

Counter-urbanisation and Nature-based Entrepreneurship: a forward to the land movement. Case Study Evidence from Suffolk, England

Rebecca Appiah-Boateng, University of East Anglia- Norwich Business School. SENSS funded PhD student. R.Appiah-Boateng@uea.ac.uk

Professor Zografia Bika, University of East Anglia- Norwich Business School. Z.Bika@uea.ac.uk

Counter-urbanisation and Nature-based Entrepreneurship: a forward to the land movement. Case Study Evidence from Suffolk, England

Summary: This study draws together parallel lines of research in counter-urbanisation, entrepreneurship and affordance theory to understand contemporary processes influencing entrepreneurial emergence and rural development in the UK. Using case study evidence from Suffolk, England, the contribution of the study is three-fold. Firstly, we uncover a new type of rural entrepreneurship, nature-based entrepreneurship that further advances our understanding of what it means to be a rural entrepreneur. Secondly, we find recent in-migrants are moving *forward to the land*, many experiencing living in a rural place for the first time and creating new *future-oriented* ways of using the land and protecting it through nature-based entrepreneurship. Thirdly, these entrepreneurial ventures support the notion that counter-urbanisation and entrepreneurship can create local development in rural areas while connecting city dwellers to rural space.

Introduction

Counter-urbanisation is considered a demographic and social process where individuals migrate from larger urban centres to smaller towns and rural areas for a variety of reasons, which cannot be easily reduced to a simple binary of choice or necessity. Literature shows that counter-urbanisation has increased since the 1960s in Western countries (Champion, 1989). This is attributed to individual migration preferences, the introduction of regional policies to support provincial locations, high levels of house building and house price differentials in rural areas, anti-urban sentiments, or pro-rural sentiment with a desire for the rural idyll (Halliday and Coombes, 1995). Counter-urbanisation is considered a 'radical lifestyle-change', especially where individuals are motivated by the desire for a better quality of life (slower pace, green space, less populated) (Ibrahim and Oyeboji, 2021: 50). Others migrate for less voluntary economic reasons or employment (Halfacree, 1994). In-migrants are therefore not homogenous but rather driven by a diverse interplay of motivations for migration.

Rural migration research has largely focussed on rural out-migration, the 'rural brain drain', returnee or retirement migration to rural areas (Stockdale, 2004; Farrell et al, 2012). To complement this body of work, counter-urbanisation studies have shown how in-migration can lead to positive contributions to their new communities, purposefully or through spillover benefits (Keeble et al.'s, 1992; Fafchamps, 2006). In-migrants 'reconfigure place on arrival' by carrying part of their old location with them to their new one (Sheller and Urry, 2006: 216). The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic however has created a context in which counter-urbanisation has increased in the UK providing an opportunity to explore how a new wave of in-migrants interacts with rural affordances to create entrepreneurial ventures and how this impacts a rural place.

In response to this opportunity, our study draws together parallel lines of research in counter-urbanisation, entrepreneurship and affordance theory to understand Covid-19 related processes influencing new entrepreneurial emergence and rural development in the UK. The impacts of Covid-19 and the current cost of living crisis has exacerbated a lack of investment in and experience of 'left behind' rural places in the UK (MacKinnon et al, 2022). However, Covid-19 also resulted in an increase in counter-urbanisation from UK cities to rural areas. East Suffolk is a rural location that has seen the highest levels of counter-urbanisation across the UK during the Covid-19 pandemic and offers a diverse rural environment as a case study. This context therefore presents an opportunity to explore anew how in-migrants can impact the development of a rural place. Especially as literature acknowledges migrants as 'agents of development' with the potential to support development of rural economies (Bosworth, 2010; UN 2019).

The contribution of the study is three-fold. Firstly, we uncover a new type of rural entrepreneurship, nature-based entrepreneurship that further advances our understanding of what it means to be a rural entrepreneur in the 21st century. Secondly, we find recent in-migrants are moving *forward to the land*, many experiencing living in a rural place for the first time and creating future-oriented ways of using the land and protecting it through nature-based entrepreneurship. Thirdly, these entrepreneurial ventures support the notion

that counter-urbanisation and entrepreneurship can create local development in rural areas while connecting city dwellers to rural space.

Theoretical Background

Rural Entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship scholars have been developing the notion of place in recent years as a spatial context which encompasses physical and material geographies and socio-cognitive relationships and networks (Muller and Korsgaard, 2018; Kibler and Fink et al., 2015; McKeever et al, 2015). It is understood that place is not simplified to a geographic location but as something that can have different meanings to different people (Redhead and Bika, 2022). Place is therefore a flexible notion, that can be 'interpreted, narrated, perceived, felt, understood and imagined' differently by different people or their cultures (Redhead and Bika, 2022: 223; Gieryn, 2000).

Rural entrepreneurship has been explored over the last 20 years as entrepreneurship taking place within a rural context or the rural context shaping the entrepreneurial activity (McElwee and Smith, 2012; Gaddefors and Anderson, 2019). Korsgaard, Muller and Tanvig (2015) have conceptualised this as an individual being an 'entrepreneur in the rural' or a 'rural entrepreneur'. In practice, this means a 'rural entrepreneur' that leverages local resources to re-connect place to space or an entrepreneur that happens to be entrepreneurially active in a rural location but has limited embeddedness, enacting a profit-oriented and mobile logic of space (ibid). While both types of rural entrepreneurship can contribute to local development, 'rural entrepreneurs' hold the potential for an optimized use of resources in a rural area and these ventures are unlikely to relocate even if economic rationality would encourage it (ibid).

Alongside rural entrepreneurship literature, an interest in nature-based solutions (NBS) has increased in recent years as the consequences of climate change have led to the development of small scale interventions and large scale entrepreneurial projects 'to address a range of social, environmental and economic challenges by protecting, conserving, restoring, sustainably using and managing natural or modified terrestrial, freshwater, coastal and marine ecosystems' (UN Environment Programme, 2022). NBS has developed as a novel form of infrastructure to find sustainable ways of tackling these challenges by both public and private actors (Choi et al, 2023). However, entrepreneurial projects have primarily focussed on increasing urban resilience to climate challenges while supporting the introduction of natural wellbeing benefits by creating green space within urban settings. These also include measures taken by companies and associations to adopt more sustainable business practices and create projects aimed at providing for example, green energy. This however does not take into consideration changes to people's relationship to land and how this may affect the development of these kinds of ventures. Nature-based solutions have thus not addressed how the relationship to land may be changing, or reworked, by a new wave of in-migrants.

Counter urbanisation

Counter-urbanisation is most commonly understood as a migratory movement. Coombes et al, (1989) have discussed this as a process in which urban residents relocate from large urban centres to non urban, rural spaces. Although some studies have discussed migration to peripheral locations, the vast majority of counter-urbanisation studies have seen this migratory movement from an urban

area to a smaller, more remote rural area and in turn, assume that migrants are creating a new rural lifestyle that is 'counter' to an urban lifestyle (Mitchell, 2004).

However, other scholars view counter-urbanisation not through a migratory lens, but focus on settlement change and how the concentration, de-concentration and redistribution of urban residents impacts the transformation of a settlement system. The focus shifts from the migratory movement itself, to 'the changing relationship between migration and settlement size' when individuals move from a concentrated settlement to a less concentrated one (Mitchell, 2004: 9). Similarly, Fielding (1983: 1) explains counter-urbanisation occurring where 'there is an inverse relationship between the sizes of places (measured in terms of their population) and their rate of population change'. Despite this definition being used for regional studies on counter-urbanisation, arguably it is too simplistic as it does not address the geographic location of migration or the motivational factors surrounding the movement resulting in settlement change.

