

Space, Place and Rural Anti-social Behaviour in Scotland

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Anti-social behaviour (herein ASB) has become something of an obsession in the United Kingdom, with a large amount of political, media and public debate (Millie, 2009). Despite the growing body of literature exploring ASB in urban contexts, rural ASB has been largely under-researched. Yet, many young adults in rural locations feel both spatially and temporally dislocated from rural life and wider society (Limb et al, 2000) - feelings which are conducive to the cause of ASB. This study aims to fill this knowledge gap and in turn to feed into the Scottish Government's strategic objective for a 'safer stronger' Scotland (Scottish Government, 2009).

This project will proceed through three case study locations based in the Tayside police force area. In order to explore the nature, impact and responses to ASB in rural communities in Scotland, participants will be drawn from the police, local authority, the third sector and the community. In particular the interaction between local communities and the police in combatting rural ASB will be explored, while perceptions that rural settlements have a greater sense of community and therefore lower ASB will be tested. The study employs a qualitative methodology, utilising interviews, focus groups and other participatory methods to answer the following research aims:

- A critical assessment of the nature and meaning of ASB in rural communities, examining the definitional variations of ASB across space and place between different rural community settings and people
- An analysis of the impact of ASB in rural communities through assessment of who is affected by ASB in rural communities and the scale of the impact
- An examination of the rural governance of ASB by critical analysing how formal and informal policing methods are utilised to combat ASB in rural communities.

This ESRC funded project is in its first year; however, the key findings of this study will be disseminated through the auspices of SIPR in due course. In addition, it is anticipated that research outputs will be given to the participating organisations.

References

Limb, M., Mathews, H., Sherwood, K., Taylor, M, and Tucker, F., 2000, 'Growing-up in the countryside: children and the rural idyll' in *Journal of Rural Studies*, Volume 16: Issue 2, pp141 – 153

Millie, A., (2009) *Anti-social behaviour*, Maidenhead: Open University Press

Scottish Government, 2009, *Strategic Objectives*, found at <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/About/scotPerforms/objectives>, last accessed 05/07/11