Research Report
to
DEFRA

The Demography of Rural Areas:

a literature review

Countryside and Community Research Unit

University of Gloucestershire

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This report has been prepared for DEFRA by a research team from the CCRU, University of Gloucestershire in accordance with the Tender and subsequent contract.

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Introduction

Research aims and objectives

The stated goal of this research is to provide information to help DEFRA understand better the policy challenges posed by the changing population characteristics in English rural areas.

In order to achieve this, the contracted research team at the University of Gloucestershire has undertaken a wide-ranging literature review that has assessed the following questions:

a. What are the drivers of current population trends ?
   Where employment is the driver, what kind of jobs are involved ?
   What are the personal characteristics and motivations of those moving into and out of rural areas ?
   What factors do they take into account in their location decision ?

b. What are the implications for government interventions in rural areas of (a) existing demographics and
   (b) the currently identifiable trends ?

c. What is the geographical variation in these factors among rural areas?

d. What areas of research would be useful to inform future policy developments in this area?

These individual research questions have been 're-packaged' into the current report structure, reflecting both the thematic orientation of the literature reviewed and the overall argumentation of the report.

Methodology

The time scale and the nature of the research has necessitated a concise, highly focused and targeted methodology whose aim has been to draw out the maximum amount of information from a wide range of existing written sources in a clear, annotated, selective and easily exploitable format.

As such, our methodological approach has included:

- a rapid initial assessment of the range of information sources available for the research and the varying levels of spatial and demographic detail they offer;

- the identification, organisation and cross-referencing of the information available into geographical, demographic and thematic categories relevant to the stated research objectives

- a classification of literature sources by importance

- the preparation of thematic dossiers responding to the four broad sets of questions outlined in the Schedule (drivers and decision processes; demographic trends; geographical variations; research implications)

- the updating of material and the identification of future areas where additional data is likely to be forthcoming in the near future.

- the submission of the interim and final reports and the presentation of the results.

The material reviewed by the research team has come from a wide range of sources. Some was already held by the applicants. However, additional literature has been collected from university collections, from university and consultancy research teams having produced material judged to be relevant to the current study, from bibliographic data bases, from our own extensive network of rural research contacts both within the UK and outside, from DEFRA and in consultation with the Rural Statistics Unit, from various government departments including the Countryside Agency, from international bodies such as the OECD and the EU and from voluntary sector bodies. Hence we have consulted and collected an extensive range of documents from statistical series and commentaries, academic research papers based upon quantitative and qualitative research on rural demographic change and migration and policy papers and documents. In addition, we have consulted with academic researchers working in the field and, where appropriate, have sought and consulted foreign studies of rural population dynamics and migration patters (particularly from France, Canada and the US) with a view to providing, where relevant, supportive evidence of trends, patterns and drivers observed in England. To date, our data base of references, papers, articles and reports numbers over 100 documents

Increasingly, refined internet searches are providing an innovative and effective way of identifying material and this has been employed by the research team. Care has been taken to assess degrees of bias and imperfection in the material investigated and reference to research concerns in these areas will be made in the submitted text.

For city-dwellers, the countryside is a repository of longing and illusion; it is a place of nourishment, innocence and ancient wisdom; it is the garden from which we have been expelled; it is more wholesome, more real than buildings and streets"
(Ian McEwen, 1998, p. vii).

"When one is in the town one amuses oneself
When one is in the country, one amuses other people.
It is excessively boring"
(Oscar Wilde, 1899).

1. APPROACHING THE ANALYSIS OF RURAL POPULATION CHANGE

This first chapter of the report identifies and discusses a number of conceptual issues related to the analysis of rural population change. It is divided into two sections.

In the first, we explore three contexts for the analysis of rural population change. We argue that the particular status of rural England creates a highly specific context for the analysis of population change and, most importantly, for urban-rural population shifts. We also explore the growing definition and characterisation of rurality as an essentially residential category and the implications this has for demographic research. Finally, we identify the ineluctable, though contestable, dominance of counter-urbanisation as a persistent analytical model for both conceptualising and analysing rural population change and identify the emergence of alternative approaches to the understanding of rural demography.

In the second section of this chapter, we provide a brief overview of what we see as the principal methodological trends in rural population studies. Here, we identify four broad categories: the broad quantitative analysis of patterns of population growth, decline and migration; more behavioural studies of locational preference and reasons for population movement; studies of rural community change and; finally, more recent biographical research.

1.1. Rural England: a research context

1.1.1. A 'landscape with figures': the paradox of rural population dynamics.

Rural England is characterised by a peculiar demographic balancing act: too many people and the countryside is held to have lost its charm, its villages become small towns, its sense of community disappears, it is no longer what it was; too few people and it suffers the ignominy of service withdrawal and decline, isolation and gradual

abandonment. Somewhere between the two lies a happy medium, though even this is not uncontested. For some, the rural population is already too large and should be reduced. For others, it should be maintained as it is but should grow no more, the unstoppable demand for more dwelling units been met by that longstanding panacea of rural planners and amenity societies alike, urban brownfield sites (Gummer, 1998). For others still, there is still capacity for growth, as long as it is carefully placed and targeted. Of course, these often strongly held opinions are highly dependent upon the individual rural localities concerned. Furthermore, they are inextricably linked to the reasons these opinion holders have for being, themselves, in the countryside.

As a result, perceptions of rural demographics and of the dynamics of rural population change are deeply rooted in, as well as being conditioned by, cultural and social factors, attitudes and preferences. The rural population, its size and its evolution is perhaps less an objective and normative set of numbers, trends and forecasts; it is fundamentally part of the symbolism and defining characteristics of the English countryside. Put another way, population, its scale and its social composition are critical components of the countryside ideal. A recent report by the Council for the Protection of England summed up not only this particular vision but also what is widely believed to constitute the principal threat to it:

> "This report has been concerned with what many people consider to be the single most important threat facing rural England - the inward movement of people from the country's main conurbations and the links to urban decline.... The traditional countryside has been the main casualty [of a long term trend towards counter-urbanisation] with green fields being built over, with the character of many towns and villages being altered by new housing estates and infilling, with house prices rising and traffic congestion increasing" (CPRE, 1998).

Crucially, and what might seem paradoxically to some, rural England is not the boundless spatial resource for demographic growth that non-urban space is often seen as in other countries. Ever since that fundamental about-turn that defined modernism, when urbanisation and industrialisation led to the massive expansion of our cities and the demographic (and political) decline of our countryside, rural Britain has taken on a new mantle – that of a protected antidote to the town, its population densities and its way of life. This has been exemplified in the policy rationale that has dominated British planning arguably since the 1930s, and continues to strongly influence strategic spatial policy making, namely that of urban containment (Hall et al. 1973). From the early planning legislation of the 1930s to today, the British development control system operates an overall presumption against growth in the countryside except for specifically identified allocation sites. Nonetheless, although professional and political opinion favours accommodating housing growth in cities, where the release of land is least controversial, the strongest demand for housing is in the very opposite types of locations, where the pressure not to build is at its most intense (Breheny, 1999).

For these reason, rural demographers have had to tread very carefully. The movement of people from the towns into the countryside, the dominant migratory trend of the last 30 years (see below), is not universally seen as a benign force bringing improved quality of life to a greater number of people and the de-congestion of urban

metropolis. It is seen above all, and particularly by the existing rural population, as a threat to a cherished, and largely mythical, rural way of life, to the landscapes and the communities of the countryside. Nevertheless, while this way of life is, to a large degree, founded upon its very immutability, the English rural population is a dynamic and fast changing one, exhibiting high rates of turnover.

1.1.2. "Where would you live ?" The countryside as a preferred location

A study of attitudes towards the countryside undertaken by the Countryside Commission in 1995, and based upon 1018 interviews across urban and rural Britain (Countryside Commission, 1997), sought to identify people's preferred residential location. The results (see Table 1.1) are perhaps unsurprising yet highly significant.

Table 1.1 Current residence and preferred residential location in England

Preferred location	Current location			
	Inner city %	Suburb %	Town %	Country %
Inner city	21	2	1	0
Suburb	18	47	13	7
Town	10	8	47	4
Countryside/Village	51	43	39	89

Source : Countryside Commission, 1997

From the Table, we observe that country dwellers are most happy with their residential lot (89% preferring to live in the countryside than anywhere else). Inner City dwellers are least happy: only 21% see the inner city as a preferred location while 51% would rather live in the countryside. Between these two extremes, suburban and town residents are more evenly divided between those that are content with their residential location and those that would prefer to move into rural areas. Across all four categories, the countryside emerges clearly as the preferred location of the majority of respondents, though it must be remembered that preference and attainability are very different things.

