to reinforce the earlier SEC classification. Other studies did not adopt this approach, so no direct contrasts could be drawn.

Education levels were then used as a further means of comparing RRI with previous studies. Results in this instance were slightly less emphatic than for Social Class Based on Occupation, but RRI migrants still stood out as having left school earlier than did other migrants.

Finally, in terms of migrant ages, other counterurbanisation studies showed mixed results. Some found migrants to be older, thus exacerbating the ageing of the receiving population. Others found they were younger and more often had school age children than did locals. In the case of RRI it was clear the participants fitted with this latter profile.

10.3.1 Implications

It is often more difficult to convincingly illustrate an absence, than a presence, of difference. For instance, if RRI participants had the SECs we have shown, yet were highly educated and frequently displayed possessions such as books and art work and spoke about missing Dublin's galleries and museums, this would stand out. It would be a contrast between the criteria developed by Bourdieu and the official classification systems applied by the Census and many sociologists. Yet this is not the picture that has emerged. Social Class by Occupation, education levels, material possessions, all point determinedly toward what could be called "mainstream working-class" origins and current standing.

The possible impacts of this migrant profile is the purview of Sections 10.5 and 10.6 to come.

10.4 MIGRANT MOTIVATIONS

- Are the goals and aspirations of RRI participants for the move different from those of migrants in other counterurbanisation studies?

This research has shown that the goals of RRI migrants for their rural move fit generally with those of migrants in other studies. However, they do stand out in one particular way; 99% of RRI migrants list a quality of life issue, rather than an employment/economic issue, as their main motivation for moving. The implications of this are considered further below.

It was also noted that although most participants gave a rural "pull" factor as their main motivation, 10% listed an urban "push" factor first. Furthermore, although it was not stated as their first motivation, 89% did note the importance of escaping crime and/or drugs in the urban neighbourhoods where they lived and many elaborated upon this in interviews. This contrasts sharply with Jones et al (1986) who state that 32% of migrants had no complaints about their urban area of origin, and 21% had only one complaint (p. 23). While Perry et al (1986) make the clear point about migrants in their study that,

> *They were members...of a privileged generation...And although their favourite explanation for moving away from the big cities was 'to escape the urban rat race,' the places they came from could hardly be described as hotbeds of urban violence or squalor. (p. 204)*

10.4.1 Implications

RRI has never made any promises in terms of locating employment for participants. Nor were more than a handful of participants in a position of taking their work with them in an on-going way (e.g. self-employed craftworkers). Yet when RRI offered support in moving to rural areas the strength of response was immediate and continuing. This demonstrates that rural areas have benefits to offer that, for some urban people, outweigh disbenefits such as the low likelihood of finding permanent,

full-time employment. Counterurbanisation generally may also be said to demonstrate this. However, many participants in other studies were portrayed as having different SECs than many RRI participants. RRI thus illustrates a group weighing up different possible risks and gains in moving. A few in this group may fit with Jones et al's (1986) description of rural migration as, "...not only a move in physical and economic space; it also involves for most migrants a conscious social distancing from metropolitan work structures, consumption patterns and lifestyles generally" (p. 25). Or it could be as Williams and Jobes (1990) say, that "Migration motivated by non-economic factors involves some rejection of conventional values, at least for all except the very affluent" (p. 189).

To many RRI participants, however, this idea of "social distancing" does not apply. In particular, to a long-term unemployed person, which before moving many RRI participants are, migration may appear to be the practical choice, even while maintaining "conventional values". Here is another example of how ignoring the "de-classed" can lead research to incomplete conclusions. If experience has convinced them they are unlikely to obtain secure, full-time work in an urban area anyway, is there an employment-related opportunity cost to consider in moving? Arguably, most are simply trying to be realistic about their options and improve their families' lives within a context that has taught them they could wait indefinitely for employment.

Similarly, Cloke and Thrift (1987) state that,

> *...some unemployed have opted for the lifestyle gains attributed to rural localities due to a sense of hopelessness regarding their ability to find work. Their attitude too may be characterised by the sense that they might as well be unemployed in a pleasant environment as in (what they may perceive to be) a less pleasant city lifestyle. (p. 332)*

While Williams and Jobes (1990) theorise,

> *Lower SES persons may be no more likely than persons of higher SES to move for quality-of-life reasons. However,*

among persons who have moved primarily for quality-of-life reasons, poorer people may be more willing to stay once they have found a quality-of-life they enjoy. (pp. 188-189)

In a related vein, within the data on RRI, there is some evidence to suggest that prioritising work may actually lessen the likelihood of a family persisting in their rural move. Table 9.5 indicated that participants who prioritised the hope of finding rural work were less likely to settle permanently in a rural area than those who did not focus hopes on that goal.

What this may suggest is that moving with no guarantee of work or prerequisite to find work indicates a greater commitment to place and the receiving community. This is somewhat supported by Jones et al (1984) who divided migrants into an "employment group" and an "environment group" in terms of motivations. They found that only 34% of the "employment group" had prior experience, through holidays, of the area to which they moved. In contrast, 70% of the "environment group" had such experience (p. 440). In terms of length of stay, it seems logical to further suggest that those who move for reasons of work are more likely to move on if that work opportunity ends. More extremely, this is supported by the "boom and bust" populations movements described in Jedrej and Nuttall (1996, pp. 169-170).

From the community viewpoint there is also the factor that employment-based re-population may involve a higher concentration of migrants to an area, compared to that produced by the RRI model. Smailes and Hugo (1985) put forward the idea that dispersed and broader-based growth, "allows absorption of new population with less structural damage to existing communities than is the case with projects of the 'growth pole' variety" (p. 43).

The above comments are in no way meant to downplay the role limited rural employment has played in catalysing rural depopulation (Hoggart, 1997; Simmons, 1997; Robinson, 1990; Phillips and Williams, 1984; Newby, 1979). Nor is it meant to imply that employment issues in rural areas are not important or should not be

addressed. That would be both impractical and insensitive to a need strongly perceived by rural residents, including those surveyed here.

I believe that [RRI] is a useful addition to reversing rural population decline. But it will in itself not be sufficient. The lack of adequate employment opportunities for young people is probably the main reason for rural population decline. Until this aspect is solved (not likely) there will be continuing problems with rural decline. CR:s667

However, RRI's experience does suggest that focussing rural population revival around purely economic criteria should not be the only approach. This was also suggested 20 years ago by Baviskar et al (1980) who stated, "To the study group, it appeared that reducing rural unemployment was the uppermost concern in the mind of the rural policy makers. This, they considered, was not the only criterion of successful rural development" (p. 21). More recently, Monk and Hodge (1995) note that in the UK,

> *The inescapable loss of employment in the agricultural sector and the lack of alternative occupations has meant that the focus of policy has tended to be on employment, and initiatives to improve conditions in rural areas have concentrated on employment creation. (p. 153)*

RRI's experience seems to lend support to the idea that focussing only on employment issues to support rural communities means other complementary opportunities for regeneration are being missed.

10.5 IMPACT OF MOVE UPON PARTICIPANTS

- Do RRI participants experience their move differently from migrants in other counterurbanisation studies?

Impacts upon migrants are not addressed in a symmetrical way in other studies. Therefore a systematic comparison, such as those presented in Chapter 2 for Social Class based on Occupation or housing tenure, is not possible for each impact. However, in considering various impacts for RRI migrants below, some comparisons with other studies can be made and other contrasts can be inferred from knowledge of the other migrant profiles.

A sense of acceptance in their new communities was noted by 92% of RRI participants. However, RRI participants, and to a lesser extent community survey respondents, did feel there was some resentment of new people by rural residents (Table 6.4). It was pointed out in Chapter 6 that this acknowledgement of resentment from RRI participants contradicted what they expressed about their personal experience of rural attitudes and shows that in Ireland the image of closed rural attitudes exists. This finding echoes that of two studies of rural Scotland (Findlay et al, 1999; Shucksmith et al, 1996), where actual integration appeared to be much stronger than the image presented.

