Analysis of the structure, dynamics and diversity of upland communities

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Executive Summary

- The purpose of this report is to examine the evidence on the social impacts and human costs of change in the uplands and identify any gaps in the evidence base. It presents an analysis of existing evidence on the structure, dynamics and diversity of upland communities. The report is based wholly on a review of published literature.

- Over forty papers and reports were reviewed. Compared to the evidence base on the physical environment the social impacts of change and the structures of the human community in the uplands are relatively under researched.

- The report is structured into four sections. Section one sets out the approach to the reviewing process and the nature of the evidence. Section two considers the evidence base on farmers and farm families. Section three is devoted to the wider community. Section four draws together a list of key drivers of social change.

Farm and Farm Households

- There is a substantial literature on the farm family and the pressures and changes that these families have experienced as a result of agricultural restructuring. The relationship between the farm family and the farm business is a critical one. The farm family is widely viewed by researchers as the social institution which upholds 'traditional' upland farming.

- Interview based studies in several different upland areas indicate that between 35 and 50 per cent of farms in the study areas have an identified successor. The likelihood of passing a farm down to the next generation is of critical importance to the management of the farm business including decisions on the farm environment/landscape.

- Some studies have argued that succession should be actively encouraged and a genetic link between the farmers of the past, current and future be maintained for social and environmental reasons. However, it is questionable whether the maintenance of a genetic link should be an aim of public policy. There are also grounds for questioning whether this genetic link is as significant as some believe. In some areas of the country a substantial proportion of the land is managed by those who consider themselves first generation farmers.

- Farm surveys have shown that there are a growing number of smaller holdings on Dartmoor and Exmoor. Research from other parts of the UK suggests that this trend has been apparent for several decades with more large scale holdings and fewer 'family sized' farms. This trend is potentially significant and warrants further research on which

groups are engaging in small scale farming and the social, economic and environmental impacts on the uplands.

- Studies in different upland areas show that the average age of farmers is consistently in the mid 50s. Upland farmers are more likely to have left school with no qualifications than their lowland counterparts.

- Like farmers in the lowlands, production is central to identity and the values of upland farmers. The significance of being involved in production to farmer identity and social status within the farming community is important to understanding the impacts of change on individuals and groups of farmers. The farming identities of the wider farm household are also considered important in adapting to processes of change.

- Multiple sources suggest that overall there has been a decline in the social life of the hills. However, certain co-operative social and economic activities are continuing and new traditions and ways of working together are emerging. Younger men and women tend to be much less nostalgic about the perceived erosion of the traditional way of life.

- The changing role of farm women can be argued to be empowering. However, there is also evidence that taking on paid work or running a business can add substantially to the pressures and stresses on farm women and households.

- The pressure to maintain a traditional family farming way of life is a source of stress and distress for many farmers and their families. Several aspects of family farming make this experience distinctive including: the socialisation of farmers into a production centred identity; changing family relations; the continuing maintenance of separate roles for farm men and women and; the sense of isolation reinforced by the coincidence of home and work.

Upland Communities

- Prior to the commissioning of research for the Inquiry there was limited statistical data on upland communities. Particularly significant characteristics identified include: high rates of employment; more local businesses per head; and lower mean household incomes in comparison to other rural areas of England.

- It is widely recognised that there is a high degree of social, economic and demographic differentiation between England's upland areas. LEADER Local Development Strategies for the 2007 – 2013 period provide an additional source of data on specific upland areas. These contain especially useful analyses of the specific problems and opportunities in each area.

- The literature suggests that three social trends are particularly important in shaping upland communities. These are: in migration; high rates of self-employment/ small business formation and; demographic ageing. All three are closely linked and the subject of debate with regard to social and economic impact.

- Recent evidence suggests that there have been substantial numbers of migrants from the A8 states to the uplands although the scale at which data is collected makes this trend difficult to quantify. There is very little intelligence on ethnic and racial minority households in upland England.

- Of growing interest in recent years has been the social diversity of visitors to the English uplands. There have been numerous studies of the attitudes and experiences of people from groups who tend to be under represented as visitors.

- While rural health has been extensively studied there is a dearth of analysis on the differences between different types of rural areas and hence whether there are distinctive upland patterns.

- Relations between farmers and non farmers in the uplands is an area that has received considerable attention in recent years. Farming continues to be seen as important to the cultural identity of the uplands. However, non farmers are playing an increasingly active role in upland communities.

Drivers of social change

- Five key drivers of change can be identified and are examined in part four of the report:
  - ➢ Self-employment and small business activity as important sources of household income
  - ➢ Changes in the profitability of farming and the economic activities of land based businesses
  - ➢ The emerging implications of demographic ageing
  - ➢ Increasing social diversity in terms of employment type, race/ethnicity/nationality, culture and social identity
  - ➢ Public policy and community based initiative in the provision of services and rural proofing

1.Introduction

The purpose of this report is to examine the evidence on the social impacts and human costs of change in the uplands and identify any gaps in the evidence base. It forms an analysis of existing evidence on the structure, dynamics and diversity of upland communities. The report forms one of the sources for the 'State of the Uplands' report to be presented to the Commission for Rural Community's Inquiry into the Future for England's Upland Communities by Delta Innovation Ltd working with the Centre for Rural Economy at Newcastle University. It has been prepared by Nicola Thompson, Centre for Rural Economy, Newcastle University with comments from Jane Atterton, Terry Carroll, Mark Shucksmith and Steve Webster.

The report is based wholly on a review of the current published literature on the social impacts and human costs of change in the uplands. Literature was initially found through the use of academic and internet search engines using a series of key terms (for example, English uplands social, upland communities, less favoured areas). This process enabled identification of a relatively small number of academic papers together with a series of research reports from universities, consultants and independent research organisations. The references contained in these papers and reports were also used to find further relevant literature. A second round of internet searching was then undertaken using the geographical names for the upland areas of England (for example, Exmoor, Lake District, Forest of Bowland). This found a small number of additional reports and papers specific to particular upland areas.

In the process of literature reviewing we have analysed over forty papers, reports and documents covering a range of themes of relevance to understanding social change in the uplands which we believe enables us to identify common themes, areas of debate and disagreement amongst researchers and the major gaps in the literature. The time frame for the research has necessitated time limiting the literature searching process. This report does not therefore claim to have found all the research undertaken of relevance to understanding the social state of the English uplands.

In their 2004 report to Defra the Institute of European Environmental Policy and GHK Consulting argue that most of the literature on hill farming relates to environmental impacts and that the social impacts of hill farming is a major gap in the literature. We too have found that the social impacts are relatively under researched. However, we have also found that there is more material on the social state of the uplands than this IEEP/GHK report suggests.

There are a series of points to bear in mind about the nature of the evidence base:

- While a number of researchers have conducted projects on the social state of the uplands very few describe their studies in these terms. The research we found was often focused on a more specific theme (role of

women, historic processes of farm restructuring, environmental knowledge) or was an upland case study for an 'England wide' report.

- Most of the uplands specific research is case study based and hence relies on qualitative methods such as interviewing and focus groups. There is more material on the nature of problems and issues experienced than there is on the extent of, and any geographical variations in, social trends and issues. Also reflecting the nature of the evidence base there is relatively little statistical material on the social structure and diversity of upland communities.

- The bulk of the evidence base relates to the social issues and problems experienced by farm families. Where the wider community is considered it is usually in relation to the farming community and the implications for social relations between these two groups. The social impacts and human costs of change in the uplands on non farming residents or non resident users of the uplands is a gap in the evidence base. This is an important gap given the significance of these groups to the social and economic structure of upland communities.

- There is a degree of geographical asymmetry in the extent to which the different upland areas of England are studied. Cumbria has been the subject of a number of research projects especially with regard to the farming community. The North York Moors has been the site of several recent studies of visitors and their use (and non use) of the uplands. The Peak District is also a research 'hot spot'. For other areas some studies exist with Exmoor, Dartmoor and Northumberland all being the sites for farm surveys in the last decade.