Various terms have been used when discussing the differences in motivation for counter-urbanisation including ex-urbanisation, anti-urbanisation and displaced-urbanisation. Displaced-urbanisation references people who migrate for economic reasons; people who move for employment, for more affordable housing or for a lower cost of living (Scott et al, 2025; Ibrahim and Oyeibanji, 2021; Halfacree and Rivera, 2012). Ex-urbanisation or dual residency describes individuals that move to peri-urban rural areas or rural commuter towns where they are able to continue working in a city but enjoy the 'environmental amenities associated with rural living' (Ibrahim and Oyeibanji, 2021: 50). This is in line with individuals exploring alternatives to living in urban areas and creating new lifestyle preferences (ibid). Similarly, in Japan, the term Kankeijinko translates as 'relationship population'; a type of counter-urbanisation involving highly mobile individuals who regularly visit the countryside and who have differing levels of attachment and commitment to their adopted rural area (Dilley et al, 2024). Whereas anti-urbanisation considers people who migrate to rural areas to avoid problems of urban crime or a fast pace of life (ibid). For this kind of in-migrant, counter-urbanisation would be a 'radical lifestyle change' because people are motivated by wanting to live and work full-time in a rural setting (ibid, p.50).

A rise in available work online that can be carried out from any location has also meant that individuals motivated to live a slower pace of life are able to move to the countryside as "digital nomads" while continuing their work digitally. These individuals may vary in terms of becoming embedded in place because they are able to move freely and as frequently as they desire (Van den Broek et al, 2023). This trend contrasts "back-to-the-land" counter-urbanisation, in which city residents are ideologically motivated by a rejection of a 'perceived meaningless city life' that involves dependence on payroll work, to migrate to a rural place in search of rediscovering an old way of living that is self-sufficient. It concerns in-migrants who have non-agrarian backgrounds who are often motivated by the political state of the world and the 'unruly' nature of global events such as wars or climate change; by becoming self-sufficient and rediscovering farming techniques to use on small holdings these individuals are able to gain a sense of control back over their lives (Sandström, 2022: 551-557; Bauman, 2017; Halfacree and Rivera, 2012). Sandström (2022: 559) study of back-to-the-land migration in Sweden between 2010 and 2020 found that such in-migrants based on 'retrotopia' of an ideal past rural life, reconnect to the land 'through benign and resilient ways' and reinventing old small holding practices that are adapted to both present and perceived future needs'.

This is in tandem with literature showing that migrants can make positive contributions to their new communities (Keeble et al.'s, 1992). It is widely acknowledged that in-migration increases the supply and demand for services within a rural location (Deller et al, 2019; Kalantaridis and Bika, 2006). This in turn has the potential to spur on entrepreneurial activity at a local level and increase economic

growth of existing businesses (ibid). Furthermore, in-migrants' access to distant networks of knowledge, markets, business practices and technologies all have important implications for the emergence of their own entrepreneurial ventures which may in turn stimulate the 'growth of rural economies' through rural in-migrant business creation, employment, and support of rural firms through increased levels of local trade and knowledge transfers (Bosworth, 2010: 977; Schafer and Henn, 2018; Deller et al., 2019; Anderson, 2000). However, in-migrant entrepreneurs do not necessarily provide new opportunities for local people; this varies due to the individual entrepreneur and the spatial context (Halfacree, 2023). In-migrant entrepreneurial ventures, however, can positively affect a community, purposefully or through spill over benefits (ibid; Fafchamps, 2006).

Affordance Theory

Affordance theory, first developed by psychologist James Gibson (1966), explores both the perception of an environment by an individual and the environment itself and has been used in varying settings; particularly found within technology related literature. Pee (2018: 27) study on sharing complex knowledge on enterprise social media, defines affordances as the user's perception of an object's utility, that is, possible actions linked to features. Affordances are found within the relationships between people and the materiality of technology, rather than being the exclusive properties of people or the technology (Pee, 2018; Volkoff and Strong, 2017).

Affordance theory in entrepreneurship literature has led to categorising affordances as either 'concrete' or 'abstract' (Gaddefors et al, 2020). Concrete affordances are entrepreneurial ventures directly relating to an environment or resource, such as tourism or education for example (ibid). Abstract affordances are entrepreneurial ventures which are not directly related to the original use of an affordance but inspired by their own perception of an environment. For example, a returnee entrepreneur, who has prior knowledge of the use of an old iron estate is shown to perceive this as a new opportunity to create a garden that can hold exhibitions, markets, and performances (Gaddefors et al, 2020). The land itself as an affordance was critical to the venture itself, as was the perception of its potential use. Crucially, the entrepreneur did not assume its function based upon a previous use (and another person's perception) of the affordance.

Regarding entrepreneurial affordances then, Gibson's theory can refer to both the spatial affordances of specific places and what an environment has to offer an entrepreneur in relation to the skills, social networks, capital, life experience for example that the entrepreneur has, which may result in their perception of an environment and their ideas for business creation (Scarantino, 2003). It is argued that the individual characteristics of the entrepreneur need to be matched meaningfully with the perception of the environment to create place-based businesses (Raymond et al, 2017). However, environments have 'countless numbers of potential affordances' that have not necessarily been perceived before (Raymond, 2017, p.7). Therefore, no assumption should be made of an environment, resource, or function, because new affordances can emerge as individuals interact with an environment in a new or different way (Felin et al, 2016). Back to the land in-migration, sees entrepreneurs motivated to live in an idealised past and engage in entrepreneurial activities that relaunch existing ideas of how to use rural affordances, such as the use of traditional, pre-industrial farming techniques on small holdings (Sandstrom 2022). However, this new context of counter-urbanisation, in response to covid-19, offers an opportunity, without assuming the function of an affordance, to explore how this new wave of in-migrants are interacting with rural affordances and engaging in entrepreneurial ventures.

Research Methods and case study profile

This study uses a qualitative case study research design, engaging with local and rural in-migrant entrepreneurs in a market town in East Suffolk, UK. This aligns with previous research that has used case studies to explore the relationship between entrepreneurship and place (Redhead and Bika, 2022; Jack and Anderson, 2002; Muller and Korsgaard, 2018).

In response to the Covid 19 pandemic, amid lockdown policies and increased home working, city dwellers began buying houses in rural areas, 're-evaluating the importance of larger homes, green spaces and connections with the local community' (McKeever, 2021). UK rural areas in 2019/2020 saw a net migration increase from urban areas of 100,300 people in comparison to net outward migration to urban areas of only 3,400 people (DEFRA, 2022). This has resulted in rural population growth of 0.8% in 2020 compared to 0.4% in 2010 (ibid). Simultaneously, rural areas have seen an increase in the emergence of new businesses; in 2020 a total of 5101 companies were formed in Suffolk alone (Chambers, 2021). This context therefore offers an opportunity to explore how recent counter urbanisation within the UK is influencing entrepreneurial emergence.

We selected the case study using ONS (2022) UK internal migration data, housing and new business registrations since the Covid-19 pandemic began. This data highlighted that the East of England experienced an 8.3% population increase, the highest in the UK, adding 488,000 residents during the years of the pandemic. Furthermore, the highest level of internal migration within the East of England was East Suffolk, with 20,825 people migrating there from other parts of the UK. The specific town selected has experienced increased counter-urbanisation, with 1,061 residential properties sold, including 521 detached properties, between 2019 and 2021 (Suffolk Council, 2022). Additionally, there was a 105% increase in homes sold for over £1 million in 2020 compared to 2019, indicating a trend of people moving to larger homes with more outdoor space (Williams, 2020).

The location has an active business community with 745 registered enterprises. 180 have been registered since the pandemic began (UK Companies House, 2022). It has a variety of industries represented. The case study is diverse including a market town (<10,000 residents) surrounded by farmland, nature reserves, rivers, forests, and located 10 miles from the Suffolk Coastline. It includes a pedestrianised high street with many independent businesses, a business park, and several large-scale manufacturing factories. It has a growing range of cultural and heritage attractions. However, it is like many other rural locations in the UK, facing issues of underdevelopment of infrastructure and some residents facing hardships due to the current cost of living crisis, which is highlighted by the presence of a local food bank. Therefore, this case study offers a diverse environment which has experienced increased levels of recent counter-urbanisation, to study rural entrepreneurial emergence and explore the following research question: How do in-migrant entrepreneurs interact with rural affordances and what is the impact of this on local development?