Nevertheless, the vast majority of RRI participants do feel accepted in their new communities, and most of the community survey respondents supported this model of rural resettlement. This status is probably due to a combination of conditions including that: the resettlers are highly dispersed, making it impossible for them to mix mainly with one another, they are not moving in order to take up a job that has just opened up in the area, they do not generally continue with their previous work and/or bring their urban social life with them. The antithesis of each of the above has been cited in other studies as a reason why incomers are not necessarily assimilated into their new communities.

A less positive picture was drawn by participants responding to questions about their housing in rural areas. For most RRI families, when they first move they are giving up secure long-term tenancies in relatively high-quality housing stock. In return they are moving to an unknown area and often taking on time-limited leases in houses that are in poorer condition than those left behind. 74% of RRI migrants were living in privately rented (65%) or Corporation (9%) housing at the time of this study. In our comparison studies, the lowest level of migrant owner-occupancy was 78% (Findlay et al, 1999). This indicates that the relatively high percentages of RRI families who take on insecure tenancies is an impact of migration that does not effect the majority of other counterurbanisers.

In terms of the actual housing quality, only 54% of RRI families felt their rural house was better than their urban house had been. Of those who had achieved this level of satisfaction, 60% had moved at least once from their first rural home. Although it is quite possible that participants in other studies moved to lower-quality housing when first migrating, it is also likely that they made this move to their own properties which they were then in a position to improve. There is no reason to think that a sizeable number of them would have been unable—either financially or due to an owner's prohibition—to improve the property to their own satisfaction.

Despite these negative aspects to the move[1], in interviews most families were emphatic that the physical surroundings of their new home more than compensated for any deficiencies in the house. They spoke clearly about their appreciation of the increased space around them, the beauty of their surroundings and, for 45%, the opportunity to grow some of their own food. These responses and experiences largely echo those of other studies.

The most common single motivation RRI families gave for moving was improving life for their children. The vast majority of these parents are satisfied that moving

[1] It should be emphasised that by no means all RRI families experienced these challenges, some have purchased houses, some have secure tenancies and many moved to warm, dry rental houses.

has improved many aspects of their children's lives. They particularly note being able to give them more freedom and that the rural communities are supportive and accepting of children. Again this resonates with migrants in other studies. A difference may be posited, however, in the amount of actual deprivation the RRI families left behind. As Perry et al (1986) said of some counterurbanisers they studied "...the places they came from could hardly be described as hotbeds of urban violence or squalor" (p. 204). Although as with most criteria there is variation within the RRI experience—many did not see themselves as moving from especially "bad" neighbourhoods—it is reasonable to state that a higher proportion of them did leave areas of real deprivation.

Another strongly perceived impact upon migrants' children is their experience of education in the country. Parents feel the education offered at rural schools is better and that the peer and community pressure is now toward staying on and obtaining higher qualification then was expected in their urban neighbourhoods. Since profiles showed that other migrants were often from professional backgrounds and had more education credentials—both markers of increased cultural capital—than RRI migrants, this is another differentiated impact. Although none of the other studies addressed this, with the profiles drawn, there is every reason to expect those other migrants' children had a strong likelihood of staying on and succeeding in school in either an urban or rural setting.

In the realm of employment this research elicited more mixed responses from participants. In the earlier section looking at motivations for the move, it was clear that finding employment was not the main reason for RRI migrants to move. However, this is not to imply that most RRI participants would decline a permanent, full-time job if it were available. Only a small minority expressed that they were actively trying to move away from that model of living and it was shown that some have found full-time employment. In terms of willingness to work, more individuals were shown to be engaged in some form of economic activity after moving compared

to before moving[2], even if much of this did not take the form of official, permanent employment. This may moderate criticisms from those who believe any reliance on state benefits is indicative of people who have no desire to work. That the majority of participants were not consciously adopting an attitude of moving away from permanent employment was further supported in interviews where many stated concerns with regard to future work opportunities for their children.

However, there were a variety of opinions expressed about whether work was easier or harder to find in rural areas and the form that work might take. This is an issue not often looked at in other studies for the simple reason that many other counterurbanisers are not searching for work locally. Between various studies it was shown that they might be: commuting to the same urban jobs, teleworking in their previous job, have located local employment before moving, have become self-employed, or have "dropped out" of the job market through accumulation of enough financial capital. A minority noted some people living through benefits, but their local employment experiences, if any, were not detailed.

Other studies also did not closely examine the overall financial impact of the move as perceived by migrants; in this RRI research, mixed perceptions were revealed. 34% felt their income was down, 39% that it was the same and 27% that it was up since moving. Intriguingly, 65% felt that it was easier to manage financially since moving, including some of those now with less money coming in. This was mainly explained as being a result of simply not being around shops and of their children putting them under less pressure to buy the 'right' things for them.

When asked for an overall assessment of their level of happiness since moving, 93% of RRI participants felt they were happier now, 7% were neutral on this, and only1% felt they were now less happy. 94% agreed that if they had it all to do over again, they would still move to the country. Although these figures suggest an

[2] Acknowledgement was made that the possibility of this being due to other factors such as the improving Irish economy could not be ruled out.

overwhelming level of satisfaction with their move, it is in the experience of the small minority who are unhappy that we find another likely contrast with other studies.

Some might argue that because many RRI participants are not selling houses or giving up jobs to move, they are risking less than the middle-class counterurbanisers of other studies. However, in a very real sense, some of them are risking much more. For a long-term unemployed person giving up Corporation housing, an unsuccessful move can carry particular penalties. Namely, the financial hurdle of moving back can be prohibitive and the difficulty of being allotted another Corporation house can be considerable. This rare but actual trap was certainly not applicable in other studies.

10.5.1 Implications

The perceived and generalised impacts of the criteria considered above can be illustrated as follows, where ↑ = improvement, ↓ = decline, and ↔ = mixed responses:

Housing	↓
Surroundings	↑
Children's lives	↑
Children's education	↑
Employment	↔
Finances	↔
Happiness	↑

However, in every one of those categories there was at least some variation in the responses given. In some instances that variation can be attributed in a straightforward way to concrete circumstances. For instance, one family moves to a high quality house while another moves to one of questionable quality.

More often than not, though, the picture that emerged was of people undergoing similar experiences, but interpreting them differently. Examples have been given of divergent responses with regard to issues such as: pay scales in rural areas, 'nosiness' of new neighbours, use of free time, work opportunities, television stations and housing quality. On a broader level, a similar phenomenon is noted by Peace (1986) when he observes,

> *The community includes...a number of 'blow-ins', i.e. people who are not born locally...Some of these, even after a decade or more are considered, and consider themselves to be, marginal to the mainstream of community life: others within a shorter time period have become actively involved in that mainstream. (p. 114)*

Responses of participants to the various aspects of moving, and its overall impact, seem to have more to do with their individual make-up rather than any outside factor. This may be caused by the fact that through moving the boundaries and contents of the fields in which they operate have shifted and some respond to these changes positively, some negatively. It is this kind of dynamism that prevents Bourdieu's work on habitus and field from being dismissed as purely deterministic.

More important still, though, is to look at the impact of moving with a different theoretical construct. How deeply this move does, or does not, ultimately effect participants may in part be judged by how it does, or does not, impact upon social reproduction. Over time the interaction of their own habitus and capital with the altered fields may alter the course this will take.

As Robbins (1991) states, "...as we grow older, we proceed to modify the identity which we have inherited. The identity is not intrinsic but the scope for changing it is circumscribed by the social expectations of the group with which we are associated" (p. 174). The rural move they have undertaken may well associate RRI migrants with a group of people with differing social expectations than those left behind. This may be the case even if, according to some scales of social class, they share more attributes with locals than do many other migrants.