- Where appropriate, studies from beyond the English uplands have been drawn on. These include research on the Welsh and Scottish Uplands and reports on rural social issues.

The report is structured into three subsequent sections. Section two considers the evidence base on farmers and farm families while section three is devoted to the wider rural community. Section four draws together a list of drivers of social change derived from a critical analysis of the key issues in the literature.

2. Farms and Farm Households

As observed above the majority of the literature on the structure, dynamics and diversity of upland communities pertains to farmers and their households. This section reviews this literature highlighting the main findings, remaining gaps in understanding and critical questions for policy. It starts with an explanation of why researchers have found the farm family to be such an important area of study. It then moves on to the characteristics and problems of upland farmers and recent research on their social and co-operative lives. This leads into a section on farming stress and suicide. The final part is concerned with the experience of farm women, in particular the evidence on the ways in which their lives and roles are changing.

The family farm

A major area of research over the last three decades has been the relationship between the farm business and the farm family. The result is a substantial academic literature on the farm family and the pressures and changes that these families have experienced as a result of agricultural restructuring. Hence there are a substantial number of studies of upland farm households in Britain of direct relevance to this report.

The literature consistently highlights the critical relationship between the farm business and the farm family. Gray (1998) in a study of Teviotdale (Scotland) provides a comprehensive account of why this relationship is so critical. He argues that farmers themselves see the family and the farm as inextricably linked. He argues that marriage is critical to the way in which sheep farming enterprises are organised and managed defining the point at which new farm households are formed as well as being the institution through which new generations are born and brought up into farming. According to Gray's analysis it is through marriage that farm men assert their own (and their family's) social identity usually taking on or over a farm business at this point in their life. This farm then becomes critical to the identity and social position of the farm family or in Gray's own words it becomes "just as important for the social existence of a family as it is for its material existence" (p.347). In underlining his point on the critical role of marriage to the enterprise of sheep farming Gray highlights two examples of farms run by single men which ultimately failed according to his analysis through the lack of a farm family.

The importance of the farm family to present and future management is a persistent theme in most subsequent studies and is widely viewed as the social institution which upholds 'traditional' upland farming. Historical study, however, suggests that the 'family farm', as distinct from a feudal system of agriculture, gradually emerged, in the northern English uplands at least, between 1400 and 1700 (Winchester, 2000). Symes and Appleton (1986) report on a historical study of the Farndale area of the North York Moors showing how in the nineteenth century farming in the dale was dominated by twenty two families who, because of their tendency to intermarry, formed a complex but stable kinship network where the individual farmers worked closely together. They cite the statistics that even by 1951 83% of the

farmers had been born in the dale. However, by 1981 this had fallen to 56% and by the 1980s only six out of the original twenty two families were left in Farndale. They claim that 1970 was the date that marked particularly rapid social change as increasing numbers of people moved out of the dale and inter farm marriage rapidly reduced. Symes and Appleton (1986) provide an account of the growing importance of the farm household as the key institution to the maintenance of the farm business. They show how the late twentieth century was a period of major social change in upland farming communities, the weakening of wider kin networks resulting in a growing dependence on the "resources contained in the simple *nuclear family*" (p.359, emphasis not in original). The relationship between farming and the *nuclear family* as distinct from an extended family consisting of a wide range of kith and kin is perhaps a more recent phenomenon. Hence while there is overwhelming evidence on the strong association between family structures and traditional upland farming systems there is a need to question whether the organisation and nature of farm families has in fact subtly, but significantly, changed over the decades. The dominant understanding of 'the family' as those with an immediate familial link (father, mother, son, daughter, brother and sister) is potentially important to the analysis of social change and continuity in the uplands.

The critical role of the farm family in upland agriculture has also resulted in a rich literature on succession (the transfer of the farm business and assets from one generation to the next). A series of statistics relating to particular geographical areas have been produced. A study of 44 farms in Cumbria in 2005 found that 23 were sure of succession, 15 were sure not have a successor and 5 were not sure (Burton *et al.*, 2005). Lobley *et al.* (2005) reported that 35% of farmers in two upland case studies (Orton Fells, Cumbria and Bakewell area of Peak District) were more likely to be planning to retire in favour of a successor. Lobley *et al.* (2004b) found that 40% of farmers on Exmoor had identified a successor. In Northumberland National Park the 1999/2000 farm survey revealed that while 58.8% of the respondents 'hoped' that another member of their family would succeed them only 34.8% rated the chances of this happening likely to very likely. On Dartmoor half the farmers in the 2002 survey had an identified successor (Turner *et al.*, 2002). The research shows that succession is an issue of importance and concern to many farmers. Hence studies based on interviews and other discussion based methods report its pivotal significance, linking the likelihood of passing a farm down to the next generation to the current running of the farm business and consequently to the management of the farm environment. It is beyond the scope of this report to critically interrogate the veracity of claims about the relationship between succession and the management of the farm environment. However, it might be noted that many farming practices adopted through the twentieth century had detrimental implications for the farmed environment and, as such, this linkage between long term family ownership and long-term stewardship might be challenged by more in-depth, interdisciplinary research. Furthermore, succession also raises a series of difficult questions about the future implications for policy.

Selected research studies have argued that succession should be actively encouraged and a genetic link between the farmers of the past, current and future is maintained. Burton *et al.* (2005) in their report 'Social Capital in Hill Farming' advocate policies to maintain particular families in the hills on the basis of their ancestral links. The authors use the link between social and environmental systems to justify the following working hypothesis for their report: "it is due to the social and human capital currently accumulated within upland farming systems that the landscape of today exists and, therefore, for them to continue to exist and deliver the landscapes people enjoy it is vital to investigate the importance of maintaining traditional farm families on the land" (p.7). Latter in the report the authors are more explicit in outlining what 'maintaining traditional farm families' might mean stating that "maintaining 'traditional' farming systems in areas like Cumbria should be more about preserving the links between one generation and the next than it is about preserving structures such as stone walls and buildings" (p.29). Other authors report that farmers commonly express the idea that knowledge of farming is essentially passed down the generations not only through the process of teaching farming skills to the next generation but also through a 'genetic' link, the idea that farming is 'in the blood'. Gray (1998) found that what he terms the 'genetic metaphor' was commonly used to explain how people had a temperament for farming that had been 'bred into' them. Likewise, Mansfield (2008) and Whitman (2005) both relate stories of newcomers to farming being criticised by established farmers as not understanding why certain management practices are necessary or having 'no idea' about farming because they lacked a family background in agriculture.

However, it is highly questionable whether public policy should be aiming to maintain this 'genetic link'. Even if it is be to assumed that ancestral links are desirable, on the basis that they are an effective means of passing down knowledge, the resultant schemes and policies would risk discriminating against those who want to work in farming but do not have the required family background. There is evidence that many upland farmers do not want their children to succeed them and are encouraging to stay in education and pursue other careers (IEEP/GHK, 2004; Whitman, 2005). Ultimately it is difficult to see how government can justify getting involved in farm succession with the explicit aim of maintaining the link from one generation of farmers to the next without being in some sense discriminatory.

There are also grounds for questioning whether the 'genetic link' is quite as significant as many believe. Certainly the geographical location of Burton *et al.*'s research (Cumbria) is an important factor in understanding why the research team place so much emphasis on *traditional* farm families. With a high proportion of common grazings there is a long tradition of hill farmers having to work together and being mutually dependent on the quality of each other's stock management practices. This is an important issue in areas with common grazings but will be less of a problem in other areas of the uplands. The evidence also suggests that in other upland parts of England there have been substantial numbers of newcomers managing the uplands for at least the last five years. Lobley *et al.* (2004b) reporting on a survey of Exmoor

farmers found that 43% of respondents stated that they were first generation farmers in the Park. About a third of these were new entrants to farming. The majority of these new entrants had small farms suggesting that they were lifestyle farmers but, nevertheless, the statistics show that new entrants are managing substantial tracts of land in this part of upland England.