Purposive sampling enabled access to two participant groups that took part in in-depth interviews. The key selection criterion for participants included locally born or in-migrant entrepreneurs and individuals serving as community leaders within the case study area (as shown in Table 1). Community leaders were included to provide a broader understanding of the rural challenges within the area, helping to situate the entrepreneurial participants within a broader social and cultural context of place (Fairhurst and Putnam, 2019). To enable a balance of locally born and in-migrant participants, a screening question has been used during recruitment. Purposive sampling has also enabled diversity of gender, age, and ethnicity within the participants along with a variety of

industries represented. The length of community involvement or the current entrepreneurial venture did not exclude participants, in order to be able to capture knowledge of recent in-migrant entrepreneurial ventures. This study considers ‘recent’ in-migrant entrepreneurs to be those who have migrated since the Covid-19 pandemic and within the last 5 years (2019-2024), whereas all others who have arrived earlier on were considered ‘established’ in-migrant entrepreneurs. Using a combination of online business directories and snowballing, 60 in-depth interviews which lasted between 1-3 hours, were conducted between 2023-2024 at company premises within the case study area to capture individuals’ perception of, access to and use of rural affordances in relation to their entrepreneurial ventures.

Table 1. Participants interviewed

	Entrepreneur (participant group 1)	Community Leader (participant group 2)	Entrepreneur & community leader
Locally born	14	3	1
Local-returnee	5		
Recent In-migrant	13	5	2
Established In-migrant	16	4	2

Analysis

Within our study, all interviews were recorded, with permission, using a digital voice recorder and transcribed by the researchers. Using Nvivo software, narrative data was analysed using critical incident analysis (Curran and Blackburn, 1994). Key incidents and influences which impact the perception of, access to and use of varying kinds of rural affordances were identified using open coding. By breaking down the process of entrepreneurial emergence in this way, it enabled us to explore the differences and similarities in the interaction with rural affordances by recent and established in-migrant entrepreneurs as well as locally born entrepreneurs. This also enabled us to explore the differences in perception, access and use of rural affordances by different entrepreneurs. Second order codes were then created identifying two thematical patterns in the interaction of rural affordances and the impact of this on entrepreneurial emergence: 1) Nature-based entrepreneurship, and 2) Forward-to-the-land movement which underpinned our overarching aggregate theoretical dimension; shift from counter-urbanisation to interactive urban/rural migration and the unknown affordances of the natural world.

Findings

Perception of rural affordances

The impact of covid-19 on counter-urbanisation within the UK has been motivated by the perception of what a rural lifestyle offers. Lockdown policies were experienced by city dwellers differently to those living in rural areas, who had easier access to outdoor space.

I think that covid made people more isolated and therefore more aware that they just happened to live in a place (KI51H, 70, local-returnee entrepreneur, author).¹

This feeling of isolation led many to reevaluate their lifestyles and as a result migrate away from crowded cities to rural areas (McKeever, 2021).

Whereas established in-migrants emphasised their desire for a change in lifestyle having lived in an urban area for the majority of their lives. The majority of established in-migrants stated they had visited Suffolk on holiday and ended up moving to the area in later life.

So we used to go come here for weekends and have our holidays here. And so we moved our caravan to Suffolk. And so we used to come over for weekends and we got to know the local area and we particularly liked it. (KI45H, 58, established in-migrant entrepreneur, campsite that runs an annual boutique festival, 3+e)

Several of the established in-migrants interviewed could also be considered as part of a 'back to the land movement' that were motivated by a rural idea, to move to the countryside for a change in lifestyle.

I'd lived all my life in London and was ready to think about not being in London. My son was in the process of leaving home, so I didn't need to stay there. And yeah, ready for a new and different challenge. We wanted to do something that was linked to holidays and we just wanted a slower pace of life. (KI42H, 60, established in-migrant entrepreneur, holiday accommodation, 2e)

This is different to recent in-migrants', who's perception of rural space is also affected by their knowledge and beliefs around climate change and the environment.

We want to support a space for nature to regenerate. Whilst also regenerating ourselves, so you can see the sort of reciprocal thing that it becomes. Then we become part of the ecosystem in a sense. It's true that sometimes the local people just take nature for granted and they don't have the same yearning and same sort of appetite for connecting more deeply. (KI07H, 51, recent in-migrant entrepreneur, private nature reserve running therapeutic wellbeing workshops, 2e)

This entrepreneur highlights the shared views of many recent in-migrant interviewees, who explained their strong sense of belonging to the natural world. Unlike local entrepreneurs who have become accustomed to living in the countryside and may take for granted the benefits of spending time outdoors, in nature, or established in-migrants who envisage an idealised rural lifestyle, recent in-migrants have purposefully migrated to a place where they not only benefit from having access to green space but also embrace nature-based entrepreneurship to create an opportunity in which people and a place can be regenerated. As Raymond (2017: 7) explains, 'there are countless numbers of potential affordances', we found that recent in-migrants in this case study perceived the rural place beyond its traditional use and traditional understanding of how people should interact with

¹ The attribution of quotes regarding the entrepreneurs shall be formatted as follows: (pseudonym, age, migration status, occupation, number of employees).

rural space. The natural world, and nature itself, has been perceived in unknown and new ways by recent in-migrants to create new entrepreneurial ventures.

A recent in-migrant entrepreneur who hosts an annual festival, explains how they respond when asked why they chose to set up a business in the case study area:

Why would you set up a theatre company in an area that has everything? My passion is to set it up in a rural area where they don't. We work with lots and lots of schools and that many of those children never, ever get an opportunity to go to the theatre. And the theatre is not just writing plays. It's so much more. It can open your eyes. There's so many possibilities and it gives you so many transferable skills that I'm passionate at trying to run this. (KI05H, 60, recent in-migrant entrepreneur, festival & theatre company, 20e & 80 volunteers)

By seeing beyond the services that already exist in a rural place, such 'recent' in-migrant entrepreneurs find opportunities to use place in different ways. This entrepreneur now runs a successful festival annually, hosting visitors from across the UK. The traditional uses of garages, halls, and fields for example are reimagined to become theatre stages. This venture creates local development by providing a new service for locals but also brings in visitors who use other businesses and spend money in the local area. This also has wellbeing benefits by broadening the cultural experiences available locally.

Access to rural resources

Social affordances are integral to entrepreneurship; social capital is broadly understood as the ability of entrepreneurs to 'extract and utilize resources from relationships to achieve desired outcomes' (Smith and BrockSmith, 2017: 20). In-migrant entrepreneurs often have access to a wider variety of social networks including local and extra-local networks which enables connections to different markets, knowledge, and approaches towards entrepreneurship (Deller, Kures, Conroy, 2019; Bosworth and Atterton, 2012).

This study highlights how rural in-migrants' access to social affordances impacts their entrepreneurial emergence; by accessing pre-existing connections to networks of city dwellers, such in-migrant entrepreneurs create a specific clientele to market their nature-based products and experiences to.

Part of our gift is bringing people from cities here. We were thinking about that, that it's quite a beautiful thing to offer because people are well, we know when we used to live in Norwich, we did feel sometimes a bit trapped and a bit limited in terms of having real access to wilder landscapes and more nature immersion. So for people to know they can come here. And that it's always here and then they can always come. It could feel like a really lovely resource. We have monthly gatherings to tend the land and the trees and the wildlife. So the business part of this piece of land, it's only just started with the workshops. (KI07H, 51, recent in-migrant entrepreneur, private nature reserve running therapeutic wellbeing workshops, 2e)

An entrepreneur who runs a luxury eco-tourism business emphasises that their city clientele come from London to visit the countryside at weekends.

People that come up from London, particularly the weekend crowd, so we tend to do a Friday to Monday or Monday to Friday stay or you can stay for a week. We got a lot of people coming up through the city who just kind of want a break and to enjoy the countryside which is really nice and everyone loves it and Suffolk is such an unspoilt place so many people that come and stay have never been to Suffolk before! (KI15H, 40, local returnee- moved from London, luxury eco-tourism & rewilding project, 3e)

Differently, locally born entrepreneurs, and established in-migrant entrepreneurs interviewed discussed the need to become locally embedded to build up a local clientele and maintain a positive reputation within the community.