Furthermore, Tovey and Share (2000) assert that in urban areas people tend to be "sorted" into different areas according to characteristics such as class. However,

> *In smaller rural settlements, despite substantial material inequalities and social exclusiveness, there may be more informal and friendly contact between relatively wealthy and poorer people. People of different classes may interact as neighbours or be linked by personal ties of work, kinship or friendship....Residence in a smaller community may increase the likelihood of class mobility, affect class solidarity and consciousness and lead to a more flexible set of class distinctions. (p. 143)*

More specifically, if parents' increasing expectations for educational success for their children are proven to be correct, this has important implications for the children's future expectations. In this way the move may be breaking the cycle of what Bourdieu and Passeron (1977) termed "the educational mortality of the working classes" (p. 156).

These possible impacts upon social reproduction cannot be proven at this stage of the project, but would be a fascinating topic for future study.

10.6 IMPACT OF RRI MIGRANTS UPON LOCAL COMMUNITIES

- Do the rural communities to which RRI participants move experience these newcomers differently from the communities in other studies of counterurbanisation?

Higher SEC migrants possess more disposable income than do many long-term rural residents. As a result, these counterurbanisers can outbid locals for homes, and eventually inflate the rural housing market (Fitchen, 1992; Hunter, 1991; Shucksmith, 1991; McLaughlin, 1990; Rogers, 1989; Newby, 1988; Weekley, 1988; Blunden and Curry, 1985; Byron and MacFarland, 1982; Shucksmith, 1981;

Baviskar et al, 1980; Forsythe, 1980). This is one of the most common and most negative effects attributed to counterurbanisation.

In contrast, the vast majority of RRI migrants at least begin their rural lives in modest rented accommodation. In this way they make use of, and hence contribute to the maintenance of, a local resource for which there has otherwise been very little demand.

Although many RRI participants do aspire to purchasing a rural home, with limited finances they are unlikely to be consistently out-competing locals. Generally, they are in a position of bidding for poor condition older houses, for which there has been little competition in many areas. In some cases they have built new houses on plots of land purchased from local landowners. A majority of them need to make use of various supported mortgage schemes that have been developed.

A small number of RRI families have moved into rural council housing. This is an impact not considered in the literature, probably because few "traditional" counterurbanisers have made use of such housing stock. It is notable here as one of the very few areas in this study where concrete examples were given of some tension surrounding the disposition of a rural resource. This suggests that in sectors where resources are under stress, and rural communities feel threatened in themselves, there is less likely to be easy acceptance of new residents.

Along with the above-mentioned inflated house prices goes the fact that some urban/rural migrants move smaller families into houses that would once have held larger numbers. Together, these impacts mean that counterurbanisation has been shown to actually *exacerbate* rural depopulation in some circumstances (Spencer, 1997; Weekley, 1988). Again, because RRI participants are not displacing local families, but moving into previously empty houses, there is no suggestion that they do anything other than increase rural population numbers.

Studies conflict as to the demographic impact of migrants, with some illustrating moves predominated by families with young children (Forsythe, 1980), others showing that large numbers of migrants are elderly (Serow, 1991; Robinson, 1990; Dean et al, 1984b; Phillips and Williams, 1984). In the case of RRI the data is unambiguous. Eighty-nine percent of participants are families with children (n=123). Comparing RRI's age profile to that of a sample rural parish (Chapter 5, Tables 5.17 and 5.18) made it clear that the migrants help to lower the age structure of rural communities.

Studies also conflict as to the impact of migration on rural schools. Some state that new residents support local schools (Jones et al, 1984; Newby, 1979), while other studies claim migrants often send their children to distant schools, further limiting local pupil numbers (Phillips and Williams, 1984).

Here again, RRI's impact could not be clearer. Chapter 7 demonstrated that participants make enthusiastic use of local schools and the new pupils have been credited with increasing teacher numbers and keeping schools open. This has been noted as of crucial importance to overall community welfare.

In contrast to the above topics, relatively little mention is made in the literature of the impact of counterurbanisation upon local employment opportunities. Findlay et al (1999) do demonstrate that some migrants hire local people to work in their businesses or homes. However, this was shown not to be relevant to the current situation of RRI migrants.

In terms of potential conflict over job opportunities, Jedrej and Nuttall (1996) do note this as a "common problem" (p.168). Yet both Forsythe (1980) and Newby (1979), although for different reasons, state that incomers do not cause problems locally by competing for limited jobs. The experience of RRI participants fits largely with Forsythe's (1980) study where migrants performed jobs left vacant by the earlier and on-going depopulation of the area.

As to the wider economic impact of counterurbanisation, logically it would seem that new residents would contribute economically by spending money in local shops and increasing demand for local services. However, it has been stated that in some settings incomers can actually hurt these institutions through actions such as shopping at a distance (Simmons, 1997; Phillips and Williams, 1984). It is believed that RRI participants are more likely to shop locally and make use of other offered services, thus benefiting the local economy. A growing number are also purchasing homes. Some of these purchases are from local residents and thus bring capital to the local economy.

A final community impact to consider is that of what effect participants may have on rural society and/or culture[3]. In popular imagination, Irish culture enjoys an admirable reputation for warmth and welcome. Some might argue that it is this attitude which enables the relatively smooth integration of RRI families into rural communities. Doubtless cultural predisposition has an impact here, but there is evidence to suggest that it is not necessarily paramount. "Even" in Ireland, studies of rural migration have noted a degree of local resentment toward newcomers (Gillmor, 1988; Gillmor and Jeffers, 1987). Although some community members did express concern over possible negative changes that might be catalysed by RRI migrants, no actual example of such an impact was given, while several concrete examples of positive effects were remarked upon.

Another possible factor that might be aiding integration is that the Irish population, by and large, share common religious roots. It was outwith the scope of this study to assess in a detailed fashion how this does, or does not, effect integration. The most that can be said is that in Chapter 6, Section 6.7 pointed out that there was some variation in participants' religious background, and it did not seem to affect their experience.

[3] It was noted in Chapter 6 that some potential long-term impacts of this nature could not be effectively addressed at this stage of the RRI programme.

10.6.1 Implications

By largely appearing not to raise contentious issues around housing, local education or employment, or to catalyse social/cultural change, RRI participants stand out from many other studies (Simmons, 1997; Jedrej and Nuttall, 1996; Shucksmith et al, 1996; Forsythe, 1980; Newby, 1979). A suggested explanation for this difference can be found in the following quote.

> *Although polarization may include an element of newcomers-versus-locals, it is based essentially on social class, with the division occurring between the working class and the middle class. The former group is largely made up of locals while the latter mainly comprises newcomers, but the class dimension is paramount. (Phillips and Williams 1984, p.94)*

The fact that such a large proportion of RRI migrants has been shown to be part of the working class is germane to several of the factors that were offered earlier as explanations for why they appear to join in so well in their new communities. However, it would be wrong to say that there are no cultural differences between RRI participants and their new rural neighbours. Indeed, some respondents noted these differences specifically and Cloke and Thrift (1990) make a compelling argument for acceptance of the existence of intra-class, as well as inter-class, tensions in rural areas. However, there are also many common meeting points. Suggesting that part of this cohesion is class-related seems not unreasonable. This idea, and its implications in terms of recruiting appropriate "re-settlers" in other contexts, would be a good area for further investigation.