The statistics from Exmoor also show that farms of under 5 ha had increased from 80 in 1990 to 227 in 2002. Together with the finding that 47% of respondents gained less than 25% of household income from farming demonstrates this suggests that the significance of small scale, lifestyle farming undertaken by people new to the area is growing on Exmoor (Lobley et al., 2004b). In Dartmoor too there has been a reported increase in the number of smaller holdings (less than 20 hectares) and hence a decline in the average holding size (Turner et al., 2002). These trends are potentially significant and warrant further research to investigate which social groups are engaging with small scale farming in the uplands and the impacts on the community, economy and the landscape. However, such research should also recognise that these trends have probably been manifest for several decades. A longitudinal study of farm households in upland Scotland over the period 1987-1991 found that about 8% of the sample could be classed as 'hobby farmers' with hardly any with a farming background or training (Shucksmith,1993; Shucksmith and Herrmann, 2002). Interesting Shucksmith and Herrmann (2002, p.43) report that "for them, policy was irrelevant, both because farming was only a hobby and because they were ineligible for support".

Given this trend it is interesting that training schemes to teach farming and other land management skills have been growing interest to those organisations involved in planning for the future of the uplands. Cumbria has also been the location of a project to teach fell farming skills and evaluate the effectiveness of such a training programme (Mansfield, 2008; Mansfield and Martin, 2004). Developed in 2002 the Fell Farming Traineeship Scheme provided training in hill farming for six young people aged 16 – 30. The report states that they were young people who were not going to inherit a farm but what is less clear is whether these were still the children or relatives of existing farmers. The scheme seems to have mixed success. The young people learnt many vital hill farming skills but the duration of one year was not long enough to develop and practice the full range of skills needed. Other schemes in Northumberland National Park and the North Pennines Area of Outstanding Beauty have provided training for people from a range of backgrounds and ages in building and maintaining traditional boundaries. The impact of these land management based training schemes, particularly on the social sustainability of upland communities needs further research.

A review of the literature points to the apparent and assumed significance of succession to current and future farm management. This is clearly a major issue for farmers themselves and has been explored in a number of recent research projects. However, it would seem that the practice of passing farms down from one generation to the next of the same family needs some sustained critical reflection on the part of the farming industry, government

and researchers. While ancestral links undoubtedly contribute to the ongoing development of upland 'cultural heritage' and do build a strong 'sense of place', (Convery et al., 2009; Convery and Dutson, 2006) there are series of problems associated with intervention to achieve this as a public policy objective. Although there is already a wealth of material on farm succession more research which critically interrogates the social impacts both of keeping particular 'traditional' families farming and of facilitating the entry of 'new' individuals and families is still needed.

In the next subsection we consider the evidence on the social characteristics of hill farmers and the frequently reported attitudes, values and behaviours associated with being a hill farmer. We start with age, educational attainment and residential mobility before moving on to some of the attitudinal research.

Upland Farmers

In their work on the Orton Fells (Cumbria) and the Bakewell area (Derbyshire) Lobley *et al.* (2005) found that the average age of hill farmers was 55, the same as the average age for farmers on Exmoor (Lobley *et al.*, 2004) and Dartmoor (Turner *et al.*, 2001). The Northumberland National Park Farm Survey does not state an average age but notes that the age profile of the full time agricultural workforce has remained remarkably consistent compared to the 1972/3 survey (NNPA, 2000). There is no statistical information on the sex or ethnicity of farmers (or the farm workforce) in any of the three farm survey reports.

The upland farmers in Lobley *et al.* (2005) were more likely to have left school without any qualifications (50% compared to 11% for lowland farmers) but on Exmoor (Lobley *et al.*, 2004b) 52% had post compulsory education and 28% had a higher education qualification. Lobley *et al.* (2005, p.8) also found that upland farmers were less likely to have a higher educational qualification (4% compared to 23% for lowland farmers). Some further interesting data on upland farmers related to their residential mobility with 69% being born in the same location as they live in now or within 10 miles of that location (p.10). Furthermore, 73% of upland farms were purely family run farms employing no non-family labour (p.18).

In terms of attitudes and values of hill farmers as a social group a common theme in the literature is the importance that they attach to production, to the desire to make up the bulk of their living from conventional farming (Burton *et al.*, 2005; Sharpley and Vass, 2006). In this respect hill farmers are like their counterparts in lowland Britain and elsewhere in Europe (Burton, 2004; Burton *et al.*, 2008; Burton and Wilson, 2006). The significance of being involved in production to farmer identity and social status within the farming community is important to understanding the impacts of change on individuals and groups of farmers. It will impact on the acceptability of policy change and hence on schemes/projects to address and adapt to changing economic and environmental circumstances.

For example, Convery and Dutson (2008) reporting on work with farmers in Ennerdale, Cumbria, the site of a 'rewilding' project argue that farmers in this valley did not want to see an end to traditional farming in the area because it was an important part of their heritage. They relate that while farmers saw their future role as being closely related to environmental management this left them feeling 'unwanted' and 'undervalued'. For policy makers and practitioners this creates a series of dilemmas in designing programmes and projects which seek to bring about change in the uplands. Programmes which do not fundamentally challenge existing agriculture production are liable to secure far greater degrees of buy in or at least acceptability (see also McHenry, 1998; Shucksmith, 1993; Shucksmith and Herrmann, 2002) but this will also limit the boundaries of what is possible and the rate of change and adaptation. Such a brake on the rate of change may of course be a good thing in terms of avoiding major mistakes and ensuring that schemes and policies are more in tune with the local community aspirations. However, as the recent experience of the implementation of the Single Farm Payment shows, major policy changes often necessitate more rapid adaptation to accommodate changes in market conditions and public policy objectives.

Price and Evans (2009 p.5) found there was a common perception that farmers were being marginalised in society in their work with farm families in upland Wales:

> "farm family members found it hard to comprehend what they viewed as a lack of political, and thus economic, support for an activity that was, clearly in their minds, the superior use of rural space. There was a collective feeling of being marginalised, undervalued and misunderstood."

The impacts of the strong identification with production, and its centrality to identity, impacts on the self-perception of other family members. To return to the themes developed above, and discussed again below, it is the farm household or the farm family which is the critical social entity and decision maker rather than the individual (s) who are 'the farmer' (see also, Shucksmith *et al.*, 1989). This is an important point in the design of schemes and policies highlighting the need to involve and target spouses, partners, children, parents etc. and to understand the role of the farm in their ideas about themselves and their place in the community and society more generally. The farming identities of the wider household, as well as the farmer, are also important to processes of change and adaptation and hence to policies for the uplands.

The centrality of production to identity might not change with any rapidity and, as noted above, may act as a brake on the speed of change in the uplands. However, in extreme cases it can ultimately have negative consequences for individuals and families who in some way dissent from this norm or who make the decision to leave farming. In case study research in an area of Devon outside the SDA boundary Reed *et al.* (2002) report that those who had left farming had been subject to verbal abuse on the basis that 'real men farm'. Furthermore, there are reports in the literature that diversified farmers can be

talked about as 'failed' farmers (Burton and Wilson, 2006) and that within farm families income from agriculture is treated as higher status and more important that off farm or non farming income (Reed *et al.*, 2002; Shucksmith and Smith, 1991)[1]. These examples can be argued to stem directly from a strong attachment to production and have the potential to adversely affect health, well being and community cohesion. It is, of course, difficult to tell how prevalent such attitudes are in the uplands and how perceptions will differ between upland areas. In areas that are established tourism destinations the high number of diversified farms may engender quite different perspectives on the role of non agricultural enterprises in family farming.

