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## Moving to the countryside: why counter-urbanisation matters

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CRE research on population transfers between urban and rural areas, both in the UK and abroad, reveals the implications of such relocations for the local economy, housing affordability and the social profile of rural areas.

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### What is counter-urbanisation?

A wide diversity of relocations usually from metropolitan environments to rural areas that happen for various reasons including:

- Quality of life
- Employment
- Environmental amenities
- Retirement

### What does the research tell us?

Counter-urbanisation is linked with diverse social phenomena globally:

- In England middle class people moving to the countryside has created acute problems of housing affordability in rural areas.
- In Ireland opportunities for self-built housing have been beneficial for rural areas that were experiencing prolonged population decline.
- In Greece, urban households have relocated (or seek to relocate) to the rural provinces and small rural towns as a means of coping with the economic crisis.

### Are there implications for policy?

Counter-urbanisation highlights concerns about:

- Rural housing unaffordability and the displacement of local, younger and lower income residents.
- Tensions between long-term and new counter-urban residents regarding planning and environmental policies.
- The role of housing and rural planning policy in accommodating the demands for rural living.
- The need for more social housing units in rural areas.

But it also reveals opportunities for:

- Population revival, new skills, capital and businesses in rural areas.
- Addressing urban-rural dependencies and realising new economic roles for rural areas.

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