Additional research in this area might be particularly appealing to those who are concerned by the assertion, made about Britain, but arguably applicable more widely, that,

> *Increasingly the British countryside is becoming a gentrified, middle-class countryside, as high house prices and a shortage of low-cost rented accommodation exclude low- and middle-income households. Often this process is characterised as a lack of housing for local village people, reflecting an ideology of localism which tends to obscure division of class and status. (Shucksmith, 1990, p. 1)*

Furthermore, it may be worth considering if the RRI model might lend support, "to argue for an inclusive rural future, a rural of Others rather then an exclusive rural of the Same" (Halfacree, 1997, p. 89). The research described in this thesis has placed RRI firmly within what Smailes and Hugo (1985) describe as "...a people led, not employment-led pattern of growth..." (p. 42). Analysis further suggests that the absence of focus on employment has enabled RRI to reach those most committed to rural life. Viewing long-term supplementation of income through benefits as an opportunity rather than a threat may open options for a "rural resettlement" approach to addressing rural population decline in other contexts. This is not a completely new suggestion. As early as 1984, Jones et al noted that more recent rural migrants in Scotland were,

> *...noticeably less affluent and contain a much higher proportion of unemployed than those who came before....This scenario suggests that state benefits could become an increasingly important cushioning and enabling element in counter-urban migration; in this way peripheral area counter-urbanization could be maintained without the context of societal affluence that spawned the movement in the 1960s.... (pp. 442-443)*

However, no other studies appear to have followed up on this suggestion. Therefore, it is not possible to know if this trend has continued unnoticed, or has dwindled away.

10.7 CONCLUSION

This analysis of Rural Resettlement Ireland illustrates an innovative programme that has developed an effective way to address some aspects of rural depopulation. Crucial to this process has been RRI's tapping into a social need not previously identified. Namely, that a meaningful number of less well off families living in urban areas aspire to, and are capable of, thriving in a rural setting. Furthermore,

RRI has shown that the rural areas to which these families move are robust enough to welcome and benefit from their presence.

In so doing, RRI has enabled individuals to achieve a dream they would be unlikely to have fulfilled without the programme. A small minority of participants did express that the move was a negative experience for them. However, survey results and interviews present a strong majority profile of personal achievement and deep satisfaction.

Emphasising the individual success stories of most RRI participants is in no way meant to imply that rural poverty—for that is what many experience—is easier or superior to urban poverty. Both involve struggle, yet there are differences between the two and individuals may find various aspects better or worse for them. To support this model of resettlement one must believe the existence of this choice to be a good thing.

From a community point of view, one must believe that change and fluidity exist there already and that this model taps into that, thus supporting diversity and maintaining numbers, especially numbers of children and working age adults. Some community doubts and questions about resettlement remain, those can only be definitively answered over time, but the current indicators of the programme's impact are strongly positive.

Is RRI the final solution to rural population decline? Of course not, but neither has the organisation ever claimed to be that. What they do offer is a small-scale and human-centred approach to increasing rural populations. Perhaps it might prove to be an example of what Halfacree (1997) means by "...if counterurbanisation can be harnessed in a critical modern way, rather than just as a 'lifestyle' or as nostalgic reaction, then, with some imagination, it can form a progressive part of the contested countryside cultures..." (p. 89). Only time will reveal whether the intriguing beginning RRI has made will mature into something more lasting, or dwindle away.

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Appendix One

Interview Guide

Interview Guide

Children's lives

--how have they settled?
--how does education compare? is there change in grades/attitude?
--how long will they stay in school (inter/leaving cert)? is this same as urban?
--what do they do with their time? Is this different? TV? Adults?
--did your children want to move?
--teenagers issues
--do you think they will stay in rural area when adult? Do you want them to?
--what will their work prospects be?
--what were your best/worst expectations for children before move? now?

Motivation for Move

--thought of moving before hearing of RRI?
--if so, why didn't you?
--what were goals/aspirations for moving?
--were hopes met?
--what were fears about moving? did they happen?
--who spoke about it most?
--what was response of family and friends when decide to move?

Relationship with RRI

--how hear of RRI?
--when heard, what did you expect they would provide?
--what was most important thing RRI offered you? Cues: the idea, legitimacy, a house, the truck, field worker, classes in Dublin.
--how could they improve?
--would it be easier if RRI was a government agency?

Experience of social/cultural/qual. of life since move

--did you feel welcomed?
--compare social life rural vs urban
--compare physical isolation rural vs urban
--is there a gender difference in these experiences?
--contrast urban and rural people and services
--is time spent differently now than in city (culture, music, Irish)?
--any difference in social status/participation in community groups? "are there people you mix with now..."
--are you happier since move, why or why not?
--ask about role of church/spirituality urban vs. rural

Experience of work/economics since move

--is anyone in the household in paid employment? if so how? how long did it take to find employment?
--are the chances of finding employment better or worse than in city?
--chances of finding nicksers (bits of work)?
--compare finances since move? Not just income, but cost of goods and services and different needs (i.e. car?).

Experience of housing/land since move

--have you moved house since coming to rural area? why? how? plans to move?
--security of tenure?
--cost of heating vs. urban house
--produce any of own food (gardening, fishing, livestock, eggs)? did you before move?
--other gardening?
--connection to natural world?
--access to bog? use it?
--how does house compare to urban?

Describe urban situation pre-move

--paid employment?
--if unemployed, how long?
--social life?
--security of tenure?
--what do you miss the most?
--any family/historical connections to rural area? Where?

Current urban connections

--what do family and friends think of move now?
--how often do family and friends come to stay?
--how often do you visit former urban area?

General

--name a few best things about moving
--name a few worst things about moving
--what was biggest surprise?
--will you stay here?
--what would they tell someone else thinking of moving?

Appendix Two

Interview Data Form

VITAL STATISTICS

Ref. No.

Interviewee gender..... Age..... Spouse/Partner's Age.....

No. of children..... Ages/gender.....

Date of move.....

Length of time on RRI wait-list.....

Where move from? .....
Size of house .....
Housing type there? corporation private rent self-own

What was weekly rent there? Under £10, 11-20, 21-30, 31-50, 50 -75, over 75

What was weekly household income there? 0-50, 51-100, 101-150, 151-200, 201-250
vary seasonally?.....

Size of house now.....

Current housing type. local authority private rent self-own

What is weekly rent now? Under £10, 11-20, 21-30, 31-50, 50 -75, over 75

Estimated weekly household income 0-50, 51-100, 101-150, 151-200, 201-250
vary seasonally?.....

No. of places lived since moved to rural 1 2 3 4 5

Size of land/garden .....

Telephone in house? yes no Where is nearest usable?.....

Where do/did parents live? What was their housing tenure? .....
.....
.....

Access to car?.....
Who in family has license? .....
Who drives? .....

Car when in urban area?.....
License then?.....
Drove then? .....

Education levels?.....
Have attended/are attending any education/training courses?.....
.....

Appendix Three

RRI Participant
Postal Survey Questionnaire

Is there anything else you would like to tell us about your experience of moving to the country? Please use this space for any comments you want to add.

Your help with this project is very greatly appreciated.
Thank you!

Rural Resettlement Scotland?

Learning from Ireland

This survey is vital to a better understanding of how Rural Resettlement Ireland works and how it might work in other countries where people want to move from the city.

Please answer all the questions. If you want to add comments in the margins or the back page, please feel free to do so. All your comments will be listened to.

Thank you for your help.

Please return this to: Centre for Human Ecology
University of Edinburgh
15 Buccleuch Place
Edinburgh EH8 9LN
SCOTLAND

THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH

First we would like to ask about why and how you moved.