Research also shows that there can be important differences between farmers on the basis of attitude and self perception[2]. Lobley *et al.* (2005) found that farmers can be classified as belonging to one of two broad groups according to how they are adapting to, and coping with, restructuring: 'active adapters' and 'passive absorbers'. Active adapters are more likely to derive income from non-agricultural sources and are hence less dependent on farming for income. They tend to be (p.25):

- younger;
- have smaller families;
- have most of their family and friends living more than 10 miles from them;
- have a higher level of education, a larger farm size;
- have increased their farm size over recent years, and;
- employ non-family labour

'Active adapters' also continued to play an important community role compared to 'passive absorbers'. However, upland farmers are less likely than lowland farmers to be 'active adapters' (31% compared to 43%). There are three important points to take from this. *First*, there are major differences in attitude between farmers. Although there is clear evidence that farmers think in certain ways about their place in the world and the importance of certain practices we must beware of 'type casting'. *Second*, it may well be the case that farmers in some upland areas are less likely to be active adaptors with consequences for the rate of change and for the design of public policy. However, crucially, in other upland areas the presence of a significant number of 'newcomers' would suggest the statistic quoted in Lobley *et al.* (2005) is particular to the Orton fells and the Bakewell area rather than the general pattern across upland England. *Third*, in consequence any research on the

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[1] The work referenced in this paragraph was undertaken in non upland areas. However, it was judged to still be of utility in understanding some of the negative consequences of 'productivist' attitudes.

[2] Other authors have used different typologies to differentiate between farmers according the values/beliefs and attitudes. Shucksmith (1993) argued that three farmer 'types' could be discerned: accumulators (expansionist and business orientated); conservative (traditional in outlook, conservative in farming technique) and disengagers (decreasing commitment to agriculture, agriculture playing an increasingly residual role). Shucksmith and Herrmann (2002) identify six main groups: hobby farmers; pluriactive successors; struggling monoactives, contented monoactives, potential diversifiers and the agri-businessmen.

social impacts of newcomers to upland farming should investigate the values and perceptions of these groups as well as their characteristics.

The final area of research on upland farmers worthy of note is trends in their social and co-operative activities. Multiple sources suggest that overall there has been a decline in the social life of the hills (Burton *et al.*, 2005; CCRU, 2007; IEEP and GHK Consulting, 2004; Reed *et al.*, 2002, Whitman, 2005). This is understood to be the result of longer farmer working hours alongside a series of perceptions commonly held by farmers about their changing societal role (as illustrated above in the quote from Price and Evans, 2009) and the nature of their relations with other farmers.

Burton *et al.* (2005, p.37) report that certain co-operative activities are decreasing including: participation by farmers in the local community; harvest activities such as hay-making and silage making and shearing. However, other activities appear to be continuing including: working together on the provision of bed and breakfast accommodation; gathering the fells on common grazings and 'neighbouring' (or assisting neighbours). Joint working the on producing and marketing local foods was even on the increase. This research also found that 92% of the farmers interviewed in their study still socialised with other farmers at auction marts. Auction marts are also highlighted as providing an importance social function on Dartmoor (Turner *et al.*, 2002).

Despite the overall message of decline and increasing social isolation, where statistics exist they suggest that a substantial number of farmers are involved in social activities. On Exmoor 60.8% of farmers reported being involved with the local hunt (Lobley *et al.*, 2004b). In Northumberland farmers were asked about social events. 54% mentioned the local show, 26% the hunt and related activities and 21% local dances. However, four fifths still thought that there had been a decline in the local social life. Most of these farmers thought that was because fewer events were organised although others mentioned the drink driving laws, fewer local services and the pressures of work commitments (Northumberland National Park Authority, 2000).

In doctoral research with farmers in Upper Coquetdale, Northumberland Whitman (2005) observed that different groups within the farming community had different perspectives on trends in social and communal life in the valley. There was a widely held belief that the hill farming way of life was changing largely because people were more mobile and had higher expectations of spending more time with their families. Younger men and women were much less nostalgic about this 'way of life', seeing benefits in getting away from some of the constraining aspects of this traditional lifestyle. Older men tended to idealise the past and saw their way of life as being 'eroded'. In contrast many women thought that this traditional lifestyle was simpler, but harsher and more isolated. It was commonly thought that there was no longer a distinct hill farming community even if local shows continued and people helped their neighbours when necessary. Women, however, tended to think that there was still a sense of community and pointed to new activities and relationships outside farming such that "…there is no lamenting a sense of

loss or an anguishing about the fact that hill farming has diminished in importance within the local 'community'. Rather there was an acceptance amongst the women of a wider sense of this 'community' and an embracing of the positives that this brings" (Whitman, 2005, p.188).

Farmers are also seemingly still well represented on formal committees and bodies involved in governance. The IEEP/GHK (2004, p.65) research found that while farmers were withdrawing from many social events they continued to be relatively well represented on school boards and parish councils. This is supported by evidence from other parts of the country with the Exmoor farm survey finding that 24.2% of farmers were involved in the parish council. In a report for the Commission for Rural Communities CCRU (2007) state that while there had been in decline in the influence of landowners in the series of five case study localities (both upland and lowland) researched, this decline was less than they had thought it would be and was highly variable across the localities.

New forms of social interaction are also emerging. There is evidence that farmer networks and discussion groups were being widely used by the farming community in different areas of the country. The Exmoor farm survey (Lobley *et al*., 2004b) found that 27.7% of farmers were in a discussion group while the Dartmoor farm survey also records that discussion groups are popular in this area (Turner *et al*., 2002). Burton *et al*. (2005) found that all the farmers interviewed in their research were members of at least one discussion group and that there were also active sheep breeders associations and a commoners group. Also in Cumbria there is an active farmer network which offers a range of practical services as well social opportunities and advocacy (http://www.cumbriafarmernetwork.co.uk/). This group has also published a short paper based on research done by farming members of the network to produce a 'Future of the Fells Index' (Alderson *et al*., 2006).

While the research suggests that 'traditional' events and activities are often in decline new traditions also seem to be emerging with new associations, networks and discussion groups forming. This raises questions about why these changes are occurring and what new needs or previously unmet needs such groupings are fulfilling. Are they playing the same kinds of roles as traditional activities such as marts, sales and shows or are they a response to new expectations? In the case of organisations such as commoners' associations the link can be made with changing legislation and governance structures highlighting the incidental effects of policy change and development on social life. There are also a series of 'who' questions. Are these organisations engaging newcomers to farming? Are they welcoming non farmers? What is their gender composition? Finally, the example of the research undertaken by the Cumbrian network raises the question of how the public and voluntary organisations with an interest in the uplands can work in partnership with new and well established social groupings and institutions to better understand and monitor social and economic change in the uplands.

The material on the changing nature of farming social and co-operative life also touches on a related issue which has been of increasing concern to

researchers and the voluntary sector in recent years. This issue is farm stress and its most distressing manifestation, farm suicide.

Farm stress and suicide

In their study of the social impacts of agricultural restructuring Lobley *et al*. (2005) asked farmers to supply three words/phrases that describe what its like to be a farmer in 2005. The most common negative responses were: 'hard work' 'depressed/depressing' 'anxious' 'isolated' 'paperwork' 'unwanted/unappreciated' 'frustrating' (p.28). However, 27% of respondents came up with responses that were largely positive: 'challenging' 'rewarding' 'satisfying' 'interesting' and 'enjoyable' (p.31). Hence while it is certainly the case that many farmers report low levels of self worth and increasing isolation (Burton *et al*., 2005; IEEP/GHK, Lobley *et al*., 2005) it is a complex and nuanced picture with other farmers not sharing such a strong sense of despondency.

The literature reviewing process found a number of articles on farm suicide reflecting a growing concern that, as an occupational group, farmers have for many years been more prone to suicide. There has been speculation as to the reasons for this. Psychological research in three (non upland) areas concluded that "farmers may have a tendency to think of suicide at lower reported levels of stress than other members of the population" (Thomas *et al*., 2003 p.185). This means that farmers tend to have a more fatalistic attitude towards their own life and are particularly susceptible to the thought that life is not worth living. While there were no specific statistics or research on the psychology of on upland farmers there is no reason to think that the trends and experiences are different from farmers in general. Hawton *et al*. (1999) mapped the farm suicide rate by county for the period 1981 – 1993. This shows the considerable geographical variation in the rate and that there is no apparent relationship between those counties with high suicide rates and those with a high proportion of land in the SDA.

