

Researching the Rural: Going Global and Staying Local

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Abstract

Rural research has multiple dimensions and directions, all striving to ascertain current rural endeavours and influence policy and practice. Developing a research trajectory within the rural sphere, requires an exploration of the theoretical, conceptual and empirical boundaries of rural studies. One of the foremost themes supporting such research is the nature of social, economic, political and cultural restructuring of rural areas driven by forces of globalization, social modernisation and technological innovation. Entwined in this process is the understanding of rural localities as sites through which these and other influences are conveyed, challenged and replicated. These ideologies have been core principles behind such past and present rural research projects as the DERREG Project, The National Rural Network Project, The BUSK Project, The IMAJINE Project and more recently The RURALIZATION Project.

In this seminar, Dr Maura Farrell, will outline key aspects of the above NUI Galway rural research projects, their directions, outcomes and impacts. In doing so, Maura will explore the challenges in developing networks which result in opportunities of inclusion for current Horizon 2020 projects, but also the benefits of undertaking national research projects and attempting to impact national rural policy.

Dr Maura Farrell is currently a full time lecturer in the School of Geography and Archaeology. Maura's teaching reflects her research specialism which revolves around Rural and Agricultural Geography and her interests focus around processes of social, cultural and economic change for rural inhabitants. Maura is currently the Principle Investigator on the National Rural Network Project and the more recent Horizon 2020, RURALIZATION Project. Dr Farrell is extremely active outside university life, having been appointed to committees and organisations both nationally and internationally. These include an appointment by the Minister for Rural and Community Development to the Monitoring Committee for the Action Plan for Rural Development and by DG-AGRI to an evaluation and reflection group for the LEADER Programme.