Q-1 Had you thought of moving to the countryside before you heard of RRI? (please circle number)

1 NO, NEVER
2 YES, ONCE OR TWICE
3 YES, OFTEN

Q-2 If "Yes", what kept you from moving without RRI? (please circle numbers of **all** that apply)

1 DID NOT KNOW HOW TO START
2 COULD NOT AFFORD TO LOOK FOR A HOUSE
3 COULD NOT FIND A HOUSE IN THE COUNTRY
4 DID NOT THINK I/WE COULD AFFORD TO MOVE
5 DID NOT KNOW IF I/WE WOULD BE WELCOME
6 NO SUPPORT FROM FAMILY OR FRIENDS
7 OTHER (please state) _____

Q-3 When you told your family and friends that you were moving, what was their response? (please circle number)

1 THEY THOUGHT IT WAS A BAD IDEA
2 THEY THOUGHT IT WAS A GOOD IDEA

Q-4 What do those family and friends think about your move now? (please circle number)

1 THEY THINK IT WAS THE WRONG THING TO DO
2 THEY THINK IT WAS THE RIGHT THING TO DO

Q-5 If you moved as a couple, which one of you encouraged the move most? (please circle number, if did not move as couple, leave blank)

1 THE WOMAN
2 THE MAN
3 NO DIFFERENCE

Q-6 What was the single most important reason you moved to the country?

_____

_____

Q-7 On a scale of 1 to 4, how important were the following hopes in YOUR household's decision to move to the country? Please circle the appropriate number for each item.

THE HOPE THAT YOU WOULD:	NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT	NOT VERY IMPORTANT	IMPORTANT	VERY IMPORTANT
Get away from crime in the city	1	2	3	4
Find a better natural environment	1	2	3	4
Have some space around you	1	2	3	4
Be with rural people	1	2	3	4
Find more or better work	1	2	3	4
Start your own business	1	2	3	4
Get your children a better education	1	2	3	4
Grow your own food	1	2	3	4
Be part of a close-knit community	1	2	3	4
Get away from drugs in the city	1	2	3	4
Participate in traditional music, crafts, or dance	1	2	3	4
Fulfil a dream or ambition	1	2	3	4
Fix up an abandoned or poor condition house	1	2	3	4

Q-8 What would be your ideal type of housing? (please circle number)

1 COUNCIL HOUSE
2 PRIVATELY RENTED HOUSE
3 OWN YOUR OWN HOUSE
4 OTHER (please state) _____

Q-9 Please state the neighbourhood, city and country you moved from.

_____

Q-10 After you sent your Family Questionnaire to Rural Resettlement, how long was it before you moved? If you moved before there were Questionnaires, how long after you first contacted RRI did you move? (please state)

_____

Q-11 What month and year did you move to a rural area? (please state)

_____

Q-12 How much money did your household personally have to spend in order to move to the country? Do not include the cost of removal, if that was covered by the Health Board. (please circle number)

1 £0 - 100
2 £101 - 200
3 £201 - 300
4 £301 - 400
5 £401 - 500
6 OVER £500

Q-13 Once you had moved, how much money did you spend personally on fixing up your house in the first 6 months?

1 NONE
2 £1 - 100
3 £101 - 200
4 £201 - 300
5 £301 - 400
6 £401 - 500
7 OVER £500

Q-14 How did you first hear about RRI? (please circle number)

1 TELEVISION
2 RADIO
3 NEWSPAPER OR MAGAZINE
4 FAMILY OR FRIENDS
5 OTHER (please state where) _____ _____

Q-15 On the following list, what did you get from Rural Resettlement? (please circle all that apply)

1 THEY GAVE US ADVICE BEFORE WE MOVED
2 THEY FOUND A HOUSE FOR US
3 WE USED THEIR TRUCK TO MOVE
4 WE WENT TO THEIR CLASSES IN DUBLIN
5 A FIELD WORKER HAS VISITED US
6 THEY HAVE HELPED US SINCE WE MOVED
7 OTHER (please state) _____

_____

_____

Q-16 What suggestions could you make to improve Rural Resettlement Ireland? (please state)

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

This section asks about your housing and transportation before and after your move.

Q-17 Overall how does the house you live in now compare to where you lived before you moved to the country? (please circle number)

1 OUR HOUSE BEFORE WE MOVED WAS BETTER
2 OUR HOUSE NOW IS BETTER

Q-18 Please answer these questions that contrast your house before you moved to the country with your house now. (please fill in the blanks)

	BEFORE MOVING	NOW
Housing type (i.e. estate, flat, terrace, detached)	_____	_____
Number of bedrooms	_____	_____
Housing terms (i.e. council house, private rent, own, etc.)	_____	_____
Written lease if renting (yes/no)	_____	_____
Length of lease (if any)	_____	_____
Size of land/garden (i.e. none, small, medium, large, or give acres if known)	_____	_____
Telephone (yes/no)	_____	_____
Type of central heating (or none)	_____	_____
Total weekly rent or mortgage	_____	_____
Total amount of housing allowance received (if any)	_____	_____

Q-19 How many houses have you lived in since moving to a rural area? (please circle number)

1 ONE
2 TWO
3 THREE
4 FOUR
5 FIVE
6 SIX OR MORE

Q-20 If you have lived in more than one house since moving to the country, please state the reason(s) for changing house(s).

_____

_____

Q-21 If you are not a home owner, do you have any plans to purchase a house in the country? (please circle number)

1 NO
2 YES

Q-22 If "Yes", which answers best describe your current situation? (please circle **all** that apply)

1 WE ARE PLANNING TO PURCHASE BUT HAVE NOT YET APPLIED FOR A MORTGAGE
2 WE HAVE BEEN APPROVED FOR A MORTGAGE FROM A BANK OR A CREDIT UNION OR A BUILDING SOCIETY
3 WE HAVE BEEN DENIED A MORTGAGE FROM A BANK OR A CREDIT UNION OR A BUILDING SOCIETY
4 WE HAVE APPLIED FOR A SHARED OWNERSHIP MORTGAGE
5 WE HAVE BEEN PASSED FOR A SHARED OWNERSHIP MORTGAGE
6 WE HAVE BEEN TURNED DOWN FOR A SHARED OWNERSHIP MORTGAGE
7 WE ARE PLANNING TO PURCHASE AND HAVE THE MONEY FROM OUR OWN RESOURCES
8 OTHER (please state) _____

_____

Q-23 If you already own your rural home, please state:

a) what type of mortgage you have (i.e. shared ownership, building society, etc.), or if you bought the house outright?_____

_____

b) was it a newly built or an existing house?_____

c) how much work did it need before and after you moved in?

_____

Q-24 Does your household produce any of your own food now, i.e. gardening, livestock, eggs, fishing? (please circle number)

1 NO
2 YES

Q-25 If "Yes", please look at the following list and circle those items that your household produces. In the space to the right of each item, please write in the number of months each year you are able to provide all of that item yourselves.

Example: If you grow potatoes and they last you for 5 months, you circle "1 POTATOES" and write "5 months" in the blank.

Item	No. of months
1 POTATOES	_____
2 OTHER VEGETABLES	_____
3 CHICKEN EGGS	_____
4 CHICKEN MEAT	_____
5 COW'S MILK	_____
6 GOAT'S MILK	_____
7 FISH	_____
8 OTHER (please state)	
_____	_____
_____	_____

Q-26 How many animals/pets do you keep, other than any noted above? For example "2 dogs and 1 goat not kept for milk" (please state)

_____

_____

Q-27 Did you produce any of your own food before you moved? (please circle number)

1 NO
2 YES

Q-28 Do you have access to a turf bog with your house? (please circle number)

1 NO
2 YES

Q-29 Do you use any bog either by renting it or having one that comes with your house? (please circle number)

1 NO
2 YES

Q-30 If "yes", how much of your heating needs do you meet this way? (please circle number)

1 ALL
2 A LARGE PART
3 A SMALL PART

Q-31 Before moving, did your household own a car? (please circle number)

1 NO
2 YES

Q-32 Before moving, who in the household had a driver's license, i.e. woman, man, son, daughter, etc.? (please state)

_____

Q-33 Does your household have a car today? (please circle number)

1 NO
2 YES

Q-34 Who in the household has a driver's license today, i.e. woman, man, son, daughter, etc.? (please state)

_____

Q-35 Is there a bus service to your nearest town, and if so, how often does it run?

_____

This section is about some social aspects of moving to the country.