While there is widespread agreement that farm stress and depression is a growing problem there is limited material which attempts to quantify the problem[3]. Lobley *et al*. (2004) point to some of the difficulties in defining what 'stress' means and how it means different things to different groups of researchers, and in different contexts. While social scientists tend to think that 'emotional disorder' is a predictable outcome of social change, for psychiatrists 'emotional disorder' equates to abnormality. Furthermore, some degree of 'stress' may be a necessary component of driving positive change within communities. The final difficulty concerns the use of the terms 'farming stress' and 'rural stress'. Lobley (2005) notes that the term 'rural stress' is often used in studies that are wholly or mainly about farmers. There is a need

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[3] Literature searching found one research article which provides statistical information on farmer mental health. However, this covers a relatively small case study locality in the Tideswell area of the Peak District (Syson-Nibbs *et al*., 2006). This found that there was a high prevalence of depression among male primary farmers with almost 8% reaching the threshold for clinical depression (p.225).

to study stress in relation to the wider rural population in more detail. This theme is returned to in the next section.

Two contextual factors emerge which are commonly thought to explain why farmers are prone to stress. The first is isolation, the growing necessity of working alone as labour is shed and fewer farm visits by other professionals are made. However, Lobley *et al*. (2004) found that whether isolation was a cause of stress was heavily contested by researchers. They conclude that social isolation, as distinct from physical isolation, is significant to farmer stress. While farmers generally report a growing sense of isolation upland farmers are the most stable in terms of frequency of contact with other farmers. Seventy two percent of Lobley *et al*.'s (2005) upland farmer sample said there had been no change in the frequency of interactions over the last five years (p.36). The second is the all encompassing nature of the farming way of life. Lobley *et al*. (2004) argue that farmers are distinctive from other business people in that they tend to have a strong emotional attachment to key business assets.

In a recent paper published in the Journal of Rural Studies Linda Price and Nick Evans draw on life history interviews with seven farm families in upland Powys to argue that the way that farmers live and work makes their experience of stress distinctive and may help to explain why farm stress is such a problem. Price and Evans (2009) examine the ways in which the structure of family farming, particularly the patriarchal nature of family farming, created distress within these families. They argue that changes in farming policy and the macro-economic context are simply the 'contextual starting point' in understanding the nature and causes of farm stress pointing to the importance of 'four clusters of distress' in explaining why many farming people are experiencing high levels of stress and distress.

The first cluster is 'farming identities' or the ways in which men and women are socialised into a farming way of life with the result that individuals often then find it difficult to think about being anywhere else or doing anything else:

> "Revealing a sense of belonging and the actions it leads individuals to take, such as staying on a farm that is no longer economically viable, is one step towards reinterpreting 'stress'. For example, when retirement is forced individuals may feel no point in continuing to live, so keenly is their sense of personal identity linked to the places and spaces of farming. Suicide may then be understood as a culmination of bundles of distress associated with maintaining the deep-seated and locationally tied roots of a gendered way of life" (p.7)

The second cluster concerns changing farming relations. Here Price and Evans explain how young farm women are increasingly viewed as potential 'gold diggers' able to easily divorce and split farms. They also point to the persistence of gendered divisions of labour on farm and the tendency to try and maintain a sense of the status of farmers and farming in the community.

In trying to maintain this sense of what it is to be a farmer they argue that many farm families essentially continue to accept essentially patriarchal relations[4].

The third cluster is about farming gender roles and the strains that maintaining gendered division of labour place on individuals. They particularly focus on women and the pressures that result from trying to do too much work and juggle multiple work roles. The fourth cluster is 'home' with Price and Evans arguing that women often feel isolated in their roles as farm wives and that men also suffer as a result of only marginal involvement in childcare and domestic responsibilities. In this cluster they also consider the importance of the farmhouse as symbolic presence in the lives of farm families linking them with the lives and expectations of generations past.

In highlighting how maintaining a 'traditional' farming way of life can be a source of stress and distress Price and Evans argue that "Medical outcomes can be interpreted more fully if linked back to the pressures emanating from a way of life that is historically and culturally patriarchal" (p.9). They also argue that this perspective is important for those stress networks who are working to help farmers deal with stress stating that:

> "Although these networks are often instigated with the best of
> intentions, they can become validated as the only source of
> help for farming people. More research is needed to establish
> if they reinforce an increasingly untenable farming way of life
> or offer a credible mechanism for release from it" (p.9).

Finally Price and Evans advocate undertaking more research on those who have rejected the family farming way of life and their reasons for doing so. In the final sub-section we explore further the research on the role of farm women and their experiences of the social impacts of change and restructuring.

The changing (and continuing) role of farm women

The IEEP/GHK (2004) study on the impacts of change in hill farming found that women were increasingly important to farm diversification, pluriactivity and in contributing to household income through off farm work arguing that "this strengthening role of women must be seen as a positive influence in a changing world and on the future sustainability of hill farming" (p.78).

However, other researchers have highlighted the negative consequences of this increasing trend. Lobley *et al.* (2005) noted how women's paid employment was having a series of impacts on farm household relations including exacerbating farmer isolation (p.34). The impacts on children in terms of increasing pressures to spend time working on the farm was also highlighted as a growing trend (p.35). The research concluded that the

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[4] Patriarchy is defined in Johnston *et al.* (2000, p.574) as "a system of social structures and practices through which men dominate, oppress and exploit women".

"personal and social costs of agricultural adjustment are presently largely being internalised within farm families" but that "the long term prospect is for the wider social repercussions of agricultural change to be more widely felt and to be recognised as an important social policy concern" (Lobley *et al.*, 2005, p.vii). The research evidence that exists on upland farm households points to the role of women in particular in this 'internalisation' and gives some insight into the impacts that this is having on farm women themselves.

The findings of a survey of forty six Cumbrian farms reported by Bennett (2004) showed that 60% of farmer's wives in the Northern Fells area of Cumbria had off farm employment. However, on average they were earning just £8,661 per annum. The women were in generally low wage, low skilled jobs many working part time or at a series of part time jobs. All except one of these forty six women continued to do most of the household and domestic work. Bennett (2004) then draws on interview research with sixteen farm women in the Northern Fells of Cumbria who work off farm to examine "why many women, especially those who have entered into waged work, are neither revelling in their new role nor experiencing the erosion of patriarchal structures that affect gender relations" (p.147). She found that many of the women interviewed had extremely time pressured lives as they attempted to juggle paid work with family and farm commitments. Many were highly committed to a farming way of life and effectively took on paid work to keep their family farming. Hence Bennett concludes that the structures of patriarchy around family farming often seem "impossible" to challenge which "partly explains their continued resilience" (p.162). Likewise, Price and Evans (2009) show how in Powys patriarchal relations have remained largely in tact. A far more complex set of consequences and relationships arise out of women's changing role than the IEEP/GHK quote on the 'strengthening role of women' suggests.

The research shows that women's work on and off farm can be a source of difficulty and pressure as well as a source of income. Despite the costs and problems many women continue to play multiple roles because the income that this brings in is pivotal to the survival of the farm. This is backed up by survey research. The Exmoor, Dartmoor and Northumberland farm surveys all showed a very significant degree of reliance on family labour and indicated that a substantial proportion of household income does not come from farming (Lobley *et al.*, 2004; Northumberland National Park Authority, 2000; Turner *et al.*, 2002). A study of the Hatherleigh/Holsworthy area of Devon (outside the SDA boundary) also highlighted the critical role of off farm income earned by women which often enables the survival of the farm household (Reed *et al.*, 2002).

A paradox emerges. Women have always been powerful in the sense that marriage and reproduction have been necessary for the family farm way of life. In some respects the role of women as spouses and partners has become even more important as farm incomes have declined and many have, in practice, subsidised the farm business to keep the family in situ. But at least some of these women seemingly feel trapped in a position where they perceive no option but to carry on and attempt to 'internalise' the impacts of

restructuring. The question has to be posed about how long this can last and what the longer term impacts will be, on the women themselves, on their children and families and on the communities in which they live. Will the ultimate result be higher rates of family breakdown with disastrous consequences for the family farm? Is there evidence that this internalisation is currently resulting in the growing incidence of various social pathologies within farm families?