Locally born entrepreneurs interviewed expressed the importance of reputation and word of mouth advertising for their ventures. For example:

Word of mouth is so important here. I've never actually advertised properly! Work has seemed to just find me, I'm really lucky in that sense. I really haven't needed to advertise. But yes, recommendation and reputation is important. (KI31H, 34, locally born entrepreneur, Business services, accountancy and property management)

Oh the majority of people have been hugely supportive! In fact, most of my customers have been local people from the village. I even get some people phoning me checking in on me that I have enough work! One lady even offered to create work for me if I needed it! She said I should phone her if I ever find myself in need of some work and she will find something in her house that needs repairing! So word of mouth is so important here and people really are supportive. (KI50H, locally born entrepreneur, upholstery business, contract workers)

Established in-migrant entrepreneurs emphasised the importance of becoming locally embedded in creating a local clientele and preventing opposition to their businesses from locals. Established in-migrant entrepreneurs engaged in businesses that provide services, are creative or engage in tourism such as holiday lets. Creating a local client base is seen by established in-migrants as a 'priority'.

So we met people but building those firm friendships was a longer job that I think, about four years in we thought, right, we've got to really focus, this has got to be a priority now. When we opened the business we had an open day without really knowing many people, which also partly was because we were still in London and Suffolk. So I think some people thought tourists, you know, incomers. So they came to see what we were doing, it was something different when we started. So we started with yurts, holiday camping. The term glamping hadn't been invented. But we soon realised we needed their support and acceptance if we were going to stay here. So we made it a priority. (KI42H, 60, established in-migrant entrepreneur, holiday accommodation, 2e)

Another established in-migrant created a local client base made of parents from their child's school.

Then my daughter started school and then that was great because obviously I had an active client base there from the school which led me into personal training. (KI35H, 52, established in-migrant entrepreneur, Pilates studio, 1e)

The importance of becoming embedded locally is highlighted further by this local returnee, who has lived in London their whole adult life before returning to Suffolk to set up a holiday business, explains the difficulties established in-migrant and local returnee entrepreneurs face if they are not accepted by the local community.

Let's just say that it was a mistake. But a few years ago some of our neighbours, they made life very, very difficult for us when we first opened. So they tried to start a bit of a campaign against our planning application and it all came from a place of jealousy. They're currently building like a 100 or an 80 house housing estate in the village but they were saying about how us opening was going to put an undue impact on the shop and the pubs and that they wouldn't be able to cope with all the extra people....I found it really upsetting. (KI15H, 40, local returnee- in-migrant from London, luxury eco-tourism & rewilding project, 3e)

By accessing existing relationships and extra local networks, recent in-migrants entrepreneurs are using back to the city connections to create a city clientele. Unlike locally born and established in-migrants, recent in-migrant entrepreneurs are not constrained in needing to become embedded in local social networks to create a clientele. They are instead marketing their nature immersion opportunities to city dwellers.

Although financial capital varies for different types of migrants, post covid-19 counter-urbanisation to East Suffolk is primarily made up of individuals who have available wealth to migrate, and to set up businesses. Class and access to wealth is therefore important for the ability of in-migrants to successfully relocate and to set up successful businesses (Halfacree, 2024). This is reflected in housing data from across Suffolk; '105% more homes with a price tag of more than £1m have been sold in 2020 compared to 2019' with a surge in interest for larger detached properties from those wanting to move out of London (Williams, 2020). In accordance with this, many 'recent' in-migrant entrepreneurs discussed how they had access to savings earned while working in a city, to use now to live a rural lifestyle and engage in entrepreneurial activities that they really care about; that benefit people and the natural world.

You know, the nature work is a small entity in our life. It's a very important one. And we moved down here to do it. But in terms of money making you know, it's not something that we live on. (K107H, 51, recent in-migrant entrepreneur, private nature reserve running therapeutic wellbeing workshops, 2e)

I would say it's a nice lifestyle, but only because I can afford it. Without getting into all personal finances....we don't have a mortgage on this place so if in the winter we don't bring in much money, well, we don't need to. (K104H, 40, recent in-migrant entrepreneur, eco tourism/glamping, 2e)

By using affordance theory to understand the 'access to' various different networks and resources entrepreneurs have, it is possible to explore the broader influence being an in-migrant has on entrepreneurial emergence.

Use of rural affordances

In-migrant perceptions of and access to rural affordances leads to their use in new or different ways. The perception of rural space relating to environmental concerns combined with in-migrant access to social and economic affordances has led to the development of and new uses of physical land for entrepreneurial ventures. Of participant group 1; out of 48 entrepreneurs, 20 in-migrant entrepreneurs have created new nature-based entrepreneurial based ventures, including all 13 recent in-migrant entrepreneurs interviewed. These in-migrant ventures make use of land in new of different ways and allow for the opportunity for city dwellers to experience nature through various kinds of nature immersion opportunities as highlighted in Table 2. In contrast, of the locally born and local-returnee entrepreneurs, only 5 entrepreneurial ventures were nature-based.

Table 2. summarizes the various ways in which recent in-migrants have reenvisioned the use of physical land in response to their perception of a rural place and their wider access to social affordances and financial capital.

Table 2. Recent in-migrant use of land for nature-based entrepreneurial ventures

Entrepreneurial venture	Previous use of land	New or different use of land
Forest school	Traditional farmland	Rewilding project & use of forest for education
Ecotourism/glamping	Traditional farmland	Use of land for holiday accommodation and to provide nature immersion opportunities for visitors. Cleared area of land for glamping
Private nature reserve	Traditional farmland	Creating a nature reserve by rewilding the land. Land also used for nature immersion opportunities through ecotherapy.
Camping site & wood fired restaurant	Traditional farmland	Diversification of farmland. Continuing to run farm alongside new camping venture.
Luxury eco-tourism & rewilding project	Traditional farmland- apple orchards	Rewilding of farmland to create nature immersion opportunities through luxury holidays “in nature”.
Mobile Sauna	Existing natural landscapes	Using natural landscape as locations for the sauna, creating nature immersion opportunities for clients.
Campsite/holiday accommodation	Small holding with stables	Using land previously used for horse grazing for campsite.
Art gallery	Existing natural landscapes	Showcasing artwork based on Suffolk’s natural landscapes by local artists.
Outdoor amphitheatre	Traditional farmland	Using farmland and existing crater to create an outdoor theatre. Creating a new ‘natural’ experience that didn’t exist locally.
Flower farm	Small holding	Turned land into a flower farm. Creating nature immersion opportunities for visitors to the flower farm to cut own flowers.
Boutique festival (with camping)	Small holding	Creating campsite on land where annual boutique festival is held. Creating a new way to experience being in nature.
Organic Farm	Traditional farmland	Use of new organic farming techniques to increase biodiversity on farmland.
Goat Yoga	Small holding	Using land to run goat yoga and goat walking sessions. Giving people the opportunity to experience nature in a new way.

One entrepreneur is using a small holding that was once used to farm, in a new way. It is now a wellbeing retreat where you can participate in goat yoga (see Table 2).

Being around animals releases this like endorphin sort of type feeling, just of happiness. I think it’s about doing something different and doing a different experience...Plus you get all the benefits from the yoga too (KI58H, 54, recent in-migrant entrepreneur, facilitates goat yoga & goat walking, 3e)

Organic farming techniques are now being utilised to improve the biodiversity on what was traditionally farmed land.