Q-36 When you first moved, did you feel welcome in your new community? (please circle number)

1 NO
2 YES

Q-37 Do you feel welcome in your community now? (please circle number)

1 NO
2 YES

Q-38 How does your social life compare now with before you moved? (please circle number)

1 WE GO OUT LESS OFTEN THAN BEFORE
2 WE GO OUT MORE OFTEN THAN BEFORE
3 THERE HAS BEEN NO CHANGE

Q-39 Whichever answer you gave above, are you happy with this? (please circle number)

1 NO
2 YES

Q-40 Is there a difference between men and women in fitting in to a rural community? (please circle number)

1 NO, THERE IS NO DIFFERENCE
2 YES, IT IS EASIER FOR A WOMAN TO FIT IN
3 YES, IT IS EASIER FOR A MAN TO FIT IN

Q-41 Has how often you attend religious services changed since you moved? (please circle number)

1 NO CHANGE
2 YES IT CHANGED, I GO LESS OFTEN NOW
3 YES IT CHANGED, I GO MORE OFTEN NOW

Q-42 On a scale of 1 to 5, please state the strength of your disagreement or agreement with the following statements. (please circle numbers)

	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEUTRAL	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE
The country is a better place to raise children.	1	2	3	4	5
The country is a better place for adults to live.	1	2	3	4	5
I am happier since moving.	1	2	3	4	5
I feel socially isolated here.	1	2	3	4	5
I feel physically isolated here.	1	2	3	4	5
It is easier to find work in the country.	1	2	3	4	5
Everyone would be happier if they moved to the country.	1	2	3	4	5
Medical care is easier to reach in the country.	1	2	3	4	5
Most country people resent city people moving in.	1	2	3	4	5
I feel safer in the country.	1	2	3	4	5
It is vital to have your own car here.	1	2	3	4	5

Questions 43 - 49 are about any children who moved with you or live with you now. If there are no children in your household, please go on to Question 50.

Q-43 When you told your children you were moving to the country, how did they react? (please circle number)

1 THEY DID NOT WANT TO MOVE AT ALL
2 THEY WERE NOT TOO UPSET
3 THEY WERE HAPPY TO MOVE

Q-44 Would your children like to move back to your former area now? (please circle number)

1 NO, THEY WOULD NOT WANT TO GO BACK
2 YES, THEY WOULD LIKE TO GO BACK

Q-45 Since you moved to the country has their been any change in your children's health? (please circle number)

1 NO CHANGE
2 YES, THEY ARE **LESS** HEALTHY SINCE WE MOVED
3 YES, THEY ARE **MORE** HEALTHY SINCE WE MOVED

Q-46 How does the education your children get now compare to before you moved to the country? (please circle number)

1 THEY GOT A BETTER EDUCATION BEFORE WE MOVED
2 THEY ARE GETTING A BETTER EDUCATION NOW

Q-47 **Before** you moved, how long did you expect each child to stay in school? (please tick appropriate line for each child, if you have more than 6 children please add your own columns)

	1st child	2nd child	3rd child	4th child	5th child	6th child
LEAVE BEFORE JUNIOR CERT	____	____	____	____	____	____
GET JUNIOR CERT	____	____	____	____	____	____
DO TRANSITION YEAR	____	____	____	____	____	____
GET LEAVING CERT	____	____	____	____	____	____
ATTEND COLLEGE	____	____	____	____	____	____

Q-48 **Since** your move, how long do you expect each of your children to stay in school? (please tick appropriate line for each child, if you have more than 6 children please add your own columns)

	1st child	2nd child	3rd child	4th child	5th child	6th child
LEAVE BEFORE JUNIOR CERT	____	____	____	____	____	____
GET JUNIOR CERT	____	____	____	____	____	____
DO TRANSITION YEAR	____	____	____	____	____	____
GET LEAVING CERT	____	____	____	____	____	____
ATTEND COLLEGE	____	____	____	____	____	____

Q-49 On a scale of 1 to 5, how much do you disagree or agree with the following statements about your child/ren since you moved? (please circle appropriate number for each item)

SINCE MOVING, MY CHILD/REN:	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEUTRAL	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE
Are more shy	1	2	3	4	5
Are more self-confident	1	2	3	4	5
Mix better with people	1	2	3	4	5
Are outside more often	1	2	3	4	5
Are inside more often	1	2	3	4	5
Have to be watched more closely	1	2	3	4	5
Have more freedom	1	2	3	4	5
Are more ambitious	1	2	3	4	5

This section asks about your household finances and employment.

Q-50 How have your household finances changed since your move? (please circle number)

1 WE HAVE LESS MONEY NOW AND IT IS HARDER TO MANAGE
2 WE HAVE LESS MONEY NOW, BUT ARE MANAGING BETTER THAN BEFORE WE MOVED
3 WE HAVE THE SAME AMOUNT OF MONEY BUT IT IS HARDER TO MANAGE
4 WE HAVE THE SAME AMOUNT OF MONEY BUT IT IS EASIER TO MANAGE
5 WE HAVE MORE MONEY NOW BUT IT IS HARDER TO MANAGE
6 WE HAVE MORE MONEY NOW AND IT IS EASIER TO MANAGE

Q-51 Is anyone in the household picking up occasional work? (please circle number)

1 NO
2 YES

Q-52 If "Yes", please state who (woman, man, son, daughter, etc.) and in what type of work and how long after you moved this type of work was offered. Please include the entire household.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Q-53 Is anyone in the household on a FAS, VTOS, or other similar training course? (please circle number)

1 NO
2 YES

Q-54 If "Yes", please state who (woman, man, son, daughter, etc.) and in what type of course and how long after you moved a training course was joined.

_____

_____

_____

Q-55 Is anyone in the household in official **part-time** paid employment? (please circle number)

1 NO
2 YES

Q-56 If "Yes", please state who is working (woman, man, son, daughter, etc.), in what type of job and how long after you moved part-time paid work was found.

_____

_____

_____

Q-57 Is anyone in the household in official **full-time** paid employment? (please circle number)

1 NO
2 YES

Q-58 If "Yes", please state who is working (woman, man, son, daughter, etc.), in what type of job and how long after you moved full-time paid work was found.

_____

_____

_____

Q-59 Is anyone in the household self-employed? (please circle number)

1 NO
2 YES

Q-60 If "Yes", please state who is self-employed (woman, man, son, daughter, etc.), in what type of work and how long after you moved self-employment began.

_____

_____

_____

Q-61 Is anyone from the household currently attending further education such as college or university? (please circle number)

1 NO
2 YES

Q-62 If "Yes", please state who (son, daughter, etc.) and what type of further education.

_____

_____

_____

Q-63 What skills or qualifications do you and members of your household have? (please state)

_____

_____

_____

_____

Q-64 Immediately **before** you moved to the country, was anyone in the household employed, self-employed, or on a training course? (please circle number)

1 NO
2 YES

Q-65 If "Yes", please state who (man, woman, son, daughter, etc.) and in what type of work or course.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Q-66 If your family's main income was Social Welfare just before you moved, how long had you been claiming it? (please circle number)

1 WE HAD BEEN CLAIMING FOR OVER 10 YEARS
2 WE HAD BEEN CLAIMING FOR 5 TO 10 YEARS
3 WE HAD BEEN CLAIMING FOR 3 TO 5 YEARS
4 WE HAD BEEN CLAIMING FOR 1 TO 3 YEARS
5 WE HAD BEEN CLAIMING FOR UNDER 1 YEAR

Q-67 Before you moved to the country, what was your household's average weekly income, after any tax being paid and including any occasional work, Social Welfare and all other benefits? (please circle number)

1 £0 - 50
2 £51 - 100
3 £101 - 150
4 £151 - 200
5 £201 - 250
6 £251 - 300
7 OVER £300

Q-68 What is your average weekly household income now, after any tax being paid and including any occasional work, Social Welfare payments and all other benefits? (please circle number)

1 £0 - 50
2 £51 - 100
3 £101 - 150
4 £151 - 200
5 £201 - 250
6 £251 - 300
7 OVER £300

And finally...

