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Invitation  
to the 17th IRS International Lecture  
on Society and Space

## Social Exclusion in Diversified Rural Contexts

Professor Mark Shucksmith, Newcastle University

Poverty and social exclusion exist in rural, as well as in urban, areas across the world. This paper begins by reviewing conceptualizations of social exclusion and its relation to place, arguing that social exclusion may be understood in terms of dynamic, multi-dimensional, relational processes which operate in localized contexts at multiple scales. Often this is considered primarily in terms of exclusion from labour markets or simply lack of income, but a full understanding of social exclusion can only be gained by considering the wider range of processes by which resources are gained and lost in our societies. These operate through markets; state; voluntary and community organisations; and family, friends and neighbours. Not only will the operation of each of these systems vary from place to place, and through time, but the capacity and agility of individuals and social groups to engage with these will also vary. Moreover, while many poor people live in poor places, many more live in relatively prosperous places, where poverty is hidden amongst affluence.

How then does rurality, and indeed rural diversity, affect social exclusion? The diversity of rural places it itself multidimensional, though often reduced to single dimensions such as distance (remote/accessible) or population density. There are many more contextual factors to consider, such as the welfare mix (welfare regime); local, national and supranational policies; relational and historically embedded patterns of economic and state restructuring; and the distribution and exercise of power at (and between) multiple scales. One interesting sociological approach distinguishes between rural areas according to the dominant form of social relations, thus distinguishing in England between a preserved countryside, a contested countryside and a paternalist countryside. This paper seeks to illustrate how social exclusion operates differently in such diversified rural contexts, even within one small country, by considering the results of a study of contrasting rural areas of Scotland in the 1990s and some of the contextual changes since then. The paper concludes by suggesting an agenda for further research.

**Discussant:**

Dr. Thilo Lang, Leibniz-Institut für Länderkunde, Leipzig, Germany



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### Vita

Mark Shucksmith is Professor of Planning at Newcastle University, where he was also Director of the Institute for Social Renewal from 2012–18, and Visiting Professor at Ruralis, Trondheim. His main areas of research include social exclusion in rural areas, rural housing and rural development. He is the author of 17 books (including editing the Routledge International Handbook of Rural Studies, with David Brown) and over 110 learned papers, as well as coordinating several EU research projects. He is currently leading a study of social exclusion and financial vulnerability in rural Britain, funded by the Standard Life Foundation. Mark has recently served as Specialist Adviser to two House of Lords Select Committees, a role he previously performed in the Scottish Parliament. He was Chair of the Scottish Government's Committee of Inquiry into Crofting (2007–08) and a Board member of England's Countryside Agency and Commission for Rural Communities (2005–13), as well as directing the Joseph Rowntree Foundation's Action in Rural Areas programme. Mark was Vice President of the International Rural Sociological Association during 2004–08 and Programme Chair for the XI World Rural Sociology Congress in Trondheim, Norway in 2004. He was awarded the honour of OBE in 2009 for services to rural development and to crofting. He is a Fellow of the Academy of Social Sciences and a Trustee of the Carnegie UK Trust and of ACRE (Action with Communities in Rural England).

### Registration

Please register for the 17th IRS International Lecture on Society and Space by 17 September 2020 by sending an email to >> [sarah.brechmann@leibniz-irs.de](mailto:sarah.brechmann@leibniz-irs.de) in order to receive a link to the Zoom event. No fees are charged for the conference.

The 17th IRS International Lecture on Society and Space is a part of the International Web Conference > [Social Entrepreneurship and Social Innovation in Rural Regions](#) organized by Leibniz Institute for Research on Society and Space | 21–22 September 2020.



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