I mean our original vision was that we would provide local food for the local population and provide local jobs. We then made the decision quite early on to go organic and we struggled in the beginning because there are lots of things we had to learn about enriching our soil and managing the crops, but eventually we got there and we used a lot of the practises now of regenerative agriculture and our soil health has improved massively and we do things like combination cropping. We have agroforestry on the farm and there’s quite a lot of interest in

that and people do quite a lot of farm tours now, and looking at the business going forward, we'll probably, you know think about how we can create a structure where we can actually allow people to go around the farm and learn about what we do and then come back and have a coffee. (KI47H, 70, local-returnee in-migrant, organic farming, 11e)

Similarly, flower farms are increasing biodiversity, protecting land from being built on and benefitting people by providing nature immersion opportunities through pick your own flower events (see Table 2).

We try to make it as sustainable as possible, which in this context means things like, you know, no chemicals, no artificial chemicals, sprays, minimal plastic, reusing things as much as possible and also managing the actual growing environment and in the bits we don't grow in, in a way which encourages diversity and maximizes kind of ecological health. (KI41H, 55, recent in-migrant, flower farmer, 2e)

While another entrepreneur is creating nature immersion opportunities for stargazing and nature photography by creating holidays where people can spend time in nature, in a rewilded location.

There was an article about us last winter naming us in like the top ten places to stay in the UK for stargazing because of the low light pollution. (KI51H, 70, local-returnee in-migrant, author, 0e)

In-migrants are creating a relationship to the land, one where they feel connected to, and motivated to protect nature/the natural world through entrepreneurial ventures. In-migrants characterise this relationship as being “custodians” of the land.

I think for us like we didn't set up this business to become the next like millionaires. But in this day and age, you're in a very privileged position to be the caretakers of a piece of land. (KI15H, 40, local returnee- in-migrant from London, luxury eco-tourism & rewilding project, 3e)

We hope we've been very sympathetic of the land that we've got and you know, I feel like we're custodians rather than we own it. (KI58H, 54, recent in-migrant entrepreneur, facilitates goat yoga & goat walking, 3e)

An entrepreneur who has created a private nature reserve to rewild their land, explains how for locals it is sometimes harder to understand this relationship to the land, as it is based around this notion of being connected to the natural world. Highlighting the different relationship to the land that recent in-migrants are reworking through their entrepreneurial ventures.

I think we are part of this cluster of people who are rewilding or regenerating land. It's sometimes a little bit harder for people to understand the rewilding rather than the emotional, creative stuff, the work that we're doing, which is about natural connection. (KI07H, 51, recent in-migrant entrepreneur, private nature reserve running therapeutic wellbeing workshops, 2e)

This idea of rewilding the land emphasises a relationship to the land that is focussed on increasing biodiversity and returning what was farmland, back to nature.

We've designated the land as a private nature reserve through the Wildlife Trust. So yeah, the goal is really to focus on increasing biodiversity. (KI07H 51, recent in-migrant entrepreneur, private nature reserve running therapeutic wellbeing workshops, 2e)

Another entrepreneur explains how rewilding the land is a complex and ongoing process that requires these recent in-migrant entrepreneurs to engage in the management of the land. By developing this new relationship to the land based on improving biodiversity and protecting the environment and keeping rural land 'natural', they are also offering nature immersion opportunities for city dwellers.

I mean, it's rewilded with a helping hand obviously. I think it's quite funny because we've had guests who come to stay and they're like, ohh, we've bought, we've had this land and we're trying to rewild it and we've just let it grow and you're like, that's not really, rewilding. That's just letting it go completely. What's the word? Whatever. It's just completely unkept. And then you're just going to grow thistles. So yeah, we have a huge amount that we do and like constantly like sowing and re seeding with the wildflowers and bulbs. We've just planted in the last month another 4000 bulbs ready for the spring on top of the four thousand that we've already planted before so it's hopefully going to be lovely in the spring. And then we have lots of things that we do to kind of increase that biodiversity and rewilding. So everything from like the broad spectrum of the flowers that we have and the pollinators to attract the bees and all the different flower beds that we have around, but we also have lots of like massive wood, old log walls and stuff that we've built for them to create like habitats in. So yeah, there's lots going on. (KI51H, 70, local-returnee in-migrant, author, 0e)

This idea of reconnecting with nature and providing opportunities for a city clientele to experience this can be considered as a way of commoditising rural isolation. It is giving people the opportunity to experience nature in a new way that benefits their wellbeing and supports entrepreneurial ventures that supports the rewilding and management of natural spaces.

You know, and people talk about coming here stressed on a Friday night and it just washing away and that this is part of our asset is just the isolation and the fact that, you know, they can run around the roads and don't see anyone and they can take their bikes out and all that kind of thing. (KI10H, 50, established in-migrant entrepreneur, turkey farming, camping & wood fire restaurant events, 10+e)

The natural landscapes found within East Suffolk are also used within in-migrant entrepreneurial ventures. An art gallery opened by a recent in-migrant, exhibits art that focusses on Suffolk and in doing so provides opportunities for local artists to showcase their work. Another entrepreneur has introduced a new book festival providing a new experience for the local community and providing work opportunities for writers across the UK.

I'm introducing a new book festival. I've mainly focused it on books that look at landscape and environment, so nature writing in a broader sense. Partly because that's where I live my life, partly because it's different, but partly because if you can't run a festival about nature writing here, you can't run it anywhere! (KI51H, 70, local-returnee in-migrant, author, 0e)

Suffolk, an established in-migrant entrepreneur explains, is a strong brand in itself and can be used to market products or services.

Suffolk is a really strong brand in itself, it's been marketed very strongly. It was marketed as was it the Curious county or it had some marketing something like that. But this has been pushed, I think quite hard onto Londoners because so many London folk come up here for weekends and for holidays and all the rest of it. And you know, so Suffolk itself is a strong brand. So anything with Suffolk on it really, you know it's gonna sell. (KI01H, 62, established in-migrant entrepreneur, candle maker, 0e)

A hotel uses destination marketing to make the spatial location central to their business; every room is decorated around a place in the case study area.

We have specified everything as local. So everything, the artwork is local, the bedrooms are local, photos in the rooms and local names on the doors, the suppliers are local. Sense of place is not only about the geography but also about the history. So that again, that links in local people and yeah. (KI33H, 60, recent in-migrant entrepreneur, hotel, 20+e)

These entrepreneurial ventures highlight the various ways that recent in-migrant entrepreneurs have used land in new or different ways to create businesses that provide nature immersion opportunities to connect city dwellers to rural space.

Impact of in-migrant entrepreneurial ventures on local development potential

In-migrant entrepreneurs explain how their use of rural affordances helps to stimulate the rural economy by increasing potential clientele for businesses, providing employment opportunities and broadening the services and experiences available for people visiting and living in a rural place. Table 3 provides evidence of the ways in which in-migrant nature-based entrepreneurial ventures have impacted local development.

Table 3. Evidence table of nature-based entrepreneurial ventures on local development

Impact on local development	Quotes
Providing employment opportunities	So we don't have any employees on the books per say, apart from ourselves, but what we do is, so somebody who was working for us for a bit as a cleaner, basically I persuaded her, encouraged her to set up her own cleaning business. So she now is contracted to do all of our cleaning. And she has three ladies who work for her. So she then invoices us on a monthly basis. (KI51H, 70, local-returnee, author, 0e) Well, because we're in East Anglia, I'm always trying to help people from this region because they don't have much compared to other places. But if you're an actor of any probably of any soul, what expression is when you're young in particular, you're gonna get down to London. So we do two groups of we have 4 days of auditions in London. And we have auditions up in Suffolk as well. So some people obviously then move back or they come from stuff, but they work in London, but they got home, they come and live at home during the festival. (KI05H, 60, recent In-migrant entrepreneur, festival & theatre company, 20e & 80 volunteers) But I suppose since we got going over the summer, I'd had three chef led evenings over the summer. Again, with local chefs, so again supporting them. (KI10H, 50, established in-migrant entrepreneur, turkey farming, camping & wood fire restaurant events, 10+e) So we used a local team of carpenters from the village. So it was a team of about four of them. So yeah, our whole thing was that we also wanted to make sure that we were using, which we still do to this day, like use local staff, putting as much money back into the local economy rather than just going for like the cheaper option, you know, a big corporate what have you. So that's kind of always a key point behind every decision that we make. With everything to do with the supply chain. (KI15H, 40, local returnee- in-migrant from London, luxury eco-tourism & rewilding project, 3e)
Creating experiences to improve wellbeing of	<i>And I run one programme a week and I run something called Elders, which I love doing. And that's basically forest school for older people. And some have dementia and some don't. And some come alone and some come with their partners. And some have been coming for three or four years and some just came last week. So it's amazingly successful and it's beautiful. (KI02H, 65, recent in-migrant</i>

