

Summarise the results and conclusions of your fieldwork and research into rural inequalities in a named area

My fieldwork and research in March 2015 consisted of; measuring the index of rurality, conducting an interview and a vehicles/services survey, researching population size and land use in the rural villages of Exford and Dunster (West Somerset). After this, I presented my data in the form of radar diagrams, charts and annotated maps, followed by analysing patterns, results and conclusions.

First and foremost, by presenting my data in the form of a radar diagram, I was able to compare the index of rurality between the village centres, where the majority of services and employment would be expected. I had calculated the index of rurality, having researched about Cloke's index, by ranking sub categories of rural indicators (employment, infrastructure, land use and environmental quality) from 1-5 based (e.g. the sub categories for infrastructure involved mobile reception, pavement access etc.). My results showed that on average, Exford was more rural than Dunster due to having a lower index, represented by a smaller box shape on the radar diagram. This was supported by my annotated map which documented services I had observed and researched about in each area. I had discovered, using <http://www.travelaboutbritain.com/somerset/dunster.php>, that the tourist destination 'Butlins' was six minutes away from Dunster, leading to the conclusion that Dunster would most likely receive greater employment opportunities, being a holiday hotspot, than the rural village of Exford which is thirty-two minutes away from Butlins. This conclusion was validated by my interview with the Met Exmoor National Park Education Manager in Dunster who educated me about local opportunities, ranging from employment to leisure facilities. In contrast, from my interview with the village agent in Exford, I learnt there were limited services for post 16s, who suffered isolation, but that Exford was nonetheless a 'tranquil and active community'.

Taking this further, by being 'tranquil', it was suggestive of Exford having little noise pollution and thus poor transport. Such a hypothesis seemed accurate from my vehicles survey where 33% of cars observed were 5-10 years old in Exford compared to Dunster where only 20% were between these ages. This indicated most people in Exford could either not afford to upgrade to newer car models or that regularly car use was very low, leading to people keeping their old cars. My annotated map also showed that road access was worse in Exford, surrounded by fields with little paving and main roads, compared to Dunster. Thus rural inequalities were greater in Exford as locals would have difficulty being mobile.

I had researched into how to statistically measure spatial inequalities between the two villages. My findings encouraged me to use the Mann Whitney U-test where I counted the number of services, which I later presented in a bar chart, within the village centres. These settlement functions included a tally of places such as gift shops, petrol stations, financial services etc. My bar chart showed that Dunster had 10 observed services whereas Exford has 12. By inputting the data into the Mann Whitney U-test, I received a value of zero which indicated both villages were completely different. Although I had seen more services in Exford, this may have been affected by limitations where I could have misreported or missed a service. Nonetheless I still hold with the conclusion that Dunster is more developed than Exford, having fewer inequalities and a smaller 'rurality' index.