

# The role of community landownership in improving rural health

## Introduction

- Community landownership provides a means through which rural communities can be empowered to enact changes in their social and economic conditions, in ways accountable to the resident population.
- Positively affecting such conditions can improve health outcomes.

## Aim

- To empirically explore the theoretical potential for community landownership to improve health in rural Scotland. Specifically:
  - How and for whom community landownership can affect rural health;
  - The perceived extent of any such impact vis-à-vis other 'interventions'.

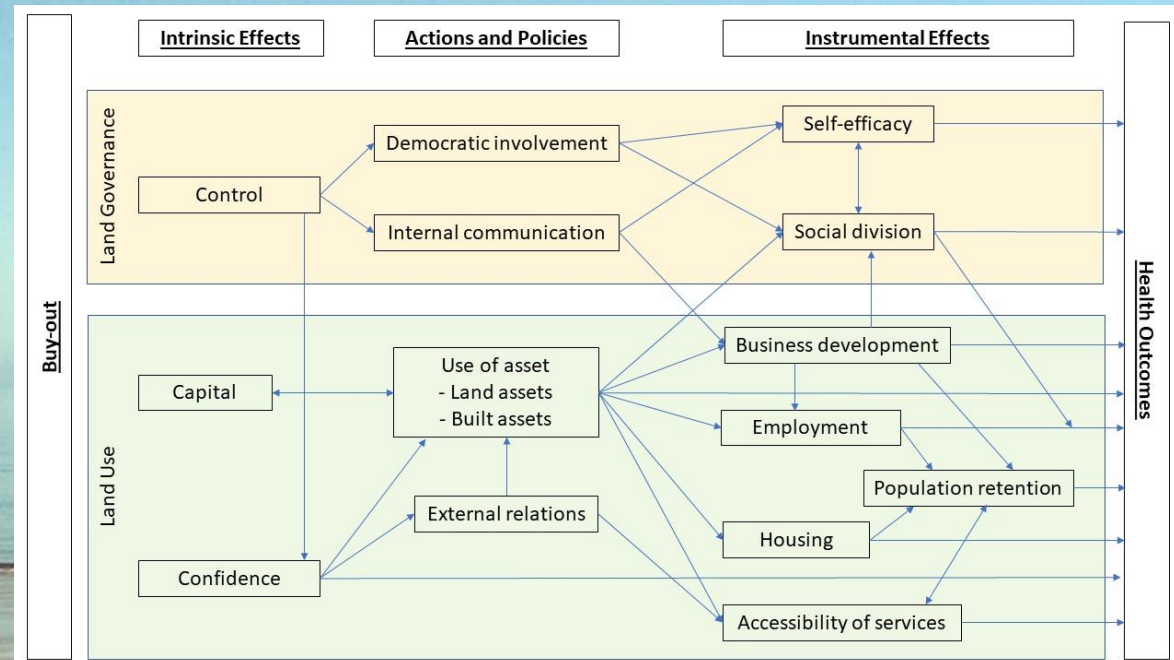


Figure 1- Empirically-informed conceptual model of the ways in which community landownership can affect rural health outcomes

## Methods

- 'Broad and deep' mixed-method, single case-study design.
  - Qualitative interviews:
    - 14 'external' stakeholders;
    - 16 'internal' residents.
  - Q Methodology (Fig. 2):
    - 40 statements
    - 62 residents.

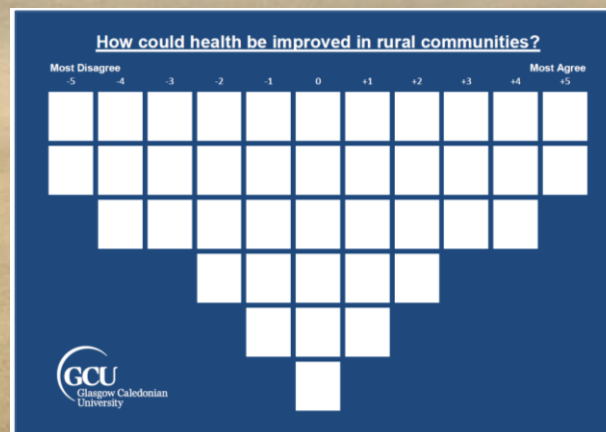


Figure 2- Q 'grid'

## Results

- Conceptual model outlining 'pathways' from land acquisition to health outcomes (Fig. 1).
- Community landownership provides the foundation upon which further health-improving initiatives can be developed.
- Health impacts are dependent on effective management and governance.
- Increased involvement in estate governance enhances potential for both positive and negative health effects.

## Conclusions

- Community landowners are not uniquely or inevitably capable of improving rural health.
- However, the locally-accountable democratic governance of an income-generating land asset combines the ability and compulsion to act in the interests of residents' health and wellbeing in ways which other actors or initiatives do not.

Dr Bobby Macaulay (bobby.macaulay@gcu.ac.uk)  
Glasgow Caledonian University

Research funded by Wellcome Trust Doctoral Studentship

Supervisors: Prof Artur Steiner, Dr Neil McHugh, Prof Cam Donaldson