Q-69 How long do you plan to stay in rural Ireland? (please circle number)

1 WE WILL LEAVE AS SOON AS WE CAN
2 WE WILL PROBABLY LEAVE WHEN THE CHILDREN ARE GROWN
3 WE WILL PROBABLY STAY FOREVER
4 WE DON'T KNOW
5 OTHER _____

Q-70 If you had it all to do over again, would you still move to the country? (please circle number)

1 NO
2 YES

Q-71 Please give the age, gender and school year of all children living in your household, including any grown-up children living with you. Please include children who are not your own, but who are living with you (e.g. if your niece is living with you). Please do not include any children of yours who did not move to the country. Please add more lines if needed.

Example: Child 1 23 year old son
Child 2 12 year old daughter, 1st year

Child 1 _____

Child 2 _____

Child 3 _____

Child 4 _____

Child 5 _____

Child 6 _____

Q-72 Please state the age and gender of all adults living in the household. Please add more lines if needed.

Adult 1 _____

Adult 2 _____

Adult 3 _____

Q-73 Please could you state your marital status?

_____

Q-74 The main person who filled in this survey is... (please circle number)

1 AN ADULT FEMALE
2 AN ADULT MALE
3 FEMALE AND MALE WORKED ON IT EQUALLY
4 OTHER (please state) _____

_____

Appendix Four

Community
Postal Survey Questionnaire

Is there anything else you would like to say about Rural Resettlement Ireland? Please use this space for any comments you want to add.

Your help with this project is very greatly appreciated.
Thank you!

Rural Resettlement Scotland?

Learning from Ireland

This survey is vital to a better understanding of Rural Resettlement Ireland and if it might work in other countries.

Please answer all the questions. If you want to add comments in the margins or the back page, please feel free to do so. All your comme will be listened to.

Thank you for your help.

Please return to: Jane Rosegrant
Institute of Ecology and Resource Management
University of Edinburgh
School of Agriculture Building
West Mains Road
Edinburgh EH9 3JG
SCOTLAND

Q-1 Do you think that rural Ireland has too few people living in it? (please circle number)

1 NO
2 YES

Q-2 If "Yes", do you think that people moving out of the cities and into the country is one good way to change this situation? (please circle number)

1 NO
2 YES

Q-3 Had you heard of Rural Resettlement Ireland before receiving this survey? (please circle number)

1 NO
2 YES

Q-4 If "Yes", how did you hear about it? (please circle numbers of **all** that apply)

1 TELEVISION
2 RADIO
3 NEWSPAPER OR MAGAZINE
4 FAMILY OR FRIENDS
5 THROUGH MY WORK
6 I HAVE MET SOMEONE WHO HAS MOVED WITH RRI

Q-5 On a scale of 1 to 5, please state the strength of your disagreement or agreement with the following statements. (please circle numbers)

	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEUTRAL	AGREE	STRONG AGREE
The country is a better place than the city to raise children.	1	2	3	4	5
The country is a better place than the city for adults to live.	1	2	3	4	5
Work is easier to find in the country than in the city.	1	2	3	4	5
Most country people resent city people moving in.	1	2	3	4	5
There is room for more people in rural Ireland.	1	2	3	4	5
Everyone would be happier if they moved to the country.	1	2	3	4	5
People have a right to choose where they live in Ireland.	1	2	3	4	5

Q-6 On the following list, what do you think families get from the organisation Rural Resettlement Ireland? (please circle **all** that apply)

1 FAMILIES GET ADVICE BEFORE MOVING
2 RRI FINDS HOUSES FOR FAMILIES
3 RRI PROVIDES A TRUCK FOR THE MOVE
4 RRI GIVES CLASSES IN DUBLIN
5 AN RRI FIELD WORKER VISITS FAMILIES
6 RRI HELPS FAMILIES TO FIND WORK
7 OTHER (please state)

_____

Q-7 Have you personally met anyone who has moved with RRI? (please circle number)

1 NO
2 YES

Q-8 Do you know of anyone who has moved with RRI? (please circle number)

1 NO
2 YES

Q-9 Do you think that families are given a grant by the government, or by RRI, to move to the country? (please circle number)

1 NO
2 YES

Q-10 Do you think that families **should** be given a grant in order to move to the country? (please circle number)

1 NO
2 YES

Q-11 Would you welcome city people moving into your area? (please circle number)

1 NO
2 YES

Q-12 Do you think your community would welcome city people moving into the area? (please circle number)

1 NO
2 YES

Q-13 What are your main hopes, if any, for the effect of new peopl moving to rural areas? (please state)

_____

_____

_____

_____

Q-14 What are your main concerns, if any, about the effect of new people moving to rural areas? (please state)

_____

_____

_____

_____

Q-15 On a scale of 1 to 5, please state the strength of your disagreement or agreement with the following statements. (please circle numbers)

	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEUTRAL	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE
I THINK CITY PEOPLE MOVING TO THE COUNTRY WILL:					
Bring new jobs to the area.	1	2	3	4	5
Help local schools stay open.	1	2	3	4	5
Change local customs.	1	2	3	4	5
Help stop rural people from moving away to the city.	1	2	3	4	5
Take houses local people need.	1	2	3	4	5
Fit in well.	1	2	3	4	5
Help keep shops and post offices open.	1	2	3	4	5
Take jobs away from locals.	1	2	3	4	5
Improve the social life in an area.	1	2	3	4	5

Q-16 As far as you know has the work of Rural Resettlement Irelan had any **positive** impact on you, your community or your work? (please circle number)

1 NO
2 YES

Q-17 As far as you know has the work of Rural Resettlement Irelan had any **negative** impact on you, your community or your work? (please circle number)

1 NO
2 YES

Q-18 Could you please explain, or add some detail, to your answer Questions 16 and 17 above? (please state)

_____

_____

_____

_____

Q-19 The main person who filled in this survey... (please circle number of all that apply)

1 LIVES IN RURAL IRELAND
2 WORKS IN RURAL IRELAND
3 WORKS WITH PEOPLE WHO LIVE IN RURAL IRELAND

Q-20 The main person who filled in this survey is... (please circle number)

1 AN ADULT FEMALE
2 AN ADULT MALE
3 FEMALE AND MALE WORKED ON IT EQUALLY

Appendix Five

Social Status Markers

Family Code:EC14	
Characteristic	**Notes**
Art on walls	Some, "home made" in their craft shop
Reading material visible	None
Background music/television	None
Body language (hexis)	Shook hands
Food offered	None
Accent	Regional English (woman and man)
Things missed from urban life	Fish and chips, markets, Indian take-away, access to DIY shops

Family Code:EC15	
Characteristic	**Notes**
Art on walls	None
Reading material visible	None
Background music/television	None
Body language (hexis)	--
Food offered	None
Accent	Dublin (man only interviewed)
Things missed from urban life	Soccer team

Family Code:EC19	
Characteristic	**Notes**
Art on walls	Not interviewed in their home
Reading material visible	See above
Background music/television	See above
Body language (hexis)	--
Food offered	See above
Accent	Dublin (woman and man)
Things missed from urban life	Secure housing tenure (corporation house)

Family Code:EC21	
Characteristic	**Notes**
Art on walls	None
Reading material visible	Local newspaper
Background music/television	None
Body language (hexis)	--
Food offered	None
Accent	Dublin (man only interviewed)
Things missed from urban life	Work, public swimming pool

Family Code:EC22	
Characteristic	**Notes**
Art on walls	Framed art posters
Reading material visible	Children's books, adult novels
Background music/television	None
Body language (hexis)	Shook hands
Food offered	Invited for (and accepted) family supper
Accent	Dublin (man), European (woman)
Things missed from urban life	Not asked