Coupled with this unequivocal expression of residential preference is the reality of the shifting vocation of English rural space. Increasingly, rurality is becoming defined a residential category. As the relative importance of primary production declines as a source of wealth and employment, so other functions and vocations of rural space have come to the fore. First and foremost amongst these has been the residential environment and the various services that accompany it. The countryside has become for an increasing proportion of the population, a chosen place to live - the result of a lifestyle choice driven by house price differentials, residential amenity, environmental quality and housing size rather than the traditional urban location necessities of proximity to work, shops, schools and services. As more and more people live in the countryside and work, either in the countryside or in the town, the relationship between work and home changes and with it the relationship between urban and rural spaces. Furthermore, as choice becomes a growing element in residential location, so

lack of choice emerges a key determinant of social differentiation and ultimately marginalisation.

1.1.3. 'Counter-urbanisation' as a hegemonic but problematic analytical device

Rural demography in England is currently defined by two over-arching trends. On the one hand, natural change (births and deaths) for the rural areas of England as a whole (defined as rural districts) is negative. Between 1991 and 2001, the number of deaths exceeded the number of births in rural districts by 18, 600. On the other hand, in-migration from urban England has become the principal demographic trend within rural Britain. Between 1991 and 2001, some 839, 400 people moved into rural areas. At one level these are crude statistics but they nevertheless provide the broad context within which more subtle forces, dynamics and tendencies operate. Left to its own, the English rural population is not sustaining itself. In-migration, however, is going far beyond the replacement of negative natural change.

Given the importance of urban-rural migration in compensating negative natural change, in expanding the rural population of England and, as we demonstrate below, in effecting wide-scale social and economic recomposition of rural communities and areas, it is unsurprising that studies of urban to rural migration have come to dominate the various disciplines associated with the study of rural demographic change. Fundamental to such studies has been the concept of counterurbanisation which has, in Spencer's words "captured the imagination of geographers, economists and planners alike" (Spencer, 1995, p. 153).

As an international phenomenon (Berry, 1976; Fielding, 1982) a defining national trend (Champion, 1989; Cross, 1990), a debate (Champion 1998), a model (Boyle, 1995), a process (Buller and Hoggart, 1994), a consequence of 'darker' forces of class relations and conflicts (Fielding, 1998), an expression of consumer choice, a rejection of the urban way of life, a declared preference for rural living, an investment strategy and so on (see below), counter-urbanisation has become hegemonic both as explanation and as description. The reasons for this have been clearly identified by a vast range of authors and researchers, and in England most notably by Tony Champion and Tony Fielding in a wide-ranging series of publications stretching over two decades. Writing together in 1992, they identify two key principal population trends that underlie and define patterns and processes of counterurbanisation:

first;

> "The fact is that the nature of internal migration in countries such as Britain has changed markedly in the post 1950 period and not least in the past 20 years. We may still retain an image of the typical internal migrant as being the unemployed working class youngster moving from a rural or old industrial area in peripheral Britain to one of the booming industrial cities in the West Midlands or the South East… Increasingly, over the recent period it has been those in secure 'middle class' professional and managerial jobs, together with those who have a strong expectation of entering such jobs… who have come to represent typical inter-regional migrants" (Champion and Fielding, 1992, p. 2);

second;

> "The spatial patters of migration… are also radically different from those of three or four decades ago… the South East region of England has been a net loser by inter-regional migration for all but a few years during the last quarter of a century…The previous pattern of internal migration produced large suburban additions to our principal cities… whereas more recent flows have added small estates of owner occupied detached houses to small- and medium sized free-standing towns and have resulted in a sudden up-grading of rural property as villages have been 'invaded' by middle-class gentrifiers" (Champion and Fielding, 1992, p. 2)

Drawing upon the oft-quoted nineteenth century cartographer, Ravenstein, whose 'laws of migration' included the assertion that 'each current of migration produces a compensating counter current', counterurbanisation takes its name and its rationale from the observation, first made in the United States, that flows of population from metropolitan to non-metropolitan areas had become, in the 1970s, larger than the traditional flows from non-metropolitan to metropolitan areas. In short, urbanisation and the hitherto prevailing logic of population concentration was yielding to a 'counter' force of migration-led population movement away from the major urban centres.

In this brief overview, we do not wish to examine the power or the durability of the counterurbanisation argument, not do we seek to elucidate all the different meanings and interpretations that have been applied to the term and that have sought to distinguish it from other observed trends of population deconcentration, decentralisation, suburbanisation and so on (for such an examination, see key texts such as Champion, 1989; Cross, 1990; Fielding, 1982 and also Halliday and Coombes, 1996). We retain simply the 'definition' forwarded by Champion, in numerous works, that counterurbanisation is an inversion of the traditionally positive relationship between net migration and settlement size. The next section of this report presents evidence of existing 'counterurbanisation' trends as they apply to rural England. Our concern here in this chapter is to critically assess the term in terms of its validity for rural demographic analysis.

A number of points can be made. First, the expression 'counterurbanisation' carries with it an implicit sense of opposition. It operates 'counter' to forces and patterns of urbanisation. However, evidence not only from Britain shows unequivocally that vertical counterurbanisation flows from metropolitan centres to rural areas co-exist not only with vertical flows from rural areas to urban centres but also with horizontal flows between and within both metropolitan centres and rural areas. Counterurbanisation as a process is an oversimplification as many of its principal proponents now acknowledge. Moreover the process of urbanisation is qualitatively and quantitatively different from the process of counterurbanisation. While the former was driven by forces of concentration (of resources, labour, capital and so on) and was largely spontaneous, counterurbanisation has not been driven simply by resource, labour, capital deconcentration. Neither has it been unhindered by regulatory processes. Counterurbanisation is not a 'natural' flow. It is a governed flow, particularly in England where housing allocations and planning rules channel and direct population movements.

Second, as Champion (1998) has pointed out, studies of counterurbanisation suffer from a confusion of pattern and process. While an overall pattern of urban to rural migration is discernable and distinguishable from previous patterns of urban concentration, this does not, in itself, reveal a distinct, or a countervailing (see above) process.

Third, the ubiquity and, initially at least, uncontested application of the counterurbanisation model has obfuscated other migration processes affecting rural areas. By creating a series of well endorsed stereotypes, notably that of the middle class family moving into rural villages bringing renewed demographic dynamism to otherwise declining rural communities and infrastructure (Bolton and Chalkley, 1989, see Table 1.2 below), counterurbanisation has largely failed to account for 'opposing' or non counter-urbanising trends, such as rural out-migration, intra-rural migration and population replacement.

Table 1.2. Stereotypes of counterurbanisation

- The elderly spending their twilight years in a quiet rural setting
- Long-distance commuters combining a rural home with an urban workplace
- People returning to where they were brought up
- Refugees from the inner city, escaping its grime and crime
- Unconventional, anti-materialist commune members
- Information technology wizards, running high-technology businesses from remote homes
- Company managers brought in to run businesses relocated to areas of cheap and non-militant labour
- Urban unemployed who would rather live in the countryside than in the city

Source: after Bolton and Chalkley, 1989, page 249

Finally, counterurbanisation remains, despite the rhetoric of pro-rural migration drivers (Halfacree, 1994), rooted in an urbano-centrism that presents urbanisation as the norm and counterurbanisation as a 'weird interregnum' and far from benign force. As such, and despite an increasing body of evidence suggesting both that a rural settlement location is the preferred destination of the majority (see above) and that specifically pro-rural 'pull factors' are as important, if not more important than anti-urban 'push factors (and indeed, when analysed, give a different picture of the counterurbanisation process, Halliday and Coombes, 1985), counterurbanisation as explanation will only ever deliver a partial understanding of the changing demography of specifically rural Britain.

1.2. An evolving research agenda

That having been said, interest in the population turnaround and in patterns of counterurbanisation has undoubtedly contributed to the resurgence of British rural studies in the 1980s and 1990s. Urban-rural migration trends have not only led to the

significant expansion of rural population, but they have also stimulated a whole set of new rural research agendas focused both upon those who move into rural areas, including their motivations, values, behaviour and social and economic trajectories, and upon those who have remained, including their responses to the socio-economic and value changes brought upon rural life. Many of the now commonplace definitional categories of the contemporary rural population (incomers, newcomers and immigrants on the one hand, locals and traditional residents on the other, as well as the attitudinal, class and status characteristics attributed to each) and rural settlements (dormitory village, commuter village…see for example, Pahl, 1965) derive from a research dynamic that has been prompted primarily by the urban-rural migration flows.

Figure 1.2 presents, in admittedly schematic form, the evolving agenda of rural population studies over the last 20 years. It is our contention, that the principal driver for this contemporary flourishing of rural studies, has been the demographic turnaround, and its social, spatial and economic effects (and causes). Without wishing to be overtly demographically deterministic, interest in the rural class structure and the political economy of rural areas, that so characterised English rural studies during that period (Lowe and Buller, 1990; Cloke, 1985a; 1985b; Cloke and Moseley 1990) was largely prompted by the fact that counterurbanisation brought a new vocal, dynamic and ideologically relatively coherent middle class population into the countryside.

