



Scottish Stakeholder Visions of Rural Land Use in a 'Just Transition'



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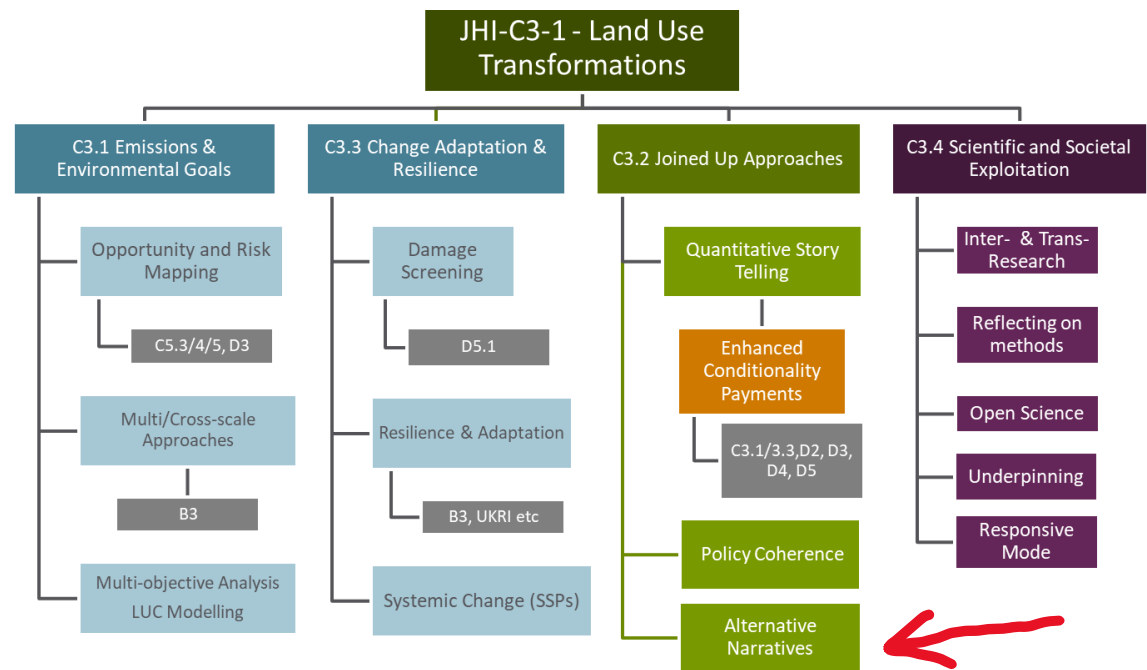
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Study: Rural Land Use Transformations

Part of the Scottish Government's Strategic Research Programme (2022-2027), funded under the Rural and Environment Science and Analytical Services (RESAS) Division of the Scottish Government

Project Purpose: to generate new insights for how land use in Scotland needs to change to meet climate change mitigation, adaptation, and other environmental objectives. The project also considers how approaches to land use can be better joined up.

- Governance lens on how to deliver GHG reduction and other environmental goals
- Broad approach to 'land use' & land users
 - Rural land-based sectors
 - Societal actors interested in land as public good



Alternative Narratives

The overall research plan is to identify a diverse set of voices which are weighing in on land-related issues in Scotland and assess the visions of land futures that these voices present

Research Questions

- Whose voices are put forward in land sector governance consultations?
- What vision of land futures do these voices present?
- What undesirable land futures do these voices argue against?
- What environmental and/or social justice issues are expressed in these responses?
- *Which voices are missing from these consultation processes?*
- *On what grounds do consultation voices claim legitimacy*



Analytical framework



Multifunctionality

- refers to the multiple, often intersecting and sometimes contested functions of the countryside. These are broadly inclusive of:
 - production (e.g. agricultural commodities, wood products)
 - conservation (e.g. of natural resources)
 - amenity or consumption (e.g. housing, natural amenities)
- activities fulfil functions beyond the individual unit to the region and society as a whole

Just Transition

Two definitions that structure approaches to achieving a low-carbon world:

