Assemblage, Place and Globalization
Researching the Global Countryside

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Presentation slides available at www.global-rural.org
“there is a discernable privileging of urban over rural in scholarly accounts of globalization”
Engaging the global countryside: globalization, hybridity and the reconstitution of rural place

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Abstract: This article applies Massey’s (2005) call for a relational understanding of space that can challenge aspatial readings of globalization to the study of globalization in a rural context. Critiquing existing rural research for tending towards studies of global commodity chains and overarching processes of globalization, it argues for more place-based studies of globalization as experienced in rural localities. The concept of the ‘global countryside’ is introduced as a hypothetical space that represents the ultimate outcome of globalizing processes, yet it is noted that the characteristics of the ‘global countryside’ find only partial articulation in particular rural spaces. Understanding this differentiated geography of rural globalization, it is argued, requires a closer understanding of how globalization reorganizes rural places, for which Massey’s thesis provides a guide. The article thus examines the reconstitution of rural places under globalization, highlighting the interaction of local and global actors, and of human and non-human actants, to produce new hybrid forms and relations. As such, it is argued, the politics of globalization cannot be reduced to domination or subordination, but are instead a politics of negotiation and configuration.

Key words: global countryside, globalization, hybridity, politics, rural.
“As this emergent global countryside is not a uniform, homogenous space, but rather is differentially articulated, and contested, through particular rural places, so the question... how are rural places remade under globalization?... becomes central to our understanding of the global countryside.”

Woods (2007), p 51
The Global Countryside: Rural Change and Development in Globalization

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Michael Woods, Jesse Heley, Francesca Fois, Laura Jones, Anthonia Onyeahialam, Sam Saville, Marc Welsh, Fidel Budy, Beth Saunders, Jack Cook, Reuben Knutson, Rachel Vaughan
Work Package 1: (Re-)Assembling the Global Countryside
Focused case studies of globalization in rural localities in advanced economies
Michael Woods, Sam Saville, Laura Jones, Francesca Fois

Work Package 2: Mapping and Narrating the Global Countryside
Analysis and mapping of global secondary data, GIS analysis of case study data, Storymaps
Anthonia Onyeahialam, Jack Cook

Work Package 3: A Countertopography of Everyday Globalization
In-depth 3-year case study of ‘everyday globalization’ in Newtown, Wales
Jesse Heley, Laura Jones, Marc Welsh, Sam Saville, Michael Woods

WP4: Differential Global Engagements in Emerging Rural Economies
Focused case studies in Africa, Brazil and China
Michael Woods, Francesca Fois

PhD: Land & Biofuels in Liberia
Fidel Budy

PhD: Faith-based international volunteering in Tanzania. Beth Saunders

Work Package 5: Rural Assemblages and Grounding Global Challenges
Case studies of ‘global challenges’ e.g. energy, water resources, food security, climate change
Michael Woods, Francesca Fois, Marc Welsh
GLOBAL-RURAL Case Studies

37 case studies in 14 countries

- Over 580 semi structured interviews
- Doorstep & street surveys
- Video recording
- Focus groups
- Ethnographic observation
- Archival, library and web research
- Participatory methods
Newtown exhibition

En Route documentary film

Website, Storymaps & social media

Presentations

ESRS Autumn School

The Conversation

Media
An assemblage approach

Central question for GLOBAL-RURAL is ‘how are rural places remade under globalization?’

To answer this question we have adopted an assemblage approach.

An assemblage approach involves enquiring into “the circumstances in which things happen: in what situations, where and when does a particular things happen, how does it happen, and so on.” (Gilles Deleuze, 1995, Negotiations, p 25)

Assemblage thinking emphasizes “emergence, multiplicity and indeterminacy, and connect to a wider redefinition of the socio-spatial in terms of the composition of diverse elements in some form of provisional socio-spatial formation” (Anderson & McFarlane, 2011, in Area, p 124)
An assemblage approach

Assemblage thinking draws in different iterations from Michel Foucault, Bruno Latour (assemblage urbanism) and Gilles Deleuze & Felix Guattari, notably via Manuel DeLanda