Research methodologies have also evolved in response to this shifting and intensifying rural studies agenda. We can identify four principal methodological and conceptual thrusts to contemporary rural population studies:

- The quantitative approach to migration studies based most commonly upon census returns, longitudinal data, housing association and building society data sets, medical data and so on. These various data sets have been used extensively by the majority of researchers in the field (for example, Champion 1989; Boyle, 1994; Hoggart, 2000)

- A second approach, based largely upon questionnaire and survey data sets, has been more behavioural (and on occasion, structuralist) and is commonly applied to distinguish the processes at work that drive and explain migration from the patterns of population change (for example, Halfacree 1994, Harper, 1991).

- A third approach, drawing heavily, in the early days at least, upon the British community studies tradition, has investigated, amongst other things, the effects of population change upon rural communities and, most notably, the effects of class recomposition (Bell, 1994; Cloke and Thrift, 1987; Murdoch and Marsden, 1994; Phillips, 1993).

- A final, and perhaps more recent approach, has been the neo-humanist approach, for which new methodologies have been sought, notably life-histories and a biographical techniques that seek to embed migration experiences in cultural and individual referentials (Halfacree and Boyle, 1993; Boyle and Halfacree, 1998).

Figure 1.2. The Severn Ages of contemporary rural population studies

Analysing a new demographic trend The population turnaround and counterurbanisation of the 1970s led to a profusion of studies of the pattern and later the process associated with this phenomenon: its reach, its amplitude, its periodicity, its originality with respect to deconcentration and decentralisation (Champion 1989; Fielding, 1984).
A new political economy of space The urban-rural population shift coupled with changes in the geography and spatial organisation of economic activities led to a new spatial political economy of which demographic trends were one component part. Counterurbanisation, and the socio-economic consequences of it, becomes an indicator of rural performance and differentiation (Fielding, 1982)
Rural social change Critically, the influx of new people, new social and occupational classes into rural areas heralded the development of a new rural research agenda focusing upon the social restructuring and recomposition of rural areas, with the notion of the countryside as a 'middle class territory' coming to the fore. Birth of rural 'class analysis' (Cloke et al.1998, Phillips 1993, Murdoch and Marsden 1994)
Neo-rurality and the rural idyll Coupled with investigations of the new social composition of rural areas and the behaviour, attitudes and values of newcomers (and their difference from 'locals') has been a set of studies demonstrating how new incoming populations have pro-actively invested in rural culture and the ideology of rural idyll and rural preservation to reinforce their own position and values, leading, on occasion, to conflicting representations (Halfacree, 1994)
Rural Exclusion Growing out of the above, has been a growing sense of how social recomposition is having the effect of excluding or of amplifying the existing exclusion of certain people/groups within rural areas (Shucksmith, 1991; Cloke et al., 1995a)
Heterogeneous ruralities Twenty years of research on urban-rural, rural-urban and intra-rural population moves have enabled a much more refined analysis of the varied rural population and the social, economic, gender, racial, lifestyle, life-cycle, class characteristics and differences of rural people, their motivations, behaviour, attitudes and values (Champion and Watkins, 1991; Boyle and Halfacree, 1998)
Post-modern rural population studies Most recently, drawing upon post-modern analysis there has emerged a growing corpus of studies reassessing notions of community and identity within a rural setting in the light of the changing composition of the rural population (Halfacree, 1997)

Whatever the approach taken, the ideological stance adopted or the particular disciplinary angle employed for population studies, the overarching dynamics of English rural population change are apparent and three fold:

- first, the central importance of urban to rural migration, as a contributor to rural demographic expansion, as a compensatory movement to rural out-migration and natural decline and, critically, as a contributor to rural social change;

- second, the fundamental driving role of economic restructuring in driving population movements (intra-rural as well as urban-rural) and affecting the socio-economic make-up of rural spaces and places and;

- third, the social recomposition of rural communities (contingent upon the other two) and the various processes of class (and thereby socio-spatial) restructuring, differentiation, entrenchment and contestation that have resulted.

In the following three sections of this report, we shall examine the literature pertaining to each of these key and defining dynamics of rural population change. Chapter 2 considers the first by looking at the nature of demographic movements between town and country and within rural areas. Chapter 3 addresses the various drivers of these different migratory trends while Chapter 4 focuses upon the changing nature and characteristics of the English rural population and the research that this has given rise to.

These chapters are then followed, first by a summary of policy implications and, second, by an assessment of future research needs.

2. Dynamics and spatial patterns of population change

This chapter identifies the principal patterns and trends of rural population change as identified in the research literature. For the present, it is primarily concerned with describing and explaining patters and variations rather than analysing causes and drivers (subjects which will be addressed in subsequent chapters of the current report). It has been subdivided into two sections, each corresponding to a particular spatial scale, the national and the regional and the local.

2.1. National and regional trends

2.1.1. Urban - rural

For over thirty years, researchers, from academia, private consultancies and the public sector have revealed, tracked, confirmed and re-confirmed the overall demographic growth of rural England. The last three intercensal periods (71-81, 81-91 and 91-01) have all displayed this overall national trend and have revealed both its growing amplitude and its deeper penetration into the more remoter rural areas of the country.

Table 2.1. % growth rates of rural Local Labour Market Areas by intercensal period

	% Growth rates of rural LLMAs
1951 - 1961	-0.5
1961 - 1971	+5.8
1971 - 1981	+9.4

Source: Champion, 1989

Table 2.2. Annual growth rates per 1000 population by LLMA category, 1984-1987

	Annual growth rates per 1000 people 1984-1987
England and Wales	3
Resorts	13
Metropolitan areas	-3
Rural LLMAs	11

Source: Champion 1989

Studies by Champion (1981; 1989; 1992), Fielding (1982), Boyle (1994), Coombes and Charlton, (1992), Rees and Stillwell, (1984) and Stillwell et al. (1992), as well as various government statistics series, all agree that rural Britain as a whole benefited from substantial in-migration, largely from urban areas during the 1970 to 1990 period and that this was generally accompanied by a decline in the metropolitan

population with the general exception of the South East region which retains its attraction both in its own right and as an 'escalator region' for social promotion and the launching of middle/service class careers (Fielding, 1991, see below).

With regard to the quantitative analysis of population movements, the principal points of debate prior to the 1991 census concerned:

- first, the hypothesised cyclical nature of urban-rural population shift;
- second, the extent to which the counterurbanisation phenomenon would persist beyond 1990 and
- third, the degree to which these migratory patterns represented a genuine urban-rural movement or rather, a step-wise or cascade-like progression down the urban hierarchy.

Identifying an apparent relationship between population growth in non-metropolitan regions and economic expansion (and a comparable relationship between slow-downs in urban-rural migration accompanying periods of economic downturn), Champion (1989) suggested that counterurbanisation was potentially a cyclical phenomenon closely bound up with the health of the essentially urban-led economy (see also Rees et al., 1996); a finding reinforced by the subsequent resurgence of urbanisation tendencies in the 1980s (Champion, 1994).

Fielding's linking of urban-rural migration trends with broader forces of economic restructuring (1982) and the changing spatial division of labour takes this a step further by relating different phases of spatial/market relations leading to different migration trends (Fielding, 1998):

Regional sectoral specialisation	the dominant model of the early 1950s, this led to the spatial concentration of industry in selected regions and reinforced rural-urban region migration
New spatial division of labour	the dominant model of the 1970s characterised by deconcentration and the de-industrialisation of older metropolitan centres with counterurban shifts in manufacturing, the service sector and population
Regional functional disconnection	emerging in the late 1970s a gradual decoupling of the traditional dependencies of inter-regional linkages and a lowering of inter-regional moves driven by market relations.

This identified relationship between urban-rural migration flows and economic and business cycles and trends originally led a number of researchers to suggest that such flows would slow down in the later 1980s and 1990s as urban centres became re-dynamised and remoter rural areas, less secure in the face of globalising market relations, began experiencing, once again, population decline (for example, Champion, 1989). Although, there is ample evidence of the former, and of renewed

migration, particularly amongst young people, into city centres, rural population expansion has continued during the 1990s even within the more remoter areas (Champion et al., 1998; Champion and Atkins, 2000).

Using National Health Service Central Register (NHSCR) data from the mid-1990s, a report produced for the Countryside Agency by Findlay et al. (Countryside Agency, 2000) revealed, first, that positive migration flows continued to characterise most rural districts in the first half of the 1990s (Table 2.3.) and, second, that although migration flows were less, numerically, in the 1990s than in the 1980s, migration rates to 'remoter largely rural' areas were amongst the highest in the 91-95 period (second to 'resort and retirement' areas, as indeed they were in the 81-91 period, see Table 2.4). Furthermore, migration change in the major urban areas continued to be negative (Table 2.5).