locals & visitors	<i>entrepreneur, forest school & rewilding project, 30e)</i> <i>But apparently being around animals releases this like endorphin sort of type feeling just of happiness. Yeah, I think it's just, it's fun, isn't it? And I think it's about doing something different and doing a different experience. And yeah, I mean, there's nothing better than when you've got, well for a lot of people, there's nothing better than when you've got an animal eating out of your hands, like coming up to you. So yeah, I think that's that the benefits right, and also with the yoga, obviously you are getting a yoga session as well. So there's all the benefits that you would get from yoga. (KI58H, 54, recent in-migrant entrepreneur, facilitates goat yoga & goat walking, 3e)</i> <i>You know, and people talk about coming here stressed on a Friday night and it just washing away and that this is part of our asset is just the isolation and the fact that, you know, they can run around the roads and don't see anyone and they can take their bikes out and all that kind of thing. (KI10H, 50, established in-migrant entrepreneur, turkey farming, camping & wood fire restaurant events, 10+e)</i>
Spill over benefits of increasing trade for local businesses and suppliers	<i>But people stay at [local hotels]. They love us because so many people stay there, and they can walk here. We have friends who have a farm, an old farm just up the road, they have three little railway carriages and another hut that people stay at. We cater for the [local pub], they love us because it's sort of the closest pub. People stop there for drinks on the way in and on the way out. (KI40H, 63, recent in-migrant entrepreneur, outdoor theatre, 10e)</i> <i>And also if it's local people, they're not necessarily going to be spending loads of money in the local community if they are already local. Like you want people to come who will then go down to the pub and have dinner there which pretty much everyone will have dinner at least one night of their stay. They'll go to the village for dinner, which is really nice. So yeah, I guess we're lucky we've got the low house. I don't know if you've ever been to the Low house but it's a great pub and it's perfect for out of towners because it's very quirky and old and you know that sort of stuff. (KI51H, 70, local-returnee in-migrant, author, 0e)</i>
Increasing services within a rural place	<i>I think we do provide a service to the Community cause throughout the summer, there's a café in this village. There's a dining venue in this village. There is nothing else like that in the village, so people can actually cycle here, they can walk here on a Sunday morning, walk their dog and have a coffee. So yeah, also you know and we actually encourage like walking and cycling by giving them a 5% discount. And part of setting it up and, you know, and promoting it and making it very accessible to local people was and that's partly to do with why, you know, people go Oh, you could charge more for your food and I'm like, no because it's about making accessible to a local community, you know as well. So that's part of it, yeah. (KI10H, 50, established in-migrant entrepreneur, turkey farming, camping & wood fire restaurant events- new venture, 10+e)</i> <i>I've got the wood and she's got the children and she's grown it. And so now it's six days a week for a school for a lot of children's home educated alternative provision. Children that would otherwise not have access to this risk or wilderness. (KI02H, 65, recent in-migrant entrepreneur, forest school & rewilding project, 30e)</i>
Spill over benefits-encouraging individuals to be more eco-conscious	<i>I know it maybe sounds a little bit cheesy, but if you can, then also inspire people who come and stay and which people often say, you know, I'm gonna go home and I'm gonna start like composting or what have you, just so like make those little decisions then that's great! Like if we can show that you can make a difference, we're happy. So I think that's so important. (KI51H, 70, local-returnee, author, 0e)</i>

Discussion

To explore the answers to our research question regarding how in-migrant entrepreneurs interact with rural affordances and the impact of this, we shall cover here the contributions of this paper.

Firstly, this study finds that post-covid recent in-migrants to East Suffolk interact with rural affordances to create entrepreneurial ventures in different ways to locally born entrepreneurs (Figure 2), by creating nature-based entrepreneurial ventures that are regenerating the area, creating a kind of 'rural renaissance' (McKeever, 2021). The natural world itself is the unknown affordance that recent in-migrant entrepreneurs are using in new and different ways.

By breaking down the process of rural in-migrant entrepreneurial emergence to understand the perception of, access to and use of rural affordances, this study finds that the combination of counter-urbanisation with the interaction of rural affordances directly impacts the development of or new uses of rural affordances regarding entrepreneurship. In this case study, this manifests itself through nature-based entrepreneurship that focuses on creating nature immersion opportunities for a city clientele.

Figure 1. Nature-based entrepreneurship



Nature-based entrepreneurship, as defined in figure 1, includes ventures that seek to benefit the wellbeing of people and that of the environment. It is different to 'green business' and 'nature-based solutions' which aim to use natural resources sustainably or generate clean energy and infrastructure (UN Environment Programme, 2022). Unlike nature-based solutions that has primarily focussed on urban resilience and ways of creating green space within urban settings to improve wellbeing of residents, nature-based entrepreneurship provides opportunities to connect city dwellers to natural spaces in a rural location (Perrault, 2022). Instead, this new category of entrepreneurship is based around the environment and wellbeing, within a rural location. It is a symbiotic relationship between the entrepreneur, the natural world and the recipient of the nature immersion opportunity or service created (Figure 1). This is highlighted by the type of recent in-migrant entrepreneurial ventures (as highlighted in Table 2) including nature reserves offering creative and therapeutic sessions, back to basics camping experiences, forest schools, an outdoor theatre, mobile sauna taken to rural and coastal locations as well as rewilding projects to increase or protect biodiversity.

All these ventures provide opportunities for people to positively experience nature while protecting rural space as 'natural'.

Unlike established in-migrant entrepreneurs who have engaged in entrepreneurial activities that rely upon the support of a local client and have been motivated to move to the countryside in search of a new lifestyle, this new wave of counter-urbanisation represents a different kind of movement, which is changing the social structure of land ownership within Suffolk. Recent in-migrants, who are becoming landowners to create nature-based entrepreneurial ventures that seek to take from, and give back to the land, are in a way becoming custodians of the natural world. Unlike the established 'back to the land' counter-urbanisation, which rejects city life and seeks to reconnect to the land through a perceived ideal past (Sandstrom, 2022). These recent in-migrants are moving *forward to the land*, many experiencing living in a rural place for the first time and creating new *future-oriented* ways of using the land, and protecting it through nature-based entrepreneurship. They are not looking back to a rural ideal past, but instead creating a new future, which offers the opportunity to connect city dwellers to rural space, create a new lifestyle for themselves, and protects the environment.

Our findings have thus uncovered a new type of rural entrepreneurship that uses rural affordances, and in particular, the natural world, in new ways. This adds to our understanding of the complex nature of rural entrepreneurship. This new type of rural entrepreneurial venture carried out by recent in-migrants also adds to our understanding of the changing relationship to the land and the social structure of land ownership in Suffolk. This knowledge of a *forward to the land movement* thus provides new knowledge of recent counter urbanisation trends in the UK.

Secondly, our research adds to the current literature on what it means to be a rural entrepreneur in the 21st century with nature-based entrepreneurship representing a development beyond the current binary characterisation of an 'entrepreneur in the rural' or a 'rural entrepreneur' as a result of covid-19 counter-urbanisation (Korsgaard et al, 2015).

An 'entrepreneur in the rural' engages with their spatial location as a space for profit. The choice of place is driven by advantages for the business or entrepreneur (providing a particular lifestyle). They are therefore weakly embedded in the place itself as they do not rely upon place-based or localized resources and targets markets that are most profitable regardless of the extent to how local these markets are (ibid). Whereas for 'rural entrepreneurs' place is important not just for the business opportunity itself but also the location has meaning, and social contexts attached (ibid). These entrepreneurs are highly embedded within a location and are concerned with the pursuit of personal, societal or cultural aspirations. They are embedded in the place so much so they may sometimes compromise financial development of the business for non-monetary aspirations. Rural entrepreneurs therefore create value for the entrepreneur and the rural place (ibid).