We primarily follow DeLanda’s articulation of assemblage thinking in *A New Philosophy of Society* (2005) and *Assemblage Theory* (2016)

DeLanda describes society as “an assemblage of assemblages” (2016, p 37)

Assemblages include... commodity chains, markets, industries, corporations, transport networks, diasporic communities, NGOs, states, governments, social movements, farms, factories, villages, towns, cities, households ... and much more
Characteristics of assemblages

1) Assemblages are **individual entities comprised by multiple parts**, which interact with other assemblages. As “the ontological status of all assemblages is the same, entities operating at different scales can directly interact with one another, individual to individual” (DeLanda, 2016, p 19)

2) Assemblages are always composed of **heterogenous components**, both human and non-human. People are components of a community, but so are “the architecture of the buildings that house them; the myriad different tools and machines used in offices, factories, and kitchens; the various sources of food, water and electricity; the many symbols and icons with which they express their identity” (DeLanda, 2016, p 20). Components can have **material and/or expressive roles** in an assemblage.
Characteristics of assemblages

3) Assemblages can be component parts of larger assemblages. “Communities can form alliances or coalitions and become a larger assemblage, a social justice movement, for example, and organisations can form industrial networks and complex governments” (DeLanda, 2016, p 20)

4) Assemblages act as a source of limitations and opportunities for their components. “The capacity of a close-knit community to enforce local norms, and the capacity of an organization to impose rules and obedience to commands, are clearly a source of constraints to their human components. But a close-knit community also tends to be solidary, an emergent property that provides a resource when it comes to political mobilization” (DeLanda, 2016, p 21)
Characteristics of assemblages

5) Assemblages are given shape by **territorialization and deterritorialization**, which refers not only to spatial boundaries and organization structure, but also the degree of homogenization of an assemblage. Territorialization describes increasing homogeneity or coherence, deterritorialization describes increasing diversity or fragmentation.

6) Assemblages are given identity by **coding and decoding** performed by expressive components. Coding can include language, naming, mapping, statistics, laws, regulations, informal conventions, accounting and prices.
Characteristics of assemblages

7) Assemblages are **dynamic and constantly changing** as they interact with other assemblages; lose, gain and exchange components; and undergo processes of deterritorialization and reterritorialization, decoding and recoding.

Each change to an assemblage has **multiple possible outcomes**. A multiplicity encompasses all the possible forms that an assemblage could take: past, present and future.

In most cases, possible futures can be anticipated and planned for and changes to the form of an assemblage do not alter its identity.

However, if **critical thresholds** are passed an assemblage experiences fundamental qualitative change, altering or losing its identity or dissolving entirely.
The farm as an assemblage

Heterogenous human and non-human components: farm family, farm workers, livestock, crops, machinery, buildings, feed, agrochemicals etc

Material components (machinery, buildings, fences, inputs etc) and expressive components (landscape, architecture, farm and field names, sound of livestock etc)

Farms are parts of larger assemblages (e.g. a supermarket supply chain, the dairy industry, the local community)

Farms interact with and exchange components with other assemblages (e.g. suppliers, buyers, neighbouring farms, ecosystems)
The farm as an assemblage

Farms constrain their components, e.g. livestock are constrained in their movement, diet, lifespan etc.

Farms are also constrained by their place in larger assemblages, e.g. contracts with supermarkets.

Farms may have a strong territorialization, e.g. around a single crop or single buyer, or may deterritorialize with diversification and multifunctionality.

Farms are coded by daily routines, farm accounts, and over-coded by legislative regulations (e.g. health & safety) and buyer requirements.
The farm as an assemblage

Farms are dynamic, constantly losing, gaining and exchanging components, with multiple possible futures.

But when critical thresholds are passed they may lose their identity and cease to function as an independent, operational farm.
Globalization and Assemblage

Globalization as “processes that create, multiply, stretch, and intensify worldwide social interdependencies and exchanges while at the same time fostering in people a growing awareness of deepening connections between the local and the distant” (Steger, 2003, *Globalization: A Very Short Introduction*, p 13).