Table 2.3. Estimated migration to and from districts (and unitary authorities) or rural England, 1991-1997

	Net gain by migration	Net loss by migration
N° of rural districts	122	20
Volume of migration (000s)	540.0	29.1

Source: Countryside Agency, 2000, based upon NHSCR data.
Note: Rural districts include all local government districts and unitary authorities as defined by the Rural Development Commission

Table 2.4. Migration as a component of population change by area type, 1991-1995

Area type	Migration change (81-91) as % of mid 1991 pop	Migration change (91-95) as % of mid 1995 pop
Greater London	-2.29	-0.48
Metropolitan counties	-3.59	-0.74
Principal cities	-4.59	-0.79
Others	-3.15	-0.71
Non-metropolitan counties	3.45	1.11
Cities	-0.87	0.36
Industrial	-0.41	-0.54
With New Towns	3.01	-0.56
Resort and retirement	11.47	3.74
Mixed urban-rural	2.83	1.16
Remoter largely rural	7.90	2.43

Source: Countryside Agency, 1990 (based upon NHSCR data - see ONS, 1998)

More recent statistics from the 2001 census, confirm this trend (DEFRA, 2002). Between 1991 and 2001, the population of rural England grew by 821, 000, almost eight times faster than that for urban areas (5.5% against 0.7%). This net total was

made up of a natural population fall of 18,600 and a positive migration in-flow (coupled with other changes) of 839, 400. By way of contrast, urban England, over the same period, recorded a natural increase of some 854, 500 and a net migration flow of 114, 000, amounting to a net population change of 968, 000.

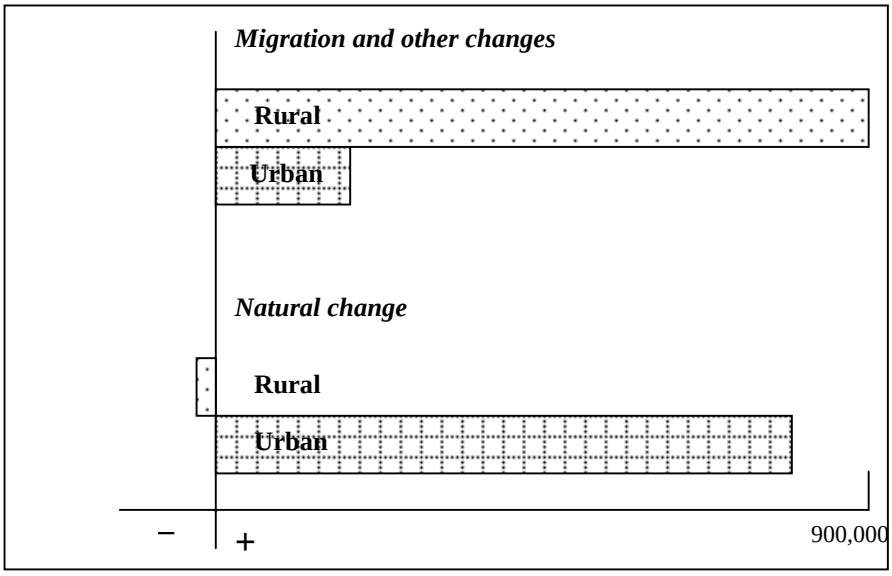
Table 2.5 Net migration in Great Britain by district type

District type	Net migration within Great Britain
Large non-metropolitan cities	-7843
Principal metropolitan districts	-20,138
Inner London	-19,263
Outer London	-24,766
Non-principal metropolitan districts	-12,637
Small non-metropolitan districts	-4616
Districts with new towns	1,353
Mixed urban/rural	23,003
Resort/port/retirement	2,357
Remote, mainly rural	17,586

Source, from Simpson and Middleton, 1999 using 1991 census data

The important net migration gains in rural Britain extended between 1991 and 2001 to rural districts in all regions, the highest population gains (essentially due to migration) being recorded in the East, the South East and the South West (though this latter has been characterised by a significant natural fall). The lowest rates of population change were noted in the rural districts of the North East region.

Figure 2.1. Components of urban and rural population change, 1991-2001



Source: based upon DEFRA 2002 from ONS Mid year population estimates

What is clear from the most recent evidence is that although assumptions that counterurbanisation would slow down post-1991 have been shown to be unfounded, the broad national patterns are more complex that the original 'turnaround' counter-urbanisation model would suggest. As Champion writes:

> "settlement systems are subject to both centripedal and centrifugal forces and that these forces vary over time in their relative strength, producing a cyclic patters in the strength of larger cities and thus in their rates of migratory growth" (Champion et al., 1998b, p. 11).

The urban exodus is generally continuing but is increasingly differentiated. Migration continues to be the dominant force in the changing demography of rural areas but recent analyses suggest that principal sources for that in-migration are changing; no longer the metropolitan centres and the industrial cities but increasingly the high density non-metropolitan counties. In addition, as Champion and Atkins (2000) show, overall propensities to migrate are also changing. Using a three point county classification of 'metropolitan', 'high density non-metropolitan' and 'low density metropolitan', they not only show:

- that low density non-metropolitan counties have the highest rate of people leaving their addresses between 1981 and 1991;

- that metropolitan counties have a substantially lower rate;

- that high density non-metropolitan counties fall somewhere in between;

but also that this pattern differs from the previous decade when metropolitan counties recorded the highest rate. Critically, the vast bulk of these changes of address, in all three categories, represented moves within the category. The verdict on counterurbanisation as a key feature of post-industrial settlement geography remains ultimately elusive. As Spencer (1995) maintains, drawing on survey work in South Oxfordshire, the established settlement hierarchy shows no sign of breaking down. Indeed, for Congdon (1994), recent levels of the urban-rural shift have "done little to dent Britain's traditionally high level of overall population concentration" (p. 23).

Boyle's study of rural in-migration in the early 1980s suggests that migration is still strongly deterred by distance, inferring the centripetal forces and the gravitational pull of urban centres still play a part in residential location. His results also suggest that migration as more linearly related to the population size of the destination than the origin. Ultimately Boyle shows evidence of counter-urbanisation flows from the north to the south and from the south to the north of England and Wales as being fairly minimal.

Finally, it is becoming evident that central cities display different urbanisation patterns to the urban areas lying within their broader city regions and to their own suburban peripheries. These can no longer be subsumed into a single category of out-migration source. Such findings strengthen the notion of a counterubanisation 'cascade' (Champion and Atkins, 1996; Champion 1997). Rather than moving from central cities to remote rural areas in a single displacement, migration patterns

associated with urban-rural shifts are often, in reality, more step-like: inner London loses to outer London, which gains from this but loses to locations at the periphery of the urban region, which gain from in turn but lose to more rural areas and so on. Empirical evidence for this is provided by Champion and Atkins (1996) in their study of flows between district types between 1990 and 1991. As Champion, in a later paper warns:

> "Given the fact that the greatest net losses and gains are recorded by the two ends of the settlement hierarchy, there is a clear temptation to link the two and conclude that the main element in counterurbanisation comprises migrants moving directly from large cities into rural areas, but this is not the case" (Champion, 1998, p. 35)

As he and others have shown, certain regions and spaces play a key role as 'transit camps' (Coombes and Charlton, 1992) or 'escalators' (Fielding, 1991) enabling migrants to move up the social and income hierarchy before moving onto a preferred residential location, often in a rural location.

2.1.2. North-South migration

The second broad national trend observed in the literature is a broad drift of population (both urban and rural) from Northern to Southern England; one provoked both by dominant North-South migration flows (though this is not to say that South-North flows do not exist as well) and by higher rates of natural population loss in Northern regions. As Stillwell et al. (1992) demonstrate, a net migration balance from the north to the south has characterised virtually all the research periods from 1975 to 1989 though this tapered off for a period towards the end of the 1980s as housing shortages, house price levels, pressures of congestion and increased commuting distances reversed the trend allowing, for the first time a net migration balance in favour of the North.

The North-South migration flow would seem to ride across the urban-rural distinction. According to recent DEFRA statistics drawn from the 2001 and 1991 censuses, the North East region displays a negative percentage change for both its rural (-0.7) and its urban (-3.6%) districts (the only region to do so). Of the five English rural districts registering the largest population decreases between 1991 and 2001, two are in the North East region and two in the North West; similar numbers to the five urban districts having the largest decreases (DEFRA, 2002). As Stillwell et al (1992) conclude: "Counterurbanisation in the North appears to have been less important than the movement of people from the North to the South" (p. 40).

2.1.3 Other regional trends

The highest % growth in rural districts between the 1991 and 2001 census were recorded in East Midlands with the highest absolute growth in the SW (DEFRA, 2000). All Government Office regions recorded overall increases in rural districts' population except the North East. Amongst urban districts, those regions exhibiting growth (though much less than for their rural districts) included East Midlands, East,

London, South East and South West. As has been mentioned above, the North East lost rural and urban population.

At the sub-regional level, a more complex picture emerges from current population trends. Amongst the highest rural district growth rates were those for East Cambridgeshire (East region: 20% change) and North Dorset (15.2%). Amongst the lowest were Forest Heath (East region: -6.8), Copeland (North West: -3.8). For urban districts – the highest was City of London (75% growth) followed by Tower Hamlets (17%). The lowest was Manchester (-10.4).