Whereas, our findings show how in-migrants interaction with rural affordances, through their perception, access and use of rural affordances, leads to the creation of nature-based entrepreneurial ventures that combine elements of both being an 'entrepreneur in the rural'

and a 'rural entrepreneur'; the in-migrants are engaging with the spatial location as a place for profit and not reliant upon localized target markets (instead, they create a new city clientele), however they simultaneously act in ways that represent Korsgaard et al (2015) 'rural entrepreneurs' whom are connected to a place through personal, societal or cultural aspirations. Having access to wider resources and networks due to counter-urbanisation combined with the motivation to bring city dwellers physically into rural space to experience nature immersion, while using the same entrepreneurial ventures to protect the environment in its 'natural' form, moves our understanding of what it means to be a 21st century 'rural' entrepreneur beyond a binary characterisation. Our findings instead show how the interaction with rural affordances by in-migrants and their city connectedness, can create entrepreneurs in rural places that connect people and places across time and space; by connecting city dwellers to rural spaces.

Thirdly, the combination of migration/counter-urbanisation and entrepreneurial emergence that brings a new clientele to a rural place also therefore supports the notion that recent in-migrants have the ability to make positive contributions to their new communities too (Keeble et al, 1992).

Figure 2. Process of in-migrant interaction with rural affordances

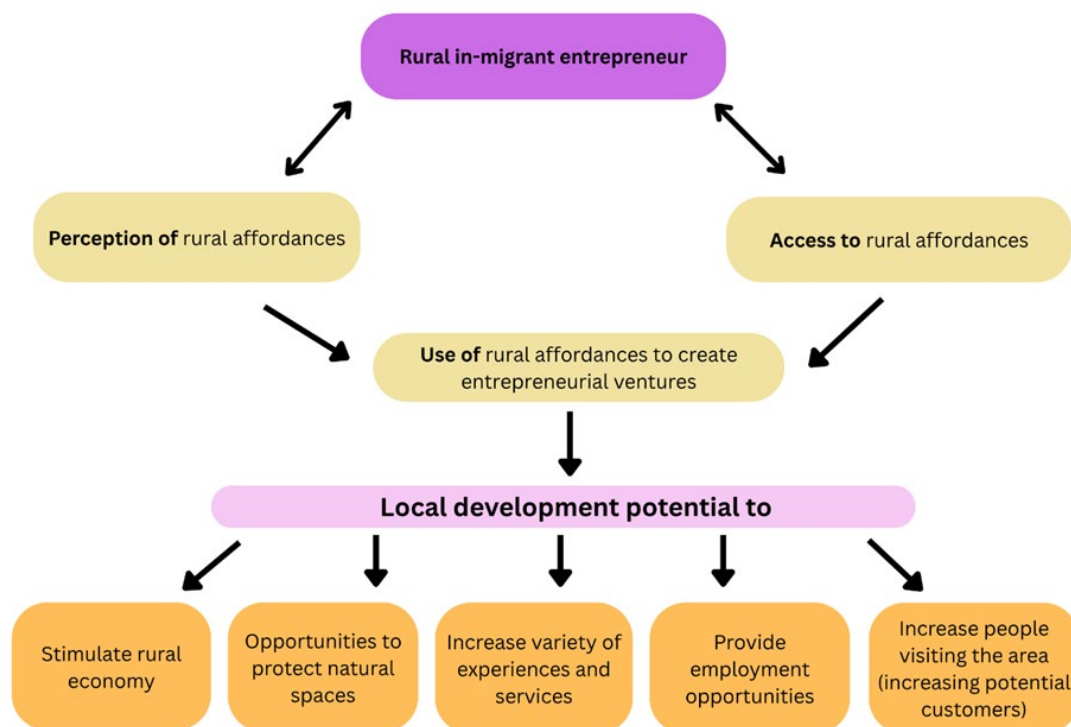


Figure 2 shows the local development potential of recent rural in-migrant entrepreneurial ventures. Our findings highlight how a new wave of in-migrant entrepreneurs, by bringing in new clientele to the area, are stimulating the rural economy through increased trade for

other businesses (Shafer and Henn, 2018; Deller et al, 2019) (see Table 3). These spillover benefits as a result of the combined process of counter-urbanisation and entrepreneurial emergence thus creates an opportunity for policy makers to support nature-based entrepreneurial ventures, which have the capability of working towards climate change targets by protecting land and biodiversity, while improving the livelihoods and wellbeing of rural communities, and urban visitors.

References

- Akpor-Oboro, M.O.M, (2018). Rethinking the Concept of Entrepreneurial Emergence: A Perspective of the Individual as the focus. *Advances in Social Sciences Research Journal*. 5 (7), 307-315.
- Bauman, Z. (2017) *Retrotopia*. Göteborg, Sweden: Daidalos.
- Bosworth, G. (2010). Commercial Counterurbanisation: An Emerging Force in Rural Economic Development. *Environment and Planning A*, 42, 966-981.
- Bosworth, G and Atterton, J. (2012). Entrepreneurial In-migration and Neoendogenous Rural Development. *Rural Sociology*, 77 (2), 254-279.
- Champion, AG. (1989). *In Counter-urbanisation: the Changing Pace and Nature of Population Decentralisation*. Edward Arnold: London.
- Choi, E, Rao, R, Paul, R. (2023) *What exactly are 'nature-based solutions'?* [Online] Available at: What Exactly Are 'Nature-based Solutions'? | World Resources Institute [accessed 23 June 2025].
- Curran, J. and Blackburn, R. (1994). *Small Firms and Local Economic Networks: The death of the Local economy?* Athenaeum Press: Newcastle Upon Tyne.
- Davidsson, P. (2015). Entrepreneurial opportunities and the entrepreneurship nexus: A re-conceptualization. *Journal of Business Venturing*, 30 (5), 674-695.
- Deller, S., Kures, M, and Conroy, T. (2019). Rural entrepreneurship and migration. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 66, 30-42.
- Fafchamps, M. (2006). Development and Social Capital. *Journal of Development Studies*, 42(7), 1180-1198.
- Fairhurst, G, T., and Putnam, L, L. (2019). An Integrative Methodology for Organizational Oppositions: Aligning grounded Theory and Discourse Analysis. *Organizational Research Methods*, 22 (4), 917-940.
- Farrell, M., Mahon, M., and McDonagh, J. (2012). The Rural as a return migration destination. *European Countryside*, 1, 31-44.
- Felin, T., Kauffman, S., Mastrogiorgio, A., and Mastrogiorgio, M. (2016). Factor markets, actors, and affordances. *Industrial and Corporate Change*, 25 (1), 133-147.
- Fletcher, D. (2003). *Framing Organizational Emergence: Discourse, Identity and Relationship*. [Online] Available at: Framing Organizational Emergence: Discourse, Identity and Relationship | Request PDF [accessed 16 June 2025].
- Gaddefors, J., and Anderson, A. (2019). Romancing the rural: Reconceptualizing rural entrepreneurship as engagement with context(s). *The International Journal of Entrepreneurship and Innovation*, 20 (3), 159-169.
- Gartner, W. (1985). A conceptual framework for describing the phenomenon of new venture creation. *Academy of Management Review*. 10 (4), 696-706.
- Gibson, J. (1966). *The senses considered as perceptual systems*. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Co. pp.244-256.
- Gieryn, T.F. (2000). A Space for Place in Sociology. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 26 (1), 463-496.

Halfacree, K. (2024). Counterurbanisation in post-covid-19 times. Signifier of resurgent interest in rural space across the global North? *Journal of Rural Studies*, 110, 1-8.

Halfacree, K. (1994). The importance of 'the rural' in the constitution of counterurbanisation: Evidence from England in the 1980s. *Journal of the European Society for Rural Sociology*, 34 (2-3), 164-189.

