

Putting the social back into society.

Rural Pact. Acting for the rural vision: making a commitment for vibrant rural areas visible.

Kate Carmody. “Enable a rural renaissance through the creation of social cooperatives”.

Why I decided that a cooperative should be a social enterprise due to needs and barriers.

- The Irish Hemp Cooperative was registered May 2018.
- It was set up to address the many issues facing small farmers. It addresses legislative and logistical barriers.
- The work of the hemp Cooperative is encouraging young farmers, and rural actors to solve their own problems by providing them with a channel to take action.
- Due to needs and barriers in policy and finance, it has failed to achieve it's aims.
- Kate Carmody, Organic farmer, Biochemist/Biomedical Scientist, Social Scientist, EU Expert in Agricultural Productivity & Sustainability.

Depopulation and socioeconomic deprivation.

We aim to drive a rural renaissance, supporting a Just transition for our communities recognising the challenges of climate change.

We are developing a sustainable network for hemp, flax and MAPS. There was a tradition of growing these crops in Ireland.

Struggling farms can stack enterprises. With local processing providing meaningful employment.

At a local level we are working on the “People’s Transition” which is run by TASC. This encourages empowerment of the local community.

Image source: Aalen, F. H. A., Whelan, K., Stout, W. (1997). *Atlas of the Irish Rural Landscape*. 1st ed. Cork: Cork University Press.

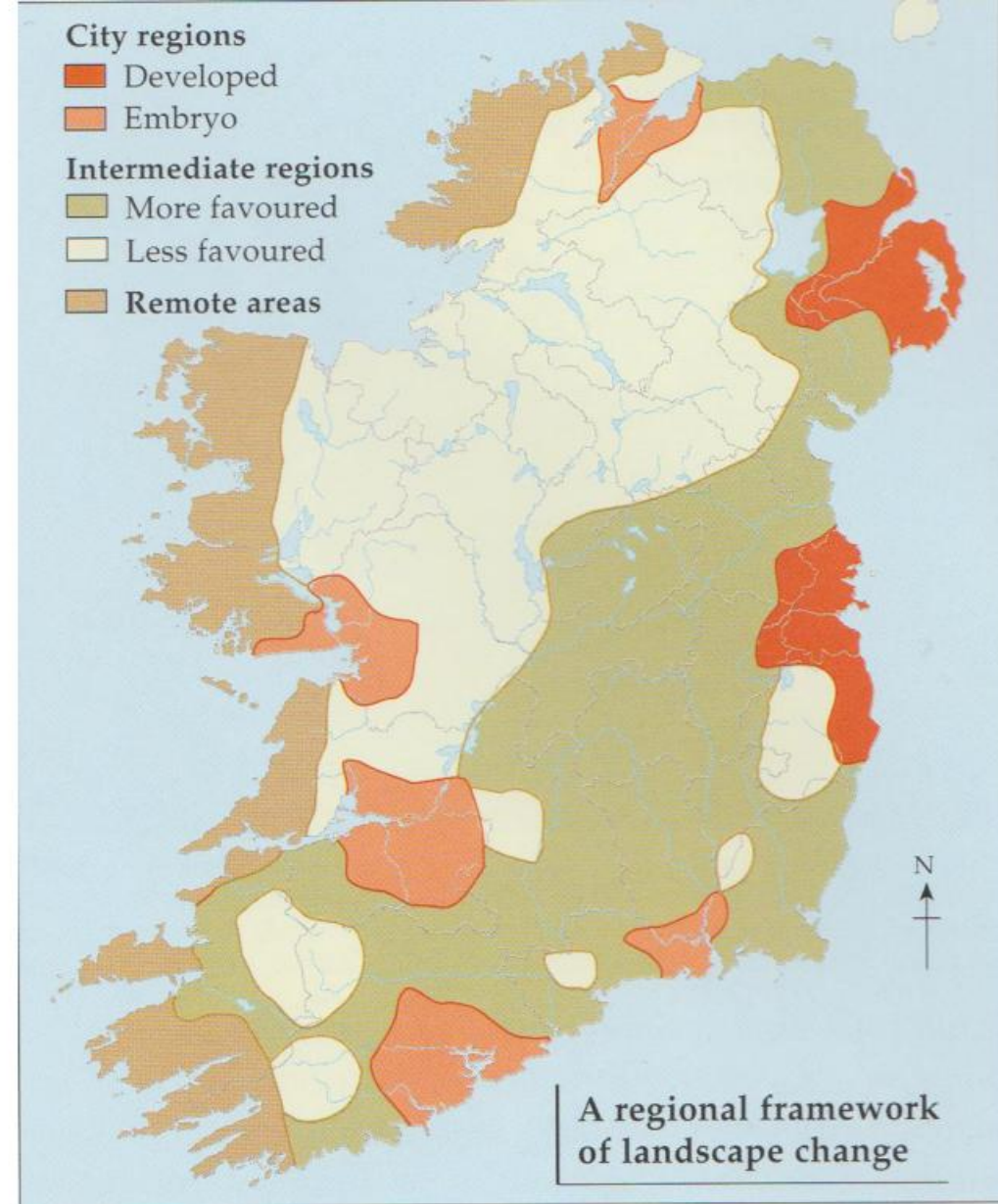


Fig. 3 The nature of landscape change varies substantially in different types of region, ranging from strong urban encroachment in city hinterlands to rapidly evolving agricultural land use in intermediate areas and depopulation, tourism development, land abandonment and afforestation in remote areas.

Rural Renaissance needs to be social.

- Formation of social cooperatives which register as social (charitable) trusts, to facilitate funding.
- A social cooperative (not for profit) will invest surplus into the community thus allowing new ideas to flourish.
- Social enterprise can access a broader funding base making them less reliant on mainstream banking services.
- As a social charitable Trust, it can access funding from Philanthropic foundations,
- Keeping communities knitted together and encouraging disruptive thinking to repopulate depleted areas is needed now.

We have learned from the Hemp Cooperative.

- With a membership of over 200 farmers and rural actors we know that our rural communities are willing to engage.
- The members are totally frustrated by lack of movement in government policy in rural Ireland.
- We need to put social capital on an equal footing with economic capital.
- We plan to create a new cooperative set up as a charitable Trust by the end of the year, and apply to the Ireland Funds for funding to develop our ideas.

Reference books worth reading.

- Humanizing the Economy, Co-operatives in the AGE of Capital by John Restakis.
- Civilizing the State by John Restakis.
- Prosperity without Growth, Economics for a Finite Planet by Tim Jackson.
- The Triumph of NATIONALIZATION by SIR LEO CHIOZZA MONEY.