**Globalization proceeds through interactions between assemblages**

Argument developed in ‘Assemblage, Place and Globalization’, paper currently under review for *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*. 
Globalization and Assemblage

1) Globalization involves the rearrangement of components in assemblages, as components are added, removed or exchanged between components.

- Subsidiary companies and plants sold between transnational corporations
  - *Edith Creek dairy, Tasmania, sold by Australian Murray Goulburn to Thai-owned Dutch Oven*

- International land investments
  - *Woolnorth property, Tasmania, bought by Chinese-owned Moon Lake Investments*

- Migrants moving between countries and introducing new foods and cultural practices
  - *Shop serving Syrian community in Ballyhaunis, Ireland*
Globalization and Assemblage

2) Globalization occurs through recurrent interactions between assemblages and fusing into larger assemblages

Takeover of local companies by transnational corporations

*Laura Ashley, Newtown, bought by Malaysian-owned MUI*

Trade agreements expanding market

*Opposition to the Trans-Pacific Partnership, New Zealand*

Social movements uniting in transnational alliances

*World Social Forum meeting, Salvador*
Globalization and Assemblage

3) Globalization advances through the deterritorialization and reterritorialization of assemblages, as they overspill boundaries, expand and extend.

Households and communities deterritorialize when members leave to work in other countries. An estimated 70 per cent of the population of Vila Fabril, Brazil, has lived and worked in Ireland.

Communities deterritorialize as immigration produces a more diverse population. Multi-lingual shop sign in rural community in New Zealand.
Globalization and Assemblage

4) Globalization is fostered by the ‘territorialization’ of assemblages towards increasing homogeneity, including the imposition of standard codes

- Standardization of quality standards through a commodity chain
  *Quality standards for UK retailer Marks and Spencer followed in a clothing factory, Tengtou, China*

- Proliferation of global brands as everyday globalization
  *McDonalds and KFC in Newtown, Wales and Fielding, New Zealand*

- Market dominance of a handful of transnational seed companies
  *Pioneer maize from US transnational DuPont planted in New Zealand*
Globalization and Assemblage

5) Globalization is not a linear process as cycles as local components can be cut from translocal assemblages and connections rearranged

Advances in transport technology leave redundant stopping-points less well connected

*Gander Airport in rural Newfoundland, Canada, once described as ‘The Crossroads of the World’ as an obligatory refueling point for TransAtlantic flights, now has no scheduled international flights*
Globalization and Assemblage

6) Globalization is a more-than-human phenomenon

Technological components enable translocal assemblages to transcend space

*Recharging mobile phones in rural Malawi*

Invasive species and pathogens circulate as the unintended consequences of global assemblage

*Olive trees in Puglia, Italy, threatened by the spread of Xylella fastidiosa*
Globalization and Place

Interactions between place-assemblages and translocal assemblages and how these produce changes in rural places

1) Globalization impacts on places through interactions between place-assemblages and the translocal social, economic, cultural, political and technological assemblages that overlap spatially with them, and which act as vectors that connect places with other places.

Place-assemblages share components with translocal components, but the roles performed by a component in each assemblage may be different.
Manufacturing FDI in County Mayo, Ireland

Foreign Direct Investment by manufacturing and healthcare companies in County Mayo, Ireland in 1970s and 1980s

As new components in place-assemblages new factories transformed the local economy by providing non-agricultural jobs

Factories also part of transnational corporate assemblages, with different roles and coding

Decisions made in corporate HQs in USA or Japan had impacts back in County Mayo

Job losses or factory closures removed components from place-assemblages
Manufacturing FDI in County Mayo, Ireland

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![Employment in Castlebar, Co Mayo by Major Foreign Firms](chart)
Globalization and Place

Interactions between place-assemblages and translocal assemblages and how these produce changes in rural places

2) Globalization effects in translocal and place assemblages are often linked by connective assemblages that both hold translocal assemblages together and provide conduits between places.