- “the need to offer state support to workers and communities who will lose their livelihoods due to a deliberate shift away from the fossil fuel industry”
- “an ambitious social and economic restructuring that addresses the roots of inequality” (Pinker, 2020)

“Ensuring that the benefits of the actions taken to address climate change and transition away from a fossil-fuel based economy are shared by all, and that the costs do not unfairly burden those least able to pay, or whose livelihoods are at risk as the economy changes, whether that be regions, industries, communities, or individuals” (Scottish Government, 2020, p. 39)

Types of Just Transition	Description
Status quo	Voluntary/market-driven greening of capitalism enabled by governments; support for workers in form of retraining, compensation
Managerial reform	Justice sought through modification of/new rules and standards e.g., OSH workers’ rights, skills development; no changes to economic model and balance of power
Structural reform	Distributive and procedural justice via institutional form, modification of governance and ownership, democratic decision making. Affected groups have agency
Transformative	An overhaul of the existing economic and political systems seen as responsible for crises; alternative development pathways and dismantling of systems of oppression



Process

- Identified diverse set of voices weighing in on land-related issues in Scotland



- Support for Agriculture and the Rural Economy (2018)
- Rural Assets Strategy (2019)
- Right to Buy Land to Further Sustainable Development (2019)
- Scottish Crown Estate (2019)
- Scotland's Economic Performance (2020)
- Just Transition Commission (2020)
- Agricultural Transition in Scotland (2021)
- Environmental Standards Scotland (2022)
- Land Rights and Responsibilities Statement (2022)
- National Council of Rural Advisers (2018)
- Good Food Nation (2019)
- Environmental Principles and Governance (2019)
- Scotland's Forestry Strategy 2019-2029
- Review of Mental health Law (2020)
- Climate Change Net Zero Nation (2021)
- Scotland's Third Land Use Strategy (2021)
- Draft National Planning Framework 4 (2022)

- Conducted discourse analysis using Carvalho's (2007) media analysis for coding framework

- actors, discursive strategies and processes (framing, legitimation), ideological viewpoints (norms, values), language and rhetoric, objects (functions of land)



	Support for Agriculture and the Rural Economy 2018	Just Transition Commission 2020	Climate Change Net Zero Nation 2021	Agricultural Transition in Scotland 2021	Draft National Planning Framework 4 2022
Community Land Scotland		*			*
Community Woodlands Association	*			*	*
Paths for All	*	*	*	*	*
Creative Scotland		*	*		*
Quakers in Scotland		*	*		*
Historic Environment Scotland	*	*	*	*	*
Royal Town Planning Institute		*	*		
Highlands and Islands Enterprise			*		*
Scottish Environment LINK	*	*		*	
John Muir Trust			*	*	*
Scottish Land and Estates	*			*	*
National Farmers Union		*	*	*	
Scottish Crofting Federation	*			*	*
CONFOR					
Soil Association Scotland	*			*	

Transition...



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- SLE briefly mentions climate change **mitigation** and seeks recognition for current activities
- CONFOR is concerned with primarily with **climate change** and offer trees as the solution, supported by government funding. Environmental and economic **goals should complement and support** each other.
- Soil Association advocate for significant **changes in agricultural policy** to deal with environmental challenges and create a future of **zero-carbon, resilient farming systems**. Future government capital funding should go to *“transformational change in agriculture and land use”*
- The Scottish Crofting Federation are concerned about **climate change** (emissions from ‘industrialised’ agriculture and from long supply chains), and crofting is proposed as key for sustainable food production, tackling climate change.
- Scottish Environment Link are concerned with **GHG emissions, agriculture, impacts of the current economic model**, suggesting a shift to circular economy, large scale and rapid changes in land use and management