There are also relationships with and parallels between the changing role of women and their importance to the continuation of upland farming (as we sometimes fondly imagine it) and the critical issues around succession. For existing farm households, as for young people considering their future, the question of whether to farm or not can only be a matter of personal choice. Care is needed to analyse the assumptions and impacts of public policy. The pursuit of the maintenance of the traditional family farm will have profound and long lasting impacts on farm women and children. There is a risk that ill thought through responses could reinforce a sense of being trapped by the weight of ancestral, cultural, social and economic expectations that the uplands will be managed through the institution of the family farm.

Summary for section two

The critical role of marriage and the family in the continuation of family farming in upland England highlights the important role of women in farm businesses. Not only are farm women important sources of free labour, wage earners and domestic and social care givers, their continued commitment to the family farming 'way of life' is often essential to the continuation of the farm business. As Reed *et al.* (2003) argue:

> "marriage is the fulcrum of the project of family farming. Within a new generation to continue the farm then the project is over, the meaning of the farm for many family farmers will have been lost. A successful marriage will see the farm continue, and the aspiration of succession fulfilled, a failed marriage may see the capital of the farm – economic and human removed".

A review on the literature on the structure, dynamics and diversity of upland farming communities points directly to the crucial role of marriage and the family for the reproduction of family farming and hence ultimately for the production of the 'cultural landscapes' of the English uplands. But while as a society we tend to think of this as a quintessentially 'traditional' way of life it may well be the case that the family farm as we know it is a comparatively recent invention. Social and community networks beyond the immediate family could well have been much more significant to the process of adapting to agricultural restructuring in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries than in the present.

Furthermore, the literature largely assumes that upland farms will be family farms[5] and that hence the future of the management of the uplands will be strongly related to trends in family farming. However, only one source provided any statistical indication of the extent of family farming in the uplands. Lobley *et al.* (2004b) found that 67% of the land covered in a survey of Exmoor farmers was farmed by family farms. In investigating the social state of the hills a final set of questions emerge. How prevalent is the 'family farm' in the uplands? What other business models for the management of land are currently in operation? This rather basic topic need more study to better understand potential alternative forms of social and business organisation for the management of the hills.

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[5] There is long running academic debate as to the definition of 'family farm'. See Gray (1998) and Reed *et al.*, 2002.

3. Upland communities

As noted in the introduction there is more research specific to upland farming households than there is on upland communities and other social and occupational groups resident in the uplands. This section has been the harder to write due to the fragmentary nature of the evidence base. This recognised the section draws together the information found on upland communities with some of the relevant literature on rural England to identify the key areas in which more intelligence is needed. The section is split into a series of subheadings. In the first we examine the evidence base on social and demographic data and trends in the uplands. We then turn to the evidence on social diversity and the health and well being of upland communities. The final sub section then address a topic which has been more extensively researched, namely relations between farmers and non-farmers

Social and demographic data

The research commissioned for the Inquiry from Huby *et al.* (2009) is distinctive in that it provides statistical information on the population of the English uplands. Little other data on social and demographic trends in the uplands was found in the literature reviewing process. To summarise the findings of this paper, compared to other rural areas of England, residents of the uplands have recently experienced:

- lower rates of population growth (2001 – 2005)
- higher rates of employment
- more local businesses per head
- fewer employed people travelling more than 10k to work
- fewer working age residents lacking in educational qualifications
- a lower dependency ratio
- lower mean household incomes
- lower proportions of people living in households in receipt of mean tested benefits.
- lower average house prices are (but greater difficulties in obtaining suitable accommodation)
- higher percentages of households spending more than 10% of their income on heating their homes
- fewer reported problems relating to mental health
- less crime

These findings are interesting in that they raise further questions for analysis and research. Why is it, when the employment rate is higher and there are more local businesses per head, that the mean household income is lower? Is there something about the nature of the businesses in the uplands that means that the wages of those running and employed in them are relatively low? Shucksmith (2000, p.18) highlights how many people in rural areas are forced into self-employment as the only alternative to unemployment. Chapman *et al.* (1998) found that in rural Britain 23% of working age people

who are on a low income are self-employed. The relationship between self employment and household income is potentially a very important one in the uplands.

Furthermore, it might be expected that with in migration and, in many upland areas, longer travel distances to urban areas and market towns, that more employed people would travel in excess of 10 kilometres to work than less. Is this because of the high number of local businesses? What does it tell us about the scale and nature of in migration? Is the lower rate of population growth and the lower house price average an artefact of the planning system rather than the demand to live in upland areas? Do the general upland trends on house prices and population growth mask a high degree of differentiation between upland areas? Are there differences in the experience of disadvantage compared to the rest of rural England with particular problems relating to high energy costs and reluctance to come forward and seek help with finance and well being issues? How do the different upland compare to the statistics for the region (s) and counties in which they are located? These are just some of the questions which Huby *et al.*'s study raises.

One of the few other published studies of upland communities was undertaken by Land Use Consultants for the Lake District National Park Authority in 2004. Unfortunately, for the purposes of the Inquiry, this compares social and economic trends in the National Park with the rest of Cumbria rather than rural England. It showed that:

- The Lake District has relatively fewer children and proportionally more people over 60. Nearly 30% of the park population are over 60.
- There are more one person households in the Park.
- The Park population is significantly better qualified than the rest of Cumbria.
- Cumbria ranks 81 out of 149 counties and unitary authorities on the Index of Multiple Deprivation. Overall, the Park is less deprived than the rest of Cumbria.
- Owner occupation is lower in the Park.
- Service accessibility is lower.
- Average incomes are higher.
- The unemployment rate is lower and self employment rate higher.
- The home working rate is double the rest of Cumbria. 25% of residents in the rural parts of the Park work from home. Overall, home working and walking to work account for over 40% of employees in the Park

Another potential source of data on social and demographic trends in specific upland areas are the applications and plans prepared for the LEADER groups in the 2007 – 2013 period. The main problem with this data source is the boundaries of the LEADER areas. While most of the English uplands are covered most of the areas extend beyond the upland boundary to include surrounding/coterminous lowland communities. Although the boundaries are often problematic LEADER documentation may be a useful source for understanding trends and issues apparent in particular areas.

For example, an analysis of The Yorkshire Dales LEADER area Local Development Strategy 2008 – 2013 (The Yorkshire Dales LEADER area, 2008) reveals some interesting facts on the socio-economic condition of the Dales. The LEADER area covers 2973 square miles mainly in the uplands and mainly in the Yorkshire Dales National Park and the Nidderdale AONB. The total population of the area is 62,531. The following is a selection of findings from the socio-economic analysis section:

- The area has lower levels of GVA compared to the surrounding lowlands and towns.
- VAT registrations are higher that the regional average in the Craven, Richmondshire, Hamilton and Harrogate districts.
- In the Craven, Richmondshire and Harrogate districts more than 25% of the self employed and/or business owners are aged 55 or above.
- There are a high proportion of the area's populations with no qualifications. The Western part of Craven and central Richmondshire have less than 18% of people with NVQ level 4 or above.
- In Craven wage rates are amongst the lowest in the region. While rates are higher for Richmondshire, Harrogate and Hamilton they are lower in the more sparse rural areas of these districts.
- There is wide disparity between those on high and those on very low incomes. Richmondshire is particularly extreme.
- 21% of the national park population is elderly (although definition of 'elderly' is not provided)
- Most of the area is in the bottom quintile in the Index of Multiple Deprivation 2007 barriers to housing and services domain.

This edited analysis gives a sense of what the issues are in the Yorkshire Dales area, however, it also highlights the second problem with using the LEADER documentation. The analysis in the documentation is necessarily based on statistics which do not usually 'fit' the LEADER boundary very well. Some data is available only at district level. Other statistics are based on super output areas, parishes, wards and national park boundaries. Nevertheless there is potential to learn something about the issues specific to each different upland area from using LEADER documentation together with local authority publications and national park/AONB management, planning and 'state of' texts.