Family Code:EC24	
Characteristic	**Notes**
Art on walls	None
Reading material visible	Children's homework
Background music/television	Soft pop music
Body language (hexis)	Shook hands
Food offered	Tea and biscuits, whiskey
Accent	Dublin (woman and man)
Things missed from urban life	Chips from the van

Family Code:EC31	
Characteristic	**Notes**
Art on walls	None
Reading material visible	None
Background music/television	None
Body language (hexis)	--
Food offered	Tea
Accent	Regional Irish (man only interviewed)
Things missed from urban life	Access to facilities for family history research, chip shop

Family Code:EO3	
Characteristic	**Notes**
Art on walls	Framed prints (reproductions)
Reading material visible	None
Background music/television	None
Body language (hexis)	--
Food offered	Tea
Accent	Dublin (woman only)
Things missed from urban life	--

Family Code:EO7	
Characteristic	**Notes**
Art on walls	None
Reading material visible	National newspaper
Background music/television	None
Body language (hexis)	--
Food offered	Tea
Accent	Dublin (woman and man)
Things missed from urban life	"I miss everything. Company, and the way things go on...there's a different way of life down here...Where I was living I'd go down to the corner...hang around." (man) Brothers and sisters (woman)

Family Code:EO9	
Characteristic	**Notes**
Art on walls	None
Reading material visible	None
Background music/television	None
Body language (hexis)	--
Food offered	Tea
Accent	Regional Irish (woman and man)
Things missed from urban life	Only family, nothing else

Family Code:EO12	
Characteristic	**Notes**
Art on walls	None
Reading material visible	None
Background music/television	None
Body language (hexis)	--
Food offered	Tea
Accent	Dublin (woman and man)
Things missed from urban life	Family and friends, live club music (not folk), sports facilities for children

Family Code:EO19	
Characteristic	**Notes**
Art on walls	None
Reading material visible	None
Background music/television	Television soap operas on
Body language (hexis)	--
Food offered	None
Accent	Dublin (man and brother)
Things missed from urban life	Nothing

Family Code:LC1	
Characteristic	**Notes**
Art on walls	Small original watercolours
Reading material visible	Novels
Background music/television	None
Body language (hexis)	Shake hands
Food offered	Tea
Accent	Dublin (woman and man)
Things missed from urban life	Cinema, theatre, swimming pool, restaurants, being anonymous

Family Code:LC9	
Characteristic	**Notes**
Art on walls	--
Reading material visible	None
Background music/television	None
Body language (hexis)	--
Food offered	Tea
Accent	Dublin (woman and man)
Things missed from urban life	Shops, more television stations

Family Code:LC15	
Characteristic	**Notes**
Art on walls	None
Reading material visible	None
Background music/television	Television on for part of interview
Body language (hexis)	Man lay on sofa
Food offered	Tea
Accent	Dublin (woman and man)
Things missed from urban life	Most things (man), convenience for the children

Family Code:LC19	
Characteristic	**Notes**
Art on walls	Religious prints
Reading material visible	Historical books
Background music/television	None
Body language (hexis)	Shook hands
Food offered	Tea
Accent	Regional English (woman) and Dublin (man)
Things missed from urban life	Amenities, transport, infrastructure

Family Code:LC21	
Characteristic	**Notes**
Art on walls	Prints, posters
Reading material visible	None
Background music/television	None
Body language (hexis)	--
Food offered	Tea
Accent	Dublin (woman and man)
Things missed from urban life	--

Family Code:LO6	
Characteristic	**Notes**
Art on walls	None
Reading material visible	None
Background music/television	None
Body language (hexis)	--
Food offered	Tea and biscuits
Accent	Regional Irish (woman only)
Things missed from urban life	"not a thing"

Family Code:LO7	
Characteristic	**Notes**
Art on walls	Small original paintings
Reading material visible	Magazines, novels
Background music/television	Radio news
Body language (hexis)	Shook hands
Food offered	Tea
Accent	Regional English (woman and man)
Things missed from urban life	--

Family Code:LO11	
Characteristic	**Notes**
Art on walls	Large posters/prints
Reading material visible	None
Background music/television	None
Body language (hexis)	Shook hands
Food offered	Tea
Accent	Dublin (woman), Belfast (man)
Things missed from urban life	---

Family Code:LO14	
Characteristic	**Notes**
Art on walls	None
Reading material visible	None
Background music/television	None
Body language (hexis)	--
Food offered	Tea
Accent	Dublin (woman only)
Things missed from urban life	--

Family Code:LO19	
Characteristic	**Notes**
Art on walls	None
Reading material visible	None
Background music/television	Rock music
Body language (hexis)	--
Food offered	Tea, cider
Accent	Dublin (woman and man)
Things missed from urban life	"Sometimes you wish something would happen. You just wish something different would happen instead of someone's cow's got TB or something like."

Family Code:LO21	
Characteristic	**Notes**
Art on walls	None
Reading material visible	None
Background music/television	None
Body language (hexis)	--
Food offered	Tea
Accent	Regional English (man only)
Things missed from urban life	Supermarkets close by

Family Code:LO27	
Characteristic	**Notes**
Art on walls	None
Reading material visible	None
Background music/television	None
Body language (hexis)	--
Food offered	Tea
Accent	Regional Irish (woman), Dublin (man)
Things missed from urban life	--

Family Code:LO30	
Characteristic	**Notes**
Art on walls	None
Reading material visible	None
Background music/television	Neighbour with music box
Body language (hexis)	--
Food offered	Tea
Accent	Dublin (woman and man)
Things missed from urban life	--

Family Code:LO38	
Characteristic	**Notes**
Art on walls	Original paintings and prints
Reading material visible	Novels, books on boating
Background music/television	None
Body language (hexis)	Shook hands
Food offered	Supper
Accent	Dublin (woman), regional Irish (man)
Things missed from urban life	Environmental groups, historical societies

Family Code:LO44	
Characteristic	**Notes**
Art on walls	None
Reading material visible	None
Background music/television	Children's television
Body language (hexis)	--
Food offered	Tea
Accent	Dublin (woman and man)
Things missed from urban life	Family

Family Code:LO46	
Characteristic	**Notes**
Art on walls	--
Reading material visible	None
Background music/television	None
Body language (hexis)	--
Food offered	Tea
Accent	Dublin (woman and man)
Things missed from urban life	"No regrets whatsoever"

Family Code:LO57	
Characteristic	**Notes**
Art on walls	None
Reading material visible	None
Background music/television	None
Body language (hexis)	Man lay on sofa for interview
Food offered	Tea
Accent	Dublin (woman and man)
Things missed from urban life	--

Family Code:LO68	
Characteristic	**Notes**
Art on walls	Original drawings and prints
Reading material visible	Novels, histories, architectural books
Background music/television	Classical music
Body language (hexis)	Shook hands
Food offered	Tea, homemade scones, homemade jam, supper
Accent	Dublin (woman), Edinburgh (man)
Things missed from urban life	Bookshops, museums, exhibitions, convenience

Family Code:LO72	
Characteristic	**Notes**
Art on walls	--
Reading material visible	None
Background music/television	Loud television
Body language (hexis)	--
Food offered	Tea
Accent	Regional Irish (woman only)
Things missed from urban life	Nothing

Family Code:LO74	
Characteristic	**Notes**
Art on walls	Small prints, posters
Reading material visible	None
Background music/television	None
Body language (hexis)	--
Food offered	Tea
Accent	Dublin (woman and man)
Things missed from urban life	--

Family Code:LO77	
Characteristic	**Notes**
Art on walls	None
Reading material visible	Novels
Background music/television	None
Body language (hexis)	--
Food offered	Tea
Accent	Dublin (woman and man)
Things missed from urban life	Company (woman), nothing (man)