The characteristics of connective assemblages can creative constraints and opportunities for place-assemblages and their engagement in global networks.
Soy Cultivation and Transport in Brazil

The expansion of soy cultivation in Central Brazil has been facilitated by developments in transport infrastructure to speed up exports to Europe and Asia.

Cargill port facilities at Santarem, bringing large cargo ships further into the interior and removing the need for transshipment at the coast.

Improvements to internal waterways and highways permitting quicker, cheaper transit of soy from plantations to ports.
E-Commerce in Rural China

New business and trading opportunities for rural communities in China have been opened up by communications networks allowed access to the internet.

Growth of e-commerce using new online platforms to access domestic and international markets, especially Taobao and AliBaba.

In communities such as Da’ou village in Shandong province, e-commerce is changing gender roles and reshaping local economic assemblages.
Tasmanian Fresh Milk Exports to China

10% of milk from Moon Lake’s Woolnorth farms in Tasmania is exported to China as fresh milk.

Made possible by food processing technology and transport networks.

Capacity also constrained by transport infrastructure.

Hobart airport runway too short for large planes for direct flights to China.
Globalization and Place

*Interactions between place-assemblages and translocal assemblages and how these produce changes in rural places*

3) Globalization can involve over-coding of components in place-assemblages by translocal assemblages, and can prompt the recoding of place-assemblages as meanings are renegotiated and established ‘rules’ no longer hold effectively.

Designations according to international conversation models restricting conventional local uses of natural resources.

New local laws or land use planning regulations to respond to challenges of interactions with translocal assemblages.
Globalization and Place

*Interactions between place-assemblages and translocal assemblages and how these produce changes in rural places*

4) Globalization proceeds through patterns of deterritorialization and reterritorialization in translocal assemblages which in turn prompt patterns of deterritorialization and reterritorialization in place-assemblages.

Foreign direct investment and divestment, trends in international tourism, out- and in-migration are all deterritorializing pressures on places.

Reduce homogeneity of local communities and economies and/or transgress the spatial boundaries of places.

Places respond by reterritorializing with new material and expressive components.
Immigration over three decades has produced a very diverse population

In 2011, 49% of the town’s residents were born outside Ireland, with 42 different nationalities represented

Reterritorialization in the form of initiatives to bring the community together

Work by the local Gaelic sports club to reach out to immigrants and promote inclusion and integration
Globalization and Place

Interactions between place-assemblages and translocal assemblages and how these produce changes in rural places

5) The outcomes of globalization are not pre-determined. Each new interaction between a place-assemblage and a translocal assemblage produces multiple possible forms that the place-assemblage could take.

Creates space for local agents to influence the outcomes of globalization, but within constraints.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Globalization Processes</th>
<th>Possible Futures for Place-Assemblages</th>
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</table>
| Immigration            | • Immigrants assimilated into community  
                          • Increasing ethnic segregation  
                          • Cosmopolitan, multi-cultural society develops  
                          • Immigrants return home or move on |
| Industrial relocation from place | • Loss of industry weakens local economy and feeds high unemployment  
                                 • Local economy diversifies into new sectors  
                                 • Remaining businesses in sector restructure to become more competitive |
| Expansion of export crops | • Export crops become dominant in locality, stimulating economic growth  
                                • Export crops become dominant in locality but associated with changes in landownership and displacement of small farmers  
                                • Expansion of export crops restricted or reversed due to unfavourable market or local environmental conditions |
| International land investment | • Land substantially transferred into foreign ownership, but with limited change to farming type or role in place-assemblage  
                                • Land substantially transferred into foreign ownership, with significant changes to farming type and/or role in place-assemblage  
                                • Land ownership remains mixed between local and foreign owners  
                                • International interest in land not sustained and holdings sold |
Globalization and Place

Interactions between place-assemblages and translocal assemblages and how these produce changes in rural places

5) The outcomes of globalization are not pre-determined. Each new interaction between a place-assemblage and a translocal assemblage produces multiple possible forms that the place-assemblage could take.

Creates space for local agents to influence the outcomes of globalization, but within constraints.

Place-assemblages change shape and adapt in response to globalization impacts without usually losing their coherence or identity.