Social and demographic trends

In this next section we use the trends and characteristics apparent from the data analysis, together with the existing academic and policy literature, in order to analyse in more depth recent social and demographic trends. The academic literature on the uplands suggests that three social trends are becoming increasingly important in shaping upland communities namely: 1) in migration 2) high rates of self-employment and small business formation and, 3) demographic ageing.

The 2008 State of the Countryside report contains a map showing population change 2001 – 2005 (p.15). This shows a highly differentiated pattern of

population change across the uplands with some areas experiencing high levels of growth and others decline. Within particular upland areas there is also a high degree of differentiation apparent. While Huby *et al.* (2009) state that the uplands are experiencing lower rates of population growth it still seems reasonable to assume that the uplands are experiencing similar patterns in terms of internal migration as England's rural areas more generally (see Commission for Rural Communities, 2008, p.19).

The impacts of in migration for rural communities have been much debated. The trend has been argued to be an important factor in house price growth, contributing to housing affordability problems throughout rural England (Affordable Rural Housing Commission, 2006; Taylor, 2008). In addition to national level studies and data sets there also exists a wealth of local level studies and data for the different upland areas which will be helpful in illuminating the differences between them. Such material ranges from in depth case study work like that undertaken by Shucksmith (1981; 1991) in the Lake District National Park to the plethora of housing needs surveys that have been undertaken by communities and organisations interested in particular localities.

With specific reference to the uplands the argument has also been made that in migrants lack some of the cultural and social qualities and characteristics of longer term residents. Convery and Dutson (2006) in an evaluation of a project examining cultural identity in the Cumbrian, North Pennine and Northumberland uplands found that "insider status and local ancestry are important toward the development of a more rooted sense of place" (p.7). They go onto argue that those who live in one place for along time develop a 'strong sense of place' which forms 'part of their identity' (p.17).

However, there is also evidence that upland communities can welcome newcomers for the other qualities and characteristics that they bring. The participants in the Northumberland National Park LMI research are reported as seeing 'commuters' as part of a healthy social mix, of thinking that the countryside should be home to a variety of people of all ages and a mix of different business types (Northumberland National Park, 2001; 2003). This perspective on the contribution of migrants to the social mix of a community raises a series of questions about what different groups bring to the social and cultural life of the uplands and the conceptions of 'sense of place' articulated by those without strong insider status and local ancestry. The economic contribution of recent migrants is also an important consideration in understanding the social mix of the uplands. Research shows that migrants can be important to local business growth and hence to job creation and investment in rural communities (Stockdale, 2006; Bosworth, 2008). Migration trends and the characteristics of the small business economy in the uplands are likely to be very closely linked.

The existing evidence base clearly demonstrates the vital importance of small businesses and self-employment to upland livelihoods (Huby *et al.*, 2009). This raises a set of questions. Why are these trends particularly apparent in the uplands? What is the relationship between wage levels and rates of

business ownership and self employment? Can this be explained by the type of sectors upland residents work in? Or, as an alterative thesis, are lower wage rates explained by the level of business aspiration in upland communities? Is demographic ageing playing an important role in shaping the structures and working practices of upland businesses? It is highly probable that a multitude of factors are at play but more research is needed to investigate livelihood strategies in the uplands and whether there are distinctive trends and characteristics. As a related issue the quality and availability of ICT infrastructure is another important avenue for research on upland communities playing a pivotal role in the rate and nature of economic and social change.

The importance of demographic ageing to upland communities has also been highlighted as a critical trend by researchers (Convery *et al*. 2009, Ward 2006). Ward (2006) points to the projected 47% increase in people aged 50+ in more rural districts by 2028 to argue that more attention needs to be paid to the role of older people as significant resources in rural development. The literature on rural ageing is instructive in developing a fuller understanding of the impacts and dynamics of population change in the uplands (see, for example, Lowe and Speakman, 2006; Murakami *et al.*, 2008) but it would be helpful to have a clearer picture of the extent to which this trend will impact on the different upland areas of England and whether there are any upland specific factors which need to be taken into account in policy making and community action. The literature highlights ageing as a critical trend but it is unclear what the implications are for the future of upland communities.

Diversity

The literature searching process found little material specific to the social diversity of residents in the English uplands. However, again the literature on rural England as whole contains some pertinent material. In 2007 the Commission for Rural Communities published a report on migration from the A8 countries. This provides evidence that there are likely to be substantial numbers of migrants from the accession states in the uplands. The report contains maps of the geographical pattern of WRS registrations for May 2004 to September 2006. The data is collected at the local authority level which may mask important distribution patterns within authority boundaries. Nevertheless is interesting in that it demonstrates that between 2004 and 2006 there were particular concentrations of A8 migrants in Cumbria, West Yorkshire, parts of North Yorkshire and the local authority areas which cover Exmoor, Bodmin moor and parts of Dartmoor[6].

In unpublished work for a masters dissertation Zielinska (2007) reports on work on the social integration of Poles in Cumbria through a placement with Cumbria Multi Cultural Service. This service provided a Commission for Rural Communities good practice case study on migrant worker issues and

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[6] A fuller account of the challenges involved in measuring migration and potential data sources for local level estimation has been prepared by Green et al (2008) for the Local Government Association. The report is available from: http://www.lga.gov.uk/lga/aio/1308026

challenges earlier in 2007 (Commission for Rural Communities, 2007b). Zielinska's research covered fieldwork sites across the county including Windermere and Penrith. She found that most Poles think that the British people they encountered in Cumbria are friendly with many being offered help and general assistance. However, migrants from Poland also reported that they had not really made friends with British people and that there were times when they felt threatened and had been subject to abuse. Such instances of abuse had been widely talked about within the Polish community and were resulting in problems of uncertainty and distrust. Evidence that some A8 migrants experience tension and hostility is also noted in the Commission for Rural Community's 2007 report on A8 migrant workers in rural areas (Commission for Rural Communities, 2007a). There were also important differences in attitude and perception within the Polish community with those who had been in Cumbria longer often seeming to resent newer arrivals and some of the impacts they seemed to have on relations with the wider community. More encouragingly Zielinska found that there were a series of formal and informal groups and organisations aiming to encourage integration. These included Polish community groups, the Churches, Surestart and the Cumbria Multi Cultural Service.

Research has also been conducted on minority ethnic households in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland (de Lima, 2006) which is helpful in articulating the need to focus on the growing social diversity of upland and remote areas. De Lima's research found that there was a problem in accessing robust statistical data with only census data providing any reliable indications. Census analysis (from 2001) showed that there is relatively small number of people from ethnic minorities but, as in the rest of Scotland, there was an increase in the ethnic minority share of the population between 1991 and 2001. De Lima (2006, p. 81) goes on to argue that "rural minority ethnic households have tended to be invisible to the planners and deliverers of services at a local level, and yet, paradoxically, they are highly visible in the local communities in which they live". Although difficult to persuade rural agencies and communities to acknowledge, let alone address, racism and racial discrimination she found that ethnic minority populations experience both the same sort of issues as the general rural population and the kind of problems that ethnic minority groups in urban areas have in accessing services. There is a clear research gap on social diversity and upland communities particularly with regard to the race, ethnicity, nationality and cultural heritage.

While social diversity has been neglected with reference to resident communities there is also growing interest, particularly amongst national park authorities, in which social groups are visiting the countryside. Studies show a relative lack of social diversity in many national park visitor profiles. For example, Breakell (2002) writing as the North York Moors National Park Tourism officer explains that by the 1990s there was a 'widening social gulf' between those visited the national park and those who did not. Research in 1994 found that visitors tended to come from particular social backgrounds "the top group were aged over 45, read The Telegraph, Financial Times or Daily Mail. Their occupations were professional, managerial, self-employed

or retirees and they have incomes of over £30,000". Breakell then discusses the experience of Heartbeat tourism in the village of Goathland. He argues that while this brought in more visitors from a much wider range of social groups such new visitors are often only given a 'muted welcome' and 'sometimes labelled as the 'wrong sort' of visitor". A further study by Mordue (2001) confirms that many of the residents of Goathland have struggled to come to terms with the scale and nature of tourism in the village. He found that while the majority of the residents had moved to the village in recent years they were very opposed to kind of changes that 'Heartbeat' tourism was bringing. Goathland is an extreme example but perhaps reflects a common concern amongst those who live in the uplands that visitors are of the 'right sort' and are 'appropriate' to the upland environment (Northumberland National Park Authority, 2003).