Research has consistently distinguished the South East and the South West as displaying unique and characteristically different patterns with respect to rural demographic change. The South East displays a number of highly specific trends, the result both of the proximity to London and the fact that it was in this region that suburbanisation and later counterurbanisation were first revealed. Indeed, as later sections of this report demonstrate, the South East has come to largely define the profile of the new rural resident as professional or managerial owner occupier having moved out of the city in search of both rural amenities and larger housing. The South East has been famously described by Fielding as an 'escalator region' (1989, 1991), drawing younger, educated and upwardly mobile into it and providing them with the means to achieve a degree of economic and social ascendancy, at which point, they characteristically migrate out further into the rural hinterland at a later stage of their working lives. The South West is characterised by the particular demographic profile of many of its in-migrants and the importance of retirement migration. Concomitantly, the region is also characterised by amongst the highest levels of out-migration amongst younger people.

Research demonstrates clearly that migration is the major force for population change at all spatial scales in Britain and that by the 1990s regional differences were being substantially reduced. Nevertheless, outside the particular status of the South East, the South West, East Anglia and the East Midlands still record amongst the highest in-migrant gains (ODPM, 1998) while northern regions continue to display out-migration losses particularly amongst people in search of work.

2.2. Local trends

Despite the rhetoric of counterurbanisation, it needs to be noted at the end of this section, that the majority of moves within rural areas are over short distances. Furthermore, although research is consistent in showing that migration moves motivated by housing needs are generally shorter distance moves, it is clear that for all the basic reasons for moving (job, life-cycle, housing and so on), short distance moves remain far and away the most numerous. Owen and Green's (1992) research using building society data show that for all moves in 1981 nationally (with no urban/rural distinction), 62.1% were under 5 miles and 77.5% under 10 miles.

Boyle's (1994) analysis of the 1981 census data similarly shows that peripheral rural areas in Northern England generally failed to attract a counterurban migratory flow from larger metropolitan areas. Observed population growth in such areas was, he

suggested, the result of a higher intensity of shorter distance moves from smaller towns.

Findlay et al.'s study for the Countryside Agency (1999) offers clear evidence of this. Three quarters of the in-migration moves into one study area (Wear Valley) consisted of moves of less that 15 kms (Table 2.6). High proportions of local moves were also recorded in the South East (Ashford), though a greater number of these local movers commuted to London and other urban centres. The East Devon case study is revealing for the high proportion of non-working in-migrants.

Table 2.6 Type of migrant by study area (percentages of total by area)

	Alnwick	Wear Valley	Ashford, Kent	South Warwick	East Devon	Totals
Local mover working locally	39	38	22	30	19	28
Local mover commuting	5	4	15	13	4	8
Local mover, not working	13	34	12	14	17	17
Incomer-working locally	13	6	14	20	16	15
Incomer-commuting	10	2	12	16	8	10
Incomer-not working	20	16	25	6	36	21

NB: Local mover (under 15 kms); Incomer (over 15 kms)

Source: Finlay et al. 1999, p. 40

2.3. Rural Outmigration

Although overall the population of rural Britain is expanding, largely due to in-migration down the urban hierarchy, rural outmigration remains a persistent and pernicious force. The 2001 census data reveals overall rural population loss being concentrated in the northern regions (North West and North East). However, the research literature allows us to qualify this broad trend, first, by distinguishing natural and migration rates and, second, by distinguishing population type:

- the rural districts experiencing the highest rates of natural population decline are concentrated in the southern regions where the proportion of older and retired people in the rural population is highest

- the rural districts experiencing the highest rates of out-migration were concentrated in the northern regions

- many of those rural districts characterised by high rates of in-migration, particularly amongst the elderly and retired, such as those of the South West, are also characterised by high rates of out-migration amongst the younger age groups

- in many rural areas affected by the in-migration of professional and managerial class ex-urbanites, a net out-migration of skilled and unskilled workers is also identified.

Hence, both in-migration and out-migration may frequently occur at the same time, leading to the socio-economic recomposition (embourgeoisement) of rural areas, a process initially masked by overall population growth. A clear example of this migration 'puzzle' is provided by the county of Cornwall (Williams 2000). Although it recorded a 27% increase in population between 1961 and 1991, it also displayed high rates of out-migration (11%). Williams' study makes the following points:

- Out-migrants were more likely to come from families where a member was seeking work and almost twice as likely to come from families where two or more people were seeking work.
- Out-migrants were over represented in the 17-25 age group. 14% of out-migrants were students in 1981, and slightly less were in 1991, suggesting that many who left to pursue education were now in employment.
- The model shows that unemployed people are twice as likely to migrate out as those in employment, and those who were students are four times more likely. Those living in council tenure are less than half as likely to migrate as those in owner occupation.
- It seems fairly clear that out-migration is not simply associated with economic disadvantage prior to leaving, though possible causes are hard to disentangle.
- There is a virtual absence of higher education facilities in Cornwall, so many young people leave for this purpose.
- Both in migrants and out migrants may be more heterogeneous than commonly supposed.

A second study, conducted by Frontier Economics for the Countryside Agency (Frontier Economics, 2001) established a significant relationship between rural out-migration and GDP. Using Family Health Service Area data they found:

- Out-migration rates vary between 2.5% and just over 4% between Family Health Service Areas, with slightly lower out-migration rates for rural and semi-rural areas compared to urban areas over the 1990s.
- Outflows of 16-19 year olds from rural and semi-rural areas increased almost continuously between 1984 and 1998.
- Outflows of 30 –44 year olds also increased but much less steadily.
- Outflows of people over 60 from rural and semi-rural areas fell during the late 1980s and then slowly rose throughout the 1990s.
- There appears to be no significant difference between male and female gender out-migration.
- There appears to be positive correlation between house prices and out-migration rates. The higher the nominal average house-price in the source area, the higher the out-migration rate.
- There are not particularly strong correlations between out- migration rates and other socio-economic conditions in rural areas.

- Typically movers from rural to urban areas tend to be younger, richer, have more formal qualifications and are more likely to be single than their counterparts who move within rural areas.

Table 2.7. Largest and smallest out-migration rates amongst rural FHSAs

Year	Largest rate	2nd largest rate	2nd smallest rate	Smallest rate
1984	Oxfordshire	Bucks	Humberside	Cumbria
1985	Bucks	Oxfordshire	Humberside	Cumbria
1986	Bucks	Oxfordshire	Humberside	Cumbria
1987	Bucks	Oxfordshire	Humberside	Cumbria
1988	Bucks	Oxfordshire	Humberside	Cumbria
1989	Oxfordshire	Bucks	Humberside	Cumbria
1990	Oxfordshire	Bucks	Humberside	Cumbria
1991	Oxfordshire	Bucks	Humberside	Cumbria
1992	Oxfordshire	Bucks	Humberside	Cumbria
1993	Oxfordshire	Bucks	Humberside	Cumbria
1994	Oxfordshire	Bucks	Humberside	Cumbria

Source: Frontier Economics, (2001)

By way of contrast, Fielding's analysis of migration trends in the South East of England (1993) reveals that while migrants to the region were generally young, single, upwardly mobile adults entering the professional and managerial sector, those leaving were biased towards older adults in multi-person households who either remained in managerial or professional jobs or on leaving such jobs either set up business on their own or retired (see also Champion and Atkins, 2000).

Identifying class differences to rural out-migration trends in a study of population change in the Scottish borders, Jamieson (2000) maintains that 'seeking a good job' almost always implies leaving the rural area. Middle class children often take out-migration for granted. Working class children, who do well at school often consider migration only at a later stage. Yet even this basic distinction can be further broken down. Jamieson reports that children of middle-class local parents are, in fact, less likely to out-migrate than those of middle class non-local parents, the overwhelming majority of whom do leave. In short, some were prepared to accept lower job aspirations because of the benefits of being surrounded by family and friends who have no plans to leave. A more subtle variant on this theme is provided in a number of studies by Little (1991, 1997), who explores women's access to the job market in rural areas. Because of the constraints of running a household, and the ideological expectations that such a role be performed, many women in rural areas are forced to seek jobs locally rather than seek jobs in line with their qualifications, experience and personal aspirations.

3. DRIVERS OF POPULATION CHANGE

Once the pattern of counterurbanisation and rural demographic change had been revealed and analysed by the first generation of empirical studies drawing upon the 1971 and 1981 censuses, later confirmed through work on longitudinal data sets, Health data and the 1991 and 2001 census returns, researchers turned to seeking explanations for urban-rural population flows and, more recently to other components of rural demographic change such as intra-rural migration. In this chapter, we present a synthesis of the substantial literature on these aspects of rural population change. The dominant focus, as is so often the case, is on the drivers and motivations for urban to rural migration shifts and the various factors that facilitate or hinder such movements. However, in line with the trajectory of research agendas identified in Figure 2. above, increasingly attention is being paid to those that leave rural areas, often a significantly distinct cohort from those who arrive.