Some impacts are so severe that critical thresholds are passed.
Acland, Queensland, Australia
TrePassey
Newfoundland, Canada
# Components in the Trepassey Place-Assemblage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>People</th>
<th>Fog</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Landscape</td>
<td>Equipment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sea</td>
<td>Household items</td>
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<tr>
<td>Buildings</td>
<td>Community events</td>
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<td>Boats</td>
<td>Church services</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wharf</td>
<td>Fish</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wildlife</td>
<td>... and more</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TOWN OF TREPASSEY

This brief outlines the importance of the fisheries to our town.

Francis Gratto - Mayor
Francis Corrigan - Deputy Mayor
Victor Bonnell
Jerome Bevans
Michael Myrick
Ronald Bution

TREPASSEY TOWN COUNCIL
Bernice Bennett - Town Clerk

[Stamp: LEWIS THE WILY SWARMS]
[Stamp: JUL 25 1977]
Territorialization around fishing

Trepasssey 1911
More-than-terra territorialization
The Barrens
Territorialisation as temporal as well as spatial
Wood, berries, game etc collected from Barrens accordingly to calendar of subsistence transhumance living

From Newfoundland Settlement Survey 1954
The Atlantic Cod

Cod were a component in the Trepassey place-assemblage but cod shoals were also an assemblage with their own territorialization and coding.

Cod mobilities
When the cod were not present, the Trepassey assemblage adjusted through migration.

Longer-term migration to the ‘Boston States’ during poor fishing years.

Seasonal migration within Newfoundland for forestry, seal hunting and construction.
1954: Opening of the FPI fish processing plant

A new component in the Trepassey place-assemblage

Reterritorialised the local fishing assemblage
Spatial Reterritorialisation of the Trepassey Place Assemblage

Fish plant site

Decline of subsistence agriculture / foraging

New ferry service

Land no longer required for drying fish / landing boats

Fewer people working as fishermen in inshore waters
Spatial Reterritorialisation of the Trepassey place assemblage

Daily commuting to FPI plant

Relocated communities

The Drook

Long Beach
Relocation of outport communities to Trepassey 1960s

New migrants to Trepassey weakened the homogeneity (territorialization) of Trepassey as a community.

Protestants relocated from White Bay in particular disrupted the coding of Trepassey as a Catholic community.

Led to the posting of the first police officer in Trepassey in 1968.
Increased prosperity and stability led to the introduction of new housing and other new components into Trepassey

**New services/facilities:** Shops, taverns, night clubs, hardware store, drugstore, cinema, supermarket, service station, taxi service, ambulance service, off licences, paved roads
Attachment to the FPI corporate assemblage

Exports to:
Mainland Canada
United States
Europe
Japan
Deep-sea trawlers replaced inshore draggers and schooners

Permitted move of fishing grounds to the Grand Banks
The Grand Banks and the Global Fisheries Assemblage
C16th-C19th
The Grand Banks and the Global Fisheries Assemblage
1980s
Plundering the depths

By JIM STAIRS

Alaska's fishing fleet has once again proved its mettle in the face of harsh conditions.

The season has been tough, with low catches and high costs. But the fleet remains determined to keep going.

Jonah, the captain of the MV "Eagle," said, "We have to keep pushing. It's what we do."

The season has been cut short due to low catches and high costs. The fleet has had to make tough decisions, but they remain committed to their work.

"We have to keep pushing," said Jonah. "It's what we do."

Fishing has been difficult this season, with low catches and high costs. But the fleet remains determined to keep going.

"We have to keep pushing," said Jonah. "It's what we do."
Coding of the Atlantic fish stocks by scientists and regulators

Recoding of northern cod as an endangered species
Closure of Trepassey FPI fish processing plant - September 1991

The Weekend Evening Telegram

Three FPI plants to be closed

Province will invest $1.5 million in short-term, seasonal operations

Gorbachev cancels to deal with mountains

Supporters of ousted dictator still at large

Loss of 700 jobs, C$13 million in wages, and C$500,000 of local taxes
The closure of the FPI plant removed the factory as a material component in the Trepassey place-assemblage, but there were several possible futures....