More positively Askins (2006) reports on research in the North York Moors and Peak District on the experience of visitors from ethnic minority groups visiting the national parks. She found that while individuals from ethnic minority communities did visit both the Peak District and North York Moors National Park that they tended to visit in large groups and to go to places on the periphery of the parks. However, focus group feedback from an ethnic minority women's group in Middlesbrough demonstrated the perception that people in the Park were friendly.

Health and well being

In 2009 the Commission for Rural Communities summarised the general situation with regards to the health of rural dwellers (Commission for Rural Communities, 2009). This stated that while most rural residents have better physical and mental health the poorest and most disadvantaged 'experience consistently lower levels of physical and mental health'. In 2009 the mental health charity Mind published a report on rural stress which looked at the wider rural population as well as farmers (Elder and Jones, 2009). This found that the following groups all warranted attention in rural communities because they tended to be excluded: farmers and farm workers, black and minority ethnic populations, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender populations, women with children, children and young people, older people, refugee and asylum seekers, travellers and migrant workers. Middleton *et al.* (2003) also suggest that there is a growing problem of suicide in the most remote rural areas. Based on statistics for 1981 to 1998 they conclude that: "Over the last 18 years, the most unfavourable trends in suicide in 15 - 44 year olds living in England and Wales generally occurred in areas remote from the main centres of population" and that it amongst women that some of the most dramatic increases in the suicide rate are occurring. Some important trends with regard to rural health and well being are now documented but there continues to be a dearth of analysis on the differences between localities and whether there are particular, distinctive upland patterns.

In 1997 Sue Shaw conducted research on stress in the Upper Teesdale area of County Durham to inform the development of the Upper Teesdale Agricultural Support Service (UTASS). This study investigated a wide range

of factors which caused stress in the dale identifying ten separate sources of stress. Shaw also found that stress was felt throughout the community, in nearly every age and occupational group. However, farmers aged 24 – 65, the unemployed and young mothers experienced particularly high degrees of social isolation. The report concludes with a series of recommendations which have guided the subsequent development of UTASS. This service, and the history of its formation, is important to developing understanding of the kinds of health services most suitable for the needs of upland communities. It is also important to understanding the benefits and challenges involved in developing community based services through local initiative.

There is now growing body of research which is addressing the relative lack of knowledge on rural mental health identified by Lobley (2005). It is, however, important that such research analyses differences between geographical localities, as well as between the different social groups in the countryside, to build a more nuanced picture on the scale and nature of the issue.

Relations between farmers and non-farmers in the uplands

Relations between farmers and non farmers in the uplands is an area that has received considerable attention in recent years. The then Countryside and Community Research Unit conducted research on five case study localities, three of which could be considered 'upland' for the Commission for Rural Communities (CCRU, 2007). They found that the most significant divisions within communities were between newcomers and more established residents rather than farmers and non farmers. Drawing on research on the impacts of hill farming in England IEEP and GHK Consulting (2004, p.33) argue that "there is little conclusive evidence to support the view that hill farmers make more of a contribution to the social aspects of rural life than other residents, although this is a view that is strongly held by some rural dwellers". The report argues that farming and farmers continue to be important to cultural identity in the areas they studied and that newcomers often value and want to support traditional attributes. The research also found that farmers often feel threatened by social change especially the migration of new types of people to the uplands. Despite this they also found that agricultural shows and markets provided an interface between farming families and the wider community. Lobley (2005) also challenges the perception that incomers are unsympathetic to farmers stating "the perception that non-farming rural dwellers, particularly 'incomers' are somehow anti-farming and therefore will not or cannot provide a social support function is not supported by research evidence".

Like the IEEP/GHK study Lobley *et al*. (2005) found that non farmers were playing an increasingly active role in their case study communities. They found evidence that non-farmers and newcomers were 'filling the gaps' in terms of fulfilling roles previously played by farmers. However, non-farmers were more likely to think that farmers did play an economically and socially important role in the community than farmers themselves did perhaps again signalling that non-farmers attach a cultural importance to the farming community. Interestingly, when asked to expand on the role that farmers

played in the community most of the non-farmers could not respond in any depth (p.vi – vii).

The reports of research undertaken for the Northumberland National Park Land Management Initiative give a slightly different perspective on attitudes to the farming community. The analysis of focus groups conducted with people living in or near to the national park showed that there was a feeling that some of the money spent on supporting the farming industry should be spent on supporting the wider rural economy. In these focus groups farmers were seen as continuing to occupy a privileged position but that many farmers negative attitude to change was a potential barrier to the development of a more diversified rural economy. The participants in these focus groups stressed the need to have a diversity of different people working in a variety of local businesses and to retain young people in the area.

Summary for section three

Huby *et al.*'s paper to the Inquiry provides a vital starting point in understanding how the uplands are distinctive in comparison to the rest of rural England. The trends reported raise a series of questions which need further examination. Such work needs to be alive to the likelihood of significant differences between upland areas. In particular, three significant trends are increasingly shaping the development of upland societies. Migration, the small business economy and ageing are interlinked trends all of which are subject to extensive research in the context of 'rural' but which receive limited attention in terms of the implications for the future of the uplands. The marked tendency to rely on self and small business employment in the uplands deserves particular attention due to the significance in structuring social and economic relationships both within upland households and the wider community.

It will also be increasingly important to better understand the social diversity of upland areas. We have focused on the growing presence of new nationalities and new minority ethnic groups but could also have considered the range of other ways in which society as a whole is becoming more diverse. These trends will have repercussions for who lives, works and visits in the hills. Finally recent years have seen a growing concern for the health and well being of rural communities. Research would suggest that the needs of upland residents are distinctive in some important respects and that more conventional means of service delivery are underutilised by key groups. This creates opportunities to develop an evidence base on the experience of developing alternative service delivery arrangements as well on the substantive issue of health and well being.

4. Drivers of Social Change

By way of conclusion this final section provides a summary of the key drivers of social change in the uplands. Based on the literature review we argue that these are:

- Self-employment and small business activity as important sources of household income
- Changes in the profitability of farming and the economic activities of land based businesses
- The emerging implications of demographic ageing
- Increasing social diversity in terms of employment type, race/ethnicity/nationality, culture and social identity
- Public policy and community based initiative in the provision of services/rural proofing

The rate and scale of change in the different upland areas will be heavily influenced by the economic opportunities available to residents. Currently **self-employment and small business activity** are important sources of household income in the uplands and seem likely to continue to be critically important to the upland economy and the social composition of the uplands.

Who will live in the uplands of the future will also be determined by decision making on how the uplands are utilised and the kinds of economic development policies pursued. Hence **changes in the profitability of farming,** linked with the ongoing reform of the CAP, will be highly influential in determining the future of current farming enterprise. As policy on future land use develops in the context of climate change adaptation and mitigation alternative economic uses of the hills will also develop. The future of tourism and recreation use is also a further critical determinant of economic and social opportunity in the uplands.

Two important demographic trends are already impacting on the social composition of the uplands and are likely to continue to shape upland communities. The **emerging implications of demographic ageing** and **increasing social diversity in terms of employment type, race and ethnicity, culture and social identity** will be increasingly significant. For both these trends there will be important variations in terms of the scale and rate of change between different upland areas.

The last driver relates directly to decision making and the role that this plays in shaping the costs and benefits of living in upland England. **Public policy** will play an important role in determining rights and responsibilities with regard to **access to key services**. This highlights the ongoing importance of rural proofing to ensure that as policy frameworks shift the consequences for the sustainability of upland settlements are considered. **Community based initiative** to provide services and advocacy will also be crucial in shaping upland futures potentially offering responsive alternatives to public sector schemes and policies.

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