3.1 Drivers of counterurbanisation and rural population change

One the whole, there is a strong degree of agreement over the basic drivers of urban-rural migration. While individual researchers may focus upon specific drivers and a certain degree of debate exists of the relative explanatory power of one driver over another (most notably, for retirement migration), the list of identified causes, drivers and motivations is consistent across the literature (Boyle, 1994; Champion, 1989). More significant though, are the various dynamics linked to space and time. With growing recognition of the veracity of the counterurbanisation 'cascade' (see above) and the often complicated nature of migratory trajectories over life-histories (see, for example, McHugh, Hogan and Happel, 1995) and over large areas (Boyle, Halfacree and Robinson, 1998), comes the understanding that drivers evolve and shift in response to both spatial and temporal circumstances. Hence, job-search drivers in a person's early twenties may yield to life-style reasons in their thirties and an entire set of different reasons upon retirement.Thus, retired people, long-distance commuters and local job movers will display very different motives for migration (Cross, 1990). Furthermore, as Dean et al., (1994) have demonstrated, separating out single personal motivations from what are often complex collective and family decisions is a difficult task, one further complicated by the challenge of accurately articulating and interpreting peoples' preferences. Finally, while a region or locality might be characterised by its receipt of job-led migrants, it might also display a propensity to loose population at a later stage for life-style reasons (eg. the SE). Another might be defined by the arrival of retirement-driven migrants but also by the out-migration of younger people (eg. the SW).

Across all these drivers and motivations operate a range of structural factors that facilitate and influence (either directly or indirectly) or hinder (again, either directly or indirectly) migration flows. These include:

- The evolving demography characterised by an increasingly ageing population
- The changing nature of the housing market
- Improved transportation links and infrastructure
- New working practices
- The changing geography of employment

- Landownership structures
- Planning policies

While these are not necessarily, in themselves, drivers of individual migration decisions, they have a profound effect upon the nature and extend of population shifts.

At the European scale, four main drivers of urban-rural migration are commonly identified in the literature (Fielding, 1982):

- Life-style preferences
- Job opportunities
- Production-led decentralisation
- State policy

Although, these are fairly crude categories (and in some cases, might have contradictory effects) and apply in different degrees to the English experience, they allow us to frame the principal 'causes' of counterurbanisation. However, they need to be refined. Cloke (1985), for one, makes a plea for a move away from what he describes as the 'macro-scale' factors, arguing that highly localised factors, often specific to individual rural localities, are often important considerations to be taken into account. In their assessment of the counterurbanisation process in Devon, Halliday and Coombes (1995) distinguish three overarching rationales: the 'anti-metropolitan', the 'anti-urban' and the 'pro-rural' as an alternative categorisation, part of which links back to research undertaken by Halfacree (1994) on the importance of 'the rural' as a distinct pull factor in migration decisions. Critically, for Halliday and Coombes (1995) there is much confusion in any categorisation of counterurbanisation drivers. Thus, while anti-metropolitan motives may drive people out of the larger metropolitan areas, they do not necessary bring them to rural areas. They could also be associated with processes of suburbanisation. Conversely, moves from Plymouth in the South West to Crawley in the South East might be interpreted as anti-urban (from larger town to smaller town) but would run counter to anti-metropolitan trends.

A review of the abundant research literature on this theme reveals an large range of motivations and drivers. Halliday and Coombes' (1995) identify 6 principal 'most important reasons' and differentiate them by the three categories of migrant profile (see Table 3.1).

The complexity of the issue is however revealed when these 'most important reasons' are compared with 'most often cited' reasons. Then, issues of 'scenery' and 'changing housing needs' emerge as more important than 'employment' while 'retirement' is relegated to sixth position.

Table 3.1. The most important reason for moving to Devon.

	% migrants citing as most important reason			
	Anti-metropolitan	Anti-urban	Pro-rural	All migrants
Employment	22	22	23	26
Family	16	19	20	17
Retirement	18	18	20	12
Business	9	7	7	10
Way of life	11	11	14	9
Scenery	9	9	6	8

Source: Halliday and Coombes (1995) from survey of Devon households new to their address in 1987/88

In his review, Champion (1989) highlights as many as 17 separate drivers identified in the literature. For a number of commentators, however, the range of motives and drivers can be conveniently broken down into two key explanations: residential preferences (linked to lifestyle, life-cycle and so on) and employment (Allinson, 2003; Bolton and Chalkley, 1990; Findlay et al., 1999; Countryside Agency, 2000), though both explanations reveal variations in intensity that can be related to the geographical regions concerned and the age/life-cycle position of migrants (Harper, 1991).

3.1.1. Economic and job-led drivers of rural population change

Of the importance of economic factors, Champion (1998) writes:

> "But the single most important change of recent years has been the massive transformation in the geography of employment. Not only has the increase in retirees and long-distance commuters generated job growth in consumer services, but a major rebalancing act has been occurring between conurbations and the shire counties as a result of the 'double whammy' of de-industrialisation and decentralisation" (Champion et al., 1998b, p. 54).

A high degree of unanimity exists in the literature over the key importance of economic and job-led drivers of rural population change. "More work has probably been published on labour migration in capitalist societies", write Boyle, Halfacree and Robinson (1998, p. 83) "than on any other form of human migration". Even retirement migration, which stands as one of the few migration flows not driven per se by job re-location has important employment impacts as it can lead to the significant expansion of service sector employment in host areas.

Stated simply, "the vast majority of households moving into rural England contain people who are in work as opposed to being retired or unemployed" (Champion, 1988, p. 54). Findlay et al.'s 1999 study for the Countryside Agency supports this. Using 1991 Census special migration statistics relating to the economic status of migrants from metropolitan areas to rural areas, they reveal that across England 43% of migrants are employed, 7% are self employed and 13% are retired. Their research also reveals a spatial dimension. The largest flows of employed migrants are to the

rural districts encircling London (Aylesbury Vale, Huntingdonshire, South Cambridgeshire, Wealden and South Oxfordshire) with other major conurbations showing a similar pattern of migration of employed people to proximate rural districts. However, for many of these people, their place of work continued to be within the urban based economy. Economic and job-led factors also emerge as the key reasons for intra-rural and intra-regional, short distance population movements, which, as we have stated above, are widely acknowledged as a major component of rural population change.

A study by Cloke et al., (1994) reveals geographical variation in the importance of job-led migration moves with employment accounting for over 20 of moves into Northamptonshire and Cheshire but less than 13% in Wiltshire, Shropshire, North Yorkshire and Northumberland. These findings are echoed by Harper (1991) who shows that while employment reasons predominate for migrants to Hampshire, those in South Staffordshire were driven more by lifestyle and housing considerations, with a high proportion of migrants retaining their jobs in neighbouring urban centres. A similar finding is recorded by Milbourne et al. (2000) whose survey for DEFRA reveals that 25% of in-migrants to a selection of rural locations moved for employment reasons. According to Halfacree (1994) for people moving from urban areas into Mid Devon and Lancaster districts, job-led reasons accounted for 56% of long-distance moves and 6% of short distance moves (<25 km). Findlay et al.'s 1999 study of sample districts in rural England, they show that 17% of moves were driven by employment reasons (against 25% for quality of life and 22% for housing). Employment reasons were most important for the migrant categories 'incomer working locally' (45% of all reasons) and 'incomer commuting' (52%). Owen (1992) identifies relationship between migration and employment in Britain, reveals from Nationwide Building Society survey undertaken in 1981 that only 15% of all moves were job related. However, job-related moves accounted for nearly 80% of long distance moves (>100 miles) and 50% of those over 25 miles.

Table 3.2. Reasons for moving amongst housebuyers against distance of move

	Distance moved in miles						
	<5	6-10	11-25	26-50	51-100	>100	All
Housing	44.7	34.8	25.1	15.3	8.3	3.0	36.5
Family cycle	30.1	33.3	29.6	19.5	12.4	10.7	28.5
Work-related	2.9	10.3	25.3	53.0	70.4	78.9	14.8
Neighbourhood	8.0	9.4	7.6	5.4	3.4	1.9	7.8
Other	14.2	12.2	12.4	6.8	5.4	5.5	12.7
All	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source Owen and Green, (1992). Based upon Nationwide Building Society data on house purchases in Britain in 1981.

The 1997 Labour Force Survey shows a clear tendency for job-related mobility rates to decline with age. Single adults display the greatest propensity to migrate for job-related reasons. Following research in the South Midlands, Lewis (1989) reveals that of 457 households polled, over a third had moved into study area since 1981 and of

the active in-migrants, 40% gave job-led reasons for their installation in the rural area. However, most of these incoming job-led migrants actually worked outside the study area. Lewis' study reveals a growing distance between employment structure of the area and the status of migrants with 85% of current (late 1980s) long-distance commuters having moved into the area since 1981.