• The plant could have been bought by another company, attached to their corporate assemblage, and kept open
• Local fishing crews could transport and sell their catch to other fish processing plants
• The downturn in fishing could have been temporary whilst fish stocks recovered followed by a revival of fishing
• The plant site could be redeveloped for other industries maintaining employment for local workers
• Fishing could disappear from the local economy
• People could migrate away, removing themselves as components in the place-assemblage
• The economic downturn could lead to the removal of shops and services as components in the place-assemblage
• The community could die
Moratorium on North Atlantic Cod Fishery introduced July 1992
Plant site sold to company in Italy

Plant equipment dismantled and transported to Tanzania

Deterritorialization
Deterritorialization

Trawlers Zebulon, Zeven, Zory and Zweloo sold to Peru

Trawler Zinder sold to South Africa

Trawlers removed from Trepassey as material components but remain as expressive components in the names of meeting rooms in the community business centre
Deterritorialization through migration

Alberta (oil sands)
British Columbia
Alberta (meat)
Ontario
Labrador
Hibernia Field (oil)
Various (merchant navy)
TREPASSEY
North Sea oil fields
Trepassey Population

60% population decrease 1991-2016
Deterritorialization but not removal?

“He’s an off shore crane operator, okay, and making money like, you know, they would never make on the plant. He’s been, like, to different parts of the world for training. Me and him went to Scotland because when he training in the middle of there ... Louis would never think about leaving Trepassey. Never and he’s gone half a year. You know, he works three weeks. He’s off three weeks.”

Trepassey Resident, Interview, Aug 2016

“A lot of people commute back and forth to work, like to the Canadian west and offshore and stuff like that, but they maintain their homes here.”

Development Officer, Interview, Aug 2016
Reterritorialization

Various agencies and programmes established by government to manage adjustment:

• Atlantic Fisheries Adjustment Programme
• Trepassey Community Development Fund
• Trepassey Management Corporation
• Trepassey Task Force
• Southern Avalon Development Association
• Irish Loop Development Board

Local residents realised that they needed to mobilize themselves to avoid the irrevocable decline of the community

“If we’re going to try anything let’s try to bring the committees together, together and see if we can talk about where we’re to and where we’re going as a community, and to do it in such a way that every person who wanted to have a say would have a say.”

Trepassey Resident, interview Aug 2016
Community Workshops

Mapping out possible future forms of the Trepassey place-assemblage
Recoding and mobilisation of material and expressive components of place to attract inward investment.
Tapping into diasporic network to help the community attach to external funding assemblages

“I don’t know if you’ve heard of the Aviva Community Fund? They give away $2m a year to communities. You know, you’re putting your proposal in and you have to vote. So it’s an online contest and you had to vote every day, blah, blah, blah. There we were, we’re like 400 people. We ran in 20,000 votes ... It was a really, really, really great community building, and even our expats were there. Like I had one girl in Ontario working at the hospital. She had ten people... you know in Ontario would be voting for us ... [Another man] was in Spain voting for us.”

Development Officer, Trepassey, interview Aug 2016
Iceberg Industries

Bottled water from icebergs
Exported to US
Adapted barge Borelas II imported from New Orleans
30 employees
Business failed 2002 because it did not correctly anticipate the constraints from other assemblages on its business model
Glamox
Norwegian company
Manufacturing maritime lighting
for oil rigs, cruise ships and naval ships
Glomox HQ
Molde, Norway

St John’s
Trepassey

California
Gulf of Mexico

EXPORTS FROM TREPASSEY FACTORY

Persian Gulf

Singapore

Glamox factories
Not a fishing village anymore?