Halfacree, K. (2023). Towards a revanchist British rural in post-COVID times? A challenge to those seeking a good countryside. *The Geographical Journal*, 00, 1-9.

Halfacree, K and Rivera, M. (2012). Moving to the Countryside... and Staying: Lives beyond Representations. *Sociologia Ruralis*, 52 (1), 92-114.

Halliday, J and Coombes, M. (1995). In Search of Counterurbanisation: Some Evidence from Devon on the Relationship between Patterns of Migration and Motivation. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 11 (4), 443-446.

Hopp, C. and Stephen, U. (2012). The influence of socio-cultural environments on the performance of nascent entrepreneurs: Community culture, motivation, self-efficacy and start-up success. *Entrepreneurship and Regional Development*. 24 (9-10), 917-945.

Ibrahim, O.R., and Oyebanji, T.J. (2021). Counter-urbanization, Entrepreneurship and Sustainable Rural Development in Developing Countries: The Nigerian Example. *Urban and Regional Planning*, 6(1)m 47-56.

Jack, S. L. and Anderson, A.R. (2002). The effects of embeddedness on the entrepreneurial process. *Journal of Business Venturing*. 17, 467-587.

Keeble, D, Tyler, P and Lewis, G. (1992). *Business Success in the Countryside: The performance of Rural Enterprise*. London: HMSO.

Kibler, E., Fink, M., Lang, R. and Muñoz, P. (2015). Place Attachment and Social Legitimacy: Revisiting the Sustainable Entrepreneurship Journey. *Journal of Business Venturing Insights*, 3, 24-29.

Korsgaard, S., Muller, S., and Tanvig, H. W. (2015). Rural Entrepreneurship or Entrepreneurship in the Rural: Between Place and Space. *International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behaviour & Research*, 21(1), 5-26.

Larson, A. (1992). Network dyads in entrepreneurial settings: a study of the governance of exchange processes. *Administrative Science Quarterly*. 37, 76-104.

Lichtenstein, B.B. (2008). *Entrepreneurship as Emergence: Complexity Science and the entrepreneuring process*. Working Paper- The 1st Israel Strategy Conference 2008 Tel Aviv University.

MacKinnon, D, Kempton, L, O'Brien, P, Ormerod, E, Pike, A and Tomaney, J. (2022). Reframing urban and regional 'development' for 'left behind' places. *Cambridge Journal of Regions, Economic and Society*, 15, 39-56.

McElwee, G., and Smith, R. (2012). Classifying the strategic capability of farmers: a segmentation framework. *International Journal of Entrepreneurial Venturing*, 4 (2), 111-131.

McKeever, E., Jack, S. and Anderson, A. (2015). Embedded entrepreneurship in the creative re-construction of place. *Journal of Business Venturing*, 30 (1), 50-65.

McKeever, V. (2021). *London's population could decline in 2021 for the first time this century. Here's why people are leaving.* [Online]. Available at: <https://www.cnbc.com/2021/01/08/why-uk-workers-are-leaving-london-amid-the-coronavirus-pandemic.html> [accessed 15 December 2021].

McMullen and Dimov. (2013). Time and the Entrepreneurial Journey: The Problems and Promise of Studying Entrepreneurship as a Process. *Journal of Management Studies*, 50 (8), 1481-1512.

Mitchell, C. (2004). Making sense of counterurbanization. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 20, 15-34.

Muller, S and Korsgaard, S. (2018). Resources and bridging: the role of spatial context in rural entrepreneurship. *Entrepreneurship & Regional Development*, 30 (1-2), 224-255.

Morris, H and Kurato, D. (2020). *Chapter 1: The entrepreneurial journey: intention versus emergence.* [Online] Available at: Chapter 1: The entrepreneurial journey: intention versus emergence in: What do Entrepreneurs Create? [accessed 16 June 2025].

Office for National Statistics. (2022). *How the population changed in East Suffolk: Census 2021.* [Online] Available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/visualisations/censuspopulationchange/E07000244/> [accessed 2 July 2023].

Pee, L.G. (2018). Affordances for sharing domain-specific and complex knowledge on enterprise social media. *International Journal of Information Management*, 43, 25-37.

Perrault, R. (2022). Problems with Nature-Based Solutions: A literature review of the barriers to implementing nature-based solutions in urban areas. *Journal of International Affairs*, 13, 128-147.

Raymond, CM., Kyatta, M and Stedman, R. (2017). Sense of Place, Fast and Slow: The potential Contributions of Affordance Theory to Sense of Place. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 8, 1674.

Redhead, G., and Bika, Z. (2022). 'Adopting place': how an entrepreneurial sense of belonging can help revitalise communities. *Entrepreneurship & Regional Development*, 34(3-4), 222-246.

Sandstrom, E. (2022). Resurgent back-to-the-land and the cultivation of a renewed countryside. *Sociologia Ruralis*, 63 (3), 544-563.

Shane, S and Venkatamaran, S. (2000). The promise of entrepreneurship as a field of research. *Academy of Management Review*. 25 (1), 217-226.

Scarantino, A. (2003). *Affordances Explained.* [Online] Available at: <file:///home/chronos/u-c94a01e2e68c8cf6727b7bdd1fabdb5c0fb50090/MyFiles/Downloads/scarantino.pdf> [accessed 10 December 2019].

Scott, M, Kellerher, L and Fox-Rogers, L. (2025). Pandemic rural residential mobilities? Towards an understanding of who moved house and why in rural Ireland. *Town Planning Review*, 96 (3), pp. 247-274.

Sheller, M, and Urry, J. (2006). The new mobilities paradigm. *Environment and Planning*, 38, 207-226.

Smith, C., Brock Smith, J and Shaw, E. (2017). Embracing digital networks: Entrepreneur's social capital online. *Journal of Business Venturing*, 32 (1), 18-34.

Stockdale, A. (2004). Rural Out-Migration: Community Consequences and Individual Migrant Experiences. *European Society for Rural Sociology*, 44 (2), 167-194.

Suffolk Council. (2022). *Housing area report*. [Online] Available at: <https://www.suffolkobservatory.info/housing/reports/#/view-report/314a500fc4714e6a84792a85840604f9/E05012744> [accessed 25 April 2022].

UK Companies House. (2022). *Halesworth advanced company search*. [Online] Available at: <https://find-and-update.company-information.service.gov.uk/advanced-search/get-results?companyNameIncludes=&companyNameExcludes=®isteredOfficeAddress=halesworth&incorporationFromDay=&incorporationFromMonth=&incorporationFromYear=&incorporationToDay=&incorporationToMonth=&incorporationToYear=&status=active&sicCodes=&dissolvedFromDay=&dissolvedFromMonth=&dissolvedFromYear=&dissolvedToDay=&dissolvedToMonth=&dissolvedToYear=> [accessed 27 April 2022].

UN (2019). *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*. [Online] Available at: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015/transformingourworld> [accessed 16 June 2025].

UN Environment Programme. (2022). *Overview of Nature-based solutions*. [Online] Available at: [Overview of Nature-based solutions | UNEP - UN Environment Programme](#) [accessed 16 June 2025].

Van den Broek, T., Haubrich, G., Razmerita, L., Murero, M., Marx, J., Lind, Y., Brakel-Ahmed, F., Cook, L., & de Boer, P. (2023). *Digital Nomads: Opportunities and Challenges for the Future of Work in the Post-Covid Society*. Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam.

Volkoff, O and Strong, D.M. (2017). *Affordance theory and how to use it in IS research*. [Online] Available at: <https://www.taylorfrancis-com.uea.idm.oclc.org/chapters/edit/10.4324/9781315619361-18/affordance-theory-use-research-olga-volkoff-diane-strong> [accessed 2 February 2025].

Williams, A. (2020). *London buyers drive surge in sales of £1million Suffolk homes*. [Online] Available at: <https://www.eadt.co.uk/news/business/londoners-buying-million-pound-homes-in-suffolk-2700800?msclkid=499da84ecf3111ecb9e30b065e3dedd1> [accessed 1 March 2022].