It needs to be noted too that employment is also a key driver for people moving **out** of current rural residential locations, particularly amongst young people (who, in any case, dominate rural out-migration flows across Britain, see for example, Findlay et al., 1999; Frontier Economics, 2001), though this has been shown to have a strongly influences by income and class factors (with children of middle class families displaying a higher propensity and ability to move out of rural locations in search of job opportunities (for example, Jamieson (2000).

In summary, a number of points can be made:

- The research suggests that long-distance migration flows are more likely to be driven by employment rather than by other factors, while shorter distance migration rates are more likely to be influenced by housing reasons (Halfacree, 1994; ODPM, 1998; Owen and Green, 1992; Gordon, 1991)

- There are clear spatial and regional patterns to job related moves with the rural areas surrounding urban conurbations being most prone to commuting flows and more remoter rural areas more characterised by in-migrants being employed locally (Harper, 1991)

- Job related moves are closely linked to age, social status and employment sector (Jamieson, 2000, see also the following section of this report)

- The range of job opportunities in rural areas is limited (though it is rising proportionally faster than in other areas) and those migrating for jobs will, generally, travel further than those migrating for other reasons (Green, 1999)

- Rural areas display higher than average levels of self employment and in-migrants from urban areas play a key role in self-employed activities in rural areas (Green, 1999; Findlay et al., 1999)

- In many examples, families 'trade off" housing and life-style advantages against employment accessibility - leading to extended commuter networks (Jarvis, 1999).

- Managerial and professional workers display a greater than average propensity to migrate over long distances (Owen and Green, 1988)

3.1.2. Residential, lifestyle and other reasons for rural population movements

If employment reasons are frequently a major factor in drawing people into rural areas, they are more often than not combined with residential, lifestyle and explicitly pro-rural or anti-urban reasons. Economic factors pull, but housing and lifestyle reasons push. (Bolton and Chalkley, 1998; Perry et al., 1986).

In their own review of the British literature, Boyle, Halfacree and Robinson (1998) identify a series of 'environmental' reasons for moving into the countryside, citing a range of sources (Table 3.3.)

Table 3.3 Primary environmental reasons given for moving into rural areas by study author(s)

Study	***Primary environmental reasons***
Radford, 1970	Countryside, health, evacuation
Ambrose, 1974	Village amenities, community spirit
Connell, 1978	Country area Character of locality
Hedger, 1981	Liked area… / Wanted to get away from …
Sherwood, 1984	To live in a village
Jones et al., 1986	The live in a nicer area (physical, social, community)
Perry et al., 1986	Preferred environment Escape urban rat race Enjoyed previous holidays Better for children Better for retirement Better for health
Lewis, 1989	Rural environment
Halfacree, 1994	Physical quality of the environment Social quality of the environment

Source: adapted from Boyle, Halfacree and Robinson (1998)

These various combinations of anti-urban and pro-rural environmental factors have been identified by many researchers. They are inextricably linked to life-cycle and household factors though, as many have shown, they are also largely contingent upon secure employment and viable career aspirations. A number of component elements might be identified:

The rural lifestyle and quality of life

Buying into the 'rural idyll' has become a major element in the residential and lifestyle trajectories of the British middle classes (Cloke, Goodwin and Milbourne, 1998; Cloke, Phillips and Thrift, 1998a, 1998b; Halfacree, 1994, 1997; Phillips, 1993; Murdoch, 1997; Murdoch and Marsden, 1994), though Hoggart (1997) offers a robust critique of the ubiquity and ineluctability of what others have labelled as the 'middle class take-over of the countryside while Cloke and Thrift (1987) challenge the often rather uncritical assumptions of class cohesion than pervade analyses of the incoming rural middle class. For such people, a rural location is equated with improved quality of life, and is thus an important reason for residential relocation, (Findlay et al., 1999, Turner et al., 1998; Harper, 1991).

Amongst retired people, the quality of the residential environment, often in association with other amenity factors such as being close to family, frequently emerges as the dominant factor in migration decision-making (Perry et al., 1986).

However, the peripheral 'urban' nature of much retirement migration, notably to the resort and coastal towns of the SW, contributes to what some have observed as a decline in the in the relative numbers of elderly households in the countryside (Hoggart, 2000). Although the English rural population may be growing in average age (DEFRA, 2000) it is arguably becoming marginally less heterogeneous across the broader age spectrum as both the young and the elderly decline in numbers.

Finally, the search for an improved residential environment is also of critical importance for intra-rural moves. Researching the reasons why people move from one rural location to another, Halfacree (1994) identifies key 'social' and 'physical' features of preferred new destinations (Table 3.4.)

Table 3.4. Key social and physical features of the destination for British rural-rural migrants

Physical features

- The area had more varied and/or *attractive scenery*
- The area had more *attractive houses* and the overall village was more pleasing to look at
- The area was near or next to *the sea*
- It was a *more open* and/or remoter area

Social features

- The area was more *socially active*, with plenty going on. It was not a dormitory or retirement area but a village community, with friendly, welcoming people and a community spirit
- The residents were *less parochial* and backward, and had a broader outlook on life. There were more professional people around
- The area had fewer 'yuppies', company cars and 'company representative' people around. There was a *wider social mix*
- It was an area of *higher status* and had a better reputation than the origin, with fewer working class people and less council housing
- There was less *crime* and general trouble in the area
- There was a *slower pace* generally, it was quieter and the general quality of life was better

Source: Halfacree 1994, p. 183-184 (emphasis in the original)

Of course, for a large proportion of these new rural and intra rural migrants, improving the residential environment is concomitant upon acquiring a property.

Housing

For many people, particularly the upwardly mobile cohorts employed in the service sector, migration into rural areas or between rural areas is often associated with changes to household size, notably those linked to the birth and growing up of children. Traditionally, the geography of housing prices has favoured rural areas, as terms of price per unit area (all other things being equal) are held to fall as distance from urban centres increases, and households that have the means, both to acquire larger property in rural areas and, where necessary, to maintain commuting links with

proximate urban centres, have been amongst the most caricatured counterurbanisers. Although in recent years, the housing price differential between urban and rural areas has inverted, with many of the most sought-after rural enclaves of the South East in particular being almost as expensive as central city locations elsewhere, leaving a house price trough in the suburban zones between the two, residential upgrading remains a significant driver of urban-rural and intra-rural population moves.

There are three elements to the debate that merit particular mention here; the influence of the housing market on migration patterns, housing as choice and, third, the variability of forms of housing tenure and their respective influence on rural population change.

First, substantial evidence exists on the relationship between the housing market and migration patterns (Boyle, Flowerdew and Stein, 1998). Congdon's research, though focused on intra-urban migration within London (1988) draws this relationship by identifying the following points: high house prices have a deterrent effect upon in-migration;

- high income migrants may boost house price inflation;
- new private housing in the area of destination is a positive influence in migration flows:
- new housing does not necessarily reduce out-migration

These findings resonate with evidence of similar trends in rural areas, particularly the inflationary effect of high income migrants into areas of restricted housing stock (Findlay et al., 1999; Countryside Agency 2000b). The impact of these inflationary tendencies on accessibility to rural housing is now well known and appreciated (for example, Bramley and Smart (1995) who revealed that in 1991, 40% of new rural households were unable to purchase a property in or near to their existing location). Another contributory factor, and key component of the process of rural socio-economic restructuring that has been widely observed as accompanying urban-rural migration (Lowe et al., 1990; Newby, 1986; Cloke and Goodwin, 1992; Marsden, 1996; Marsden et al;, 1990; Urry, 1995), has been the sale of council houses, first to tenants and then onwards to incoming owner-occupiers (Chaney and Sherwood, 2000). Chaney and Sherwood demonstrate that this process of resale is creating a substantial opportunity in certain parts of rural England for comparatively young dual-income career and largely urban families to move into the countryside.

Second, many of the studies already cited in this review point to changing housing need as an important driver (through rarely the principal driver) of population movement into and within rural areas. Thus 37% of respondents in Halliday and Coombes' 1995 study of migration into Devon identified this as a reason, while 24% of those in Lewis' 1989 study of migrants into Northamptonshire and Huntingdonshire did the same. There are, as one might expect, important life-cycle (Grundy and Fox, 1985; Hoggart, 2000) and commuting (Davies, 1993) aspects to this pattern of housing upgrading through rural migration.

Third, there is clear evidence that owner occupiers make up a significant proportion of both urban-rural migrants and intra-rural migrants compared with their representation as a whole within housing classes (Hughes and McCormick, 1985; Boyle, 1993; Leon

and Strachan, 1993). Owner occupation now constitutes 75% of rural tenures compared to 65% nationally. Furthermore, council house tenants display a much lower propensity and ability to migrate both from town to country and within the country than owner occupiers (though interestingly, the stud by Halfacree et al (1992) study offers a contradictory interpretation, arguing that local authority housing does not appear to have a deterrent effect upon migration rates. Boyle's analysis of the relationship between housing tenure type and migration (1993) offers empirical confirmation of this, showing that owner occupiers dominate long distance moves while council house tenants are the most frequent movers within existing local authority boundaries. He also uncovers interesting differences between the directionality and destination of different housing tenure types; owner occupiers dominate urban-rural counter-urbanising moves while those in the private rented sector are disproportionally numerous amongst migrants into London and the South East. Finally, Boyle is careful to acknowledge however that although tenure type correlates with these differences, it is not necessarily a causal factor. Other considerations such as institutional and procedural factors, the job market and its relationship to housing tenure and so on are also of importance.