In accepting the end of fishing, Trepassey passed a critical threshold with a qualitative change in its sense of place

Q: Do people still think of Trepassey as being a fishing community?
A: Might be some. I would never say the people... I think there’s a community trying to find itself
(Development officer, Interview – August 2016)

“I don’t think of Trepassey as a fishing community. I don’t see it as a fishing community. Nine chances out of ten if you’re going to see a vessel coming up the harbour in any part of the months of the year since the plant closed it’s a transport red vessel coming in to do maintenance of the boiler.” (Resident, Interview – August 2016)

“We have a good many fishers here, but it’s not really considered as a fishing community anymore, although the people here are really still thinks if it don’t come in on the waters it’s not going to happen here” (Former mayor, Interview – August 2016)
The Global Countryside

What does an assemblage approach tell us about how rural places are being changed by globalization? (1)

Globalization proceeds through small, often incremental, changes in rural localities and the responses of rural communities

Globalization is pervasive, affecting rural communities around the world, and is the continuation of historic patterns of relational place-making

Because globalization happens through small exchanges, interactions and adjustments in places, it will be experienced in different ways by different rural communities

There are however repeated, common objects and motifs that can be found in the global countryside (such as chain hotels, shops and restaurants; tourism experiences; seeds and crop varieties; cultural references, etc.) due to the tendency of global assemblages towards homogeneity and standardization, and the reproduction of globalization through imitation
The Global Countryside

What does an assemblage approach tell us about how rural places are being changed by globalization? (2)

Globalization can involve the insertion of new people, crops, livestock, buildings, objects and activities into rural localities, creating new relationships within localities and introducing new connections to other places and to translocal networks.

Globalization can also involve the removal of people and things from rural localities, in some cases through relocation to other places, which can make rural communities less well connected than they were previously.

Examining how some entities (e.g. farms and factories) are both part of rural places and part of translocal corporations, industries or networks, with different functions in each, can help to reveal where and how rural communities are vulnerable to events and decisions happening elsewhere.
The Global Countryside

What does an assemblage approach tell us about how rural places are being changed by globalization? (3)

Globalization can stretch rural communities over larger distances as people migrate for work, education or security, but do not fully leave, and as new part-time residents and regular visitors buy into the community

Transport and communications infrastructure both facilitate and constrain connections between rural places and global networks and markets, helping to shape the differentiated impact of globalization on rural areas

Changes from globalization reduce the homogeneity or coherence of rural communities, but communities commonly respond by reorganizing around new economic activities, cultural practices or ideas that can underpin a sense of identity
The Global Countryside

What does an assemblage approach tell us about how rural places are being changed by globalization? (4)

Globalization involves both material and discursive elements.

Globally-circulating discourses, for example about nature conservation or free trade, may be imposed on rural landscapes or rural economies, changing their material use.

New local discourses may be articulated in rural communities in response to the challenges of globalization, including new local laws and regulations, but also political campaigns and movements.

Even as industries or other objects disappear from the material life of rural communities as a consequence of globalization, their symbolic significance to the local sense of place can live on, with memories, representations and remnants enrolled into heritage assemblages.
The Global Countryside

What does an assemblage approach tell us about how rural places are being changed by globalization? (5)

The outcomes of globalization are never pre-determined. With each change there are multiple possible futures that could result.

Local actors, including local governments, have some capacity to anticipate, plan for and negotiate between possible futures, and thus can influence the outcomes of globalization, but within constraints.

The capacity of rural communities to respond to the challenges and opportunities of globalization may be constrained by their place in other translocal formations, state power and laws, the natural environment, and the legacies of past industries and cultures.

Rural communities adapt and change in response to globalization, but in extreme cases thresholds are passed which fundamentally alter the identity or threaten their sustainability.
The Global Countryside

But, there are also limitations to the assemblage approach

The assemblage approach is better at describing how things happen, rather than explaining why they happen

Our analysis of globalization and the global countryside needs to combine an assemblage framework with explanatory theories from other perspectives, e.g. political economy or political ecology
The Global Countryside

Further Research:

• More research on how and why globalization changes specific rural places in different ways
• More research on why some possible futures prevail over others
• More research on questions of power and agency
• More research on experiences of globalization by different groups within rural communities
• Combination of assemblage framework with political economy, political ecology, feminist and other perspectives

Practical Lessons:

• How do we translate the insights from an assemblage analysis into policies and practical action?
• What lessons and examples of good practice can we draw?
Thank you

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