...Justice

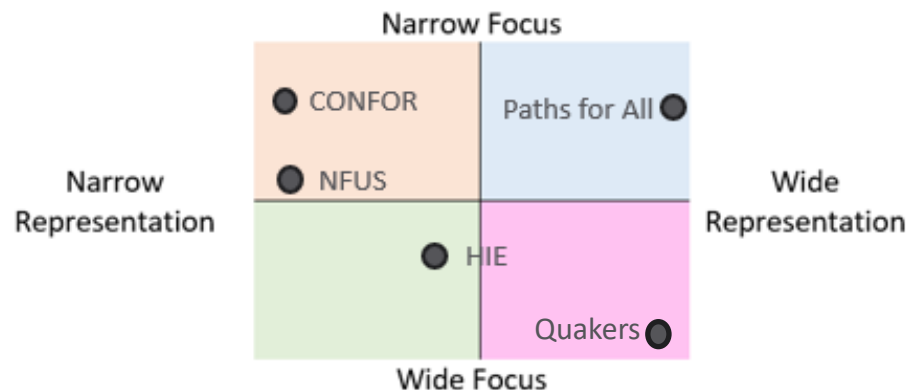
“the principles of a Just Transition must be embedded throughout all actions. This must ensure that communities are actively engaged in land use decisions and that planning and public support for net zero does not widen existing inequalities. The opportunities and benefits arising from these actions must be shared fairly across Scotland.... through sustainable land and other asset management that retains wealth within communities on a more equitable basis for the common good” (CLS)



- Democracy, transparency, inclusion: participation in planning and decision-making
 - John Muir Trust: *“overcome barriers to participation such as digital divides, unequal access to information, and also consider the different needs of individuals to participate or engage meaningfully”*
- Equality: access to land, distribution of wealth/benefits
 - RTPI: “issues about how we ensure people have equal accessibility to the things they need”
- Frames include:
 - Community wealth
 - Common good
 - Public benefit
 - Food security

Sectoral vs holistic view

- **Highlands and Islands Enterprise** represent **people, communities and businesses** in the region, focusing on economic success but also concerned with inclusion and environmental sustainability.
- **National Farmers Union Scotland** represent **their members** to ensure they benefit from any land use or regulation changes. Concerns include the **offshoring of carbon emissions** (through consumption of food farmed abroad) and the **cost of living for farmers**
- **Paths for All** focus on issues to do with transport and walking in Scotland, **representing Scottish society** as a whole.
- **CONFOR** represent **members of the forestry and wood supply chain** and are almost solely concerned with promoting the increase of that sector in their responses
- Quakers consider a range from **non-human lives and global impacts** to human and local



Status quo to transformation

- **Radical, widespread change** needed
 - Quakers in Scotland refer to “the fundamental reframing of our relationship with the natural world that is required” from extractive, human-centred to being part of the natural world
 - Scottish Environment Link say “We must make large scale and rapid changes in the way we use and manage our land”
 - “The main barrier to a just transition is the refusal of the sector and its regulators to recognise the scale of change needed.” (Community Woodlands Association)
- Changes needed are **smaller** (in scope and impact)
 - Historic Environment Scotland advocate for continuation in policy direction
 - NFUS believe changes are needed to agri-environmental regulations towards performance-based payments
- **No change** is needed
 - SLE support a continuation in the model of land ownership and tenure, limiting the decision-making power of communities



Rights & responsibilities

- SLE advocate for the **rights of private landowners** rather than communities to decide on land use on private land, and NFUS stress that farmers should be in a position where they can manage their land with minimal interference
- The Community Woodland Association advocates for land right-holders having environmental and social **responsibilities towards local communities**. Decisions about land use should not be “limited to small, heavily subsidised groups of wealthy people”.

*“We agree with that addressing climate change and nature recovery should be the primary guiding principles, but this transition needs to be socially just. Due to current **unequal land ownership patterns** in Scotland, there is a pronounced risk that moves towards net zero will have unintended harmful impacts on people” (CLS)*

- NFU Scotland is concerned primary producers will carry most of the environmental responsibility and financial cost of environmental land use actions



Conclusions

- Stakeholder perspectives on Just Transition range from supporting the status quo to advocating for structural change. Justice aspects generally do not feature as much as environmental ones
- Positions taken consider different epistemic and spatial scales, from holistic and global to sectoral and localized
- A multiscale approach – imbricated with multifunctionality - could help to enable an understanding of interlinked issues and a possibly more inclusive frame for land use changes but much of the current discourse is adversarial and narrowly focused
- There is a question of what sort of persuasion is most compelling thus far – for influencing policy or the public



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