Household composition

Jarvis (1999) demonstrates a relationship between household employment structure and relative rates of mobility. Using date from 1981 and 1991, the study shows that households with more than one breadwinner show a propensity to be less mobile than do traditional male-breadwinner households. Households are showing increased immobility because of the need to consolidate at a fixed residential location in order to sustain two incomes or careers.

Offering four idealised types of household: traditional (male active, female inactive), flexible (male in full time, female in part time), dual earner (both male and female in full employment but neither in career socio-economic groups 1 and 11) and dual career (both in full time career group 1 and 11 jobs). Jarvis' findings show that:

- Traditional category display the highest propensity to migrate.
- Flexible move least.
- Residential inertia is associated with dual income families.

However, the question remains whether traditional households generate higher rates of mobility or are themselves the product of “wife’s sacrifice” in moves which originate in flexible or dual earner households. Dual earner families also less likely to make long-distance moves. Over time, this lack of propensity to move increases. Greater spatial inertia, especially over distance, is generated in households with two earners than in those with two careers. Flexible households thus demonstrate greatest stability and greatest inertia.

In their study, Ford and Champion (2000) consider in detail different household types and their varying propensities for rural out of, into and within London.Their findings might be summarised as follows:

- highest levels of overall mobility are found for members of young renting families / non-family households and for non-manual workers in couple only households. The latter are more heavily involved in migration out of London and the former in into London migration.
- One-person households also make a substantial contribution to all 3 types of migration, though this is due to their importance in the total population sample, as their migration rates are slightly below average for all 3.
- Young non-manual workers living with owner-occupying parents exhibit overall mobility close to the average, but are more heavily involved in both in and out migration and much less in local movement.
- Grown-up children living with renting parents and men in manual occupations with no children at home are characterised by average overall mobility, but compared with the total population this mobility more commonly takes place in the form of movement within London rather than over longer distance.
- Three groups of older home owners are characterised by below average rates of overall mobility, resulting from a combination of just below average out-migration and very low levels of in-migration and local movement from London. These are spouses in non-manual occupations with children, fathers in couples with children, and older inactive spouses in couple-only households.

3.2. Impacts of migration

The study by Findlay et al. (1999) for the Countryside Agency considered the impact of migration in rural England within five sample rural districts. We reproduce here the summary of their findings.

Labour market impacts

- Migration appears to strengthen the existing trend within the rural labour market away from employment in primary production and into services
- The job generating potential of in-migration to rural areas is considerable. It is strongest amongst the very significant proportion of urban to rural lovers who are self-employed. On average, every self-employed migrant to rural England, living in a householf who originated outside the area of current residence, generated 1.7 additional full-time jobs
- Not unexpectedly, migrant self-employed persons were most likely to generate new work in small professional businesses, while self-employed persons in the primary sector such as forestry consultants were less likely to employ other staff
- Other migrants (employees, retired and other inactive) also created new labour demands in rural areas, but this group were more likely to stimulate demand for lower wage part-time staff
- Benefits for the rural economy resulting from the new incomes associated with net in-migration were less than might have been hoped. This was because of the strength of urban-based weekly shopping patterns. Urban based shopping patterns were strongest amongst incomers to rural areas who continued to commute to work in cities or large towns

Housing impacts

- There is widespread agreement that houring - specifically housing affordable to locals - is the foremost social isue arising in the context of urban-rural migration inthe UK. Overall long-term residents and less well-off local movers are disadvantaged in the conventional - market led - housing supply system

- There has been a significant transfer of housing from the social to the private sector, albeit largely in the current owership of local people. Given the acknowledged uner-represntation of such provision in rural housing, this trnasfer has a disporportionate significance for groups marginalised by the housing market

- Settlements at all scales have been targeted by migrants. Incomers fulfil an ambiguous role, both buying into the rural housing market and expanding it through renovation and extension of rural properties within the housing market

- There are well recognised regional variations in pressures on access to housing stock.

Social and econcomic integration

- More important than migrant status as an influence on the household's social involvement within the local communities, was household composition (especially in terms of number of children) and the age of head of household.

- Households who moved from an urban location, who possessed high incomes and who commuted to work beyond the immediate area were more actively involved in local community activities than other movers

- There was little evidence, however, tha incomers 'take over the running of local affairs'.

- Few migrant households used public bus services on a regular basis (at least once a week).

Perceptions of migrant impacts

- Not surprisingly, migrants had a more positive opinion of the effects of migration into rural areas than long-term residents. For example, migrants were more likely than long-term residents to see migrants as contributing to an expansion of local employment opportunities

- The most negatively viewed impacts of migration relatedto house prices and public transport. More than alf of long term residents and migrants believed that 'incomers had raised house prices' or that 'incomers did not use public transport'.

Source: Findlay et al. 1999, p x-xi.

In the next section, we look at the impacts of counterurbanisation and other forces of demographic change in rural areas in greater detail.

4. THE CHANGING DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF THE ENGLISH RURAL POPULATION

The preceding sections of this report have identified and explored the research literature relating to the dynamics of rural population change. As has been amply demonstrated, of the two fundamental mechanisms of demographic growth or decline, migration and natural change, migration is by far and away the dominant force affecting rural England today. Furthermore, of the three component elements of migration (urban-rural, intra-rural and rural-urban), the former has attracted the greater research interest, partly because of its 'counter' urbanisation character (which provides a break with past migration trends), partly too because it has been a key driver of major changes to the characteristics of the English rural population and, as a consequence, that population's various attitudes and policy demands.

In this section, we move away from demographic movements to report upon research into the changing characteristics and demographic profile of the English rural population. We begin with a rapid resumé of the age, working age and gender profiles of the English rural population as revealed by the 2001 census (DEFRA, 2002). We then go on to assess the literature on demographic characteristics, and their dynamics, under a series of thematic headings. It should be noted, however, that the focus of this section, and indeed, the report as a whole is on demographic change and not social change. As a result, critical social issues and their impact upon rural areas, such as homelessness, unemployment, housing availability, jobs, service access, transport and so on are not addressed here.

4.1. Overview of the current situation

The 2001 census returns reveal a net increase in the proportion of the English rural population within the 40 years to retirement age cohort and a net fall in under 24 bands (Table 4.1). However, these changes are only slightly more pronounced that those for the British population as a whole. Nevertheless, the overall balance for rural Britain reveals a declining under 40 population and a growing over-40 population. The average age for England's rural districts currently stands at 41.2 years against 38.3 years in urban districts. Crucially, these shifts cannot be explained by natural change but rather reflect differential patterns of migration (see above): with higher proportions of younger people moving out of rural areas and higher proportions of over 40 people moving in. Migration is thus significantly exaggerating natural demographic trends leading to an ageing of the rural working population.

At the regional level, the rural population of the south is ageing faster than elsewhere and a clear relationship would seem to exist between high levels of retirement population and low levels of under 25 population (for example, the South West). High rates of growth in the 40-retirement working population were recorded in the North East which also saw the highest rates of decline amongst the 25-39 age group, according to the DEFRA report.

Table 4.1. Change in percentage of population in each age band, 1991-2001

	% change 1991 - 2001	
	Rural districts	All England districts
0-14	-0.3	-0.2
15-24	-2.5	-2.0
25-39	-0.7	-0.1
40 - Retirement	2.8	2.3
> Retirement	0.6	0

Source: DEFRA, 2001

4.2. A shifting research agenda

A very large number of studies over the last 30 years have revealed, documented and analysed the changing socio-economic composition of rural Britain. Indeed, this has become one of the central preoccupations of contemporary rural studies and in particular, their politicisation (Phillips, 1998). Economic restructuring and social recomposition, in part the cause and in part the consequence of urban-rural migration, have characterised the changing composition of the rural population. On the former, Rees has written:

> "Changes in rural employment structures are central to any understanding of the reality of rural social life. On the one hand they reflect profound shifts in the nature and organisation of capitalist production and, more specifically, the widely differing types of locality. On the other, employment changes themselves have resulted in radical developments in terms of rural class structures, gender divisions, the forms of political conflict occurring in rural areas and, indeed, of the complex processes by which 'rural cultures' are produced and reproduced" (Rees, 1984, p. 27)

Here, the social change observed in rural areas is held to result primarily from the restructuring of economic relations, binding the two together (Marsden 1992).

Social recomposition has been revealed as the second key feature of the changing English population. Driven by a rediscovery of class analysis and its application to rural research (pioneered by Newby, 1980; 1987), a number of authors have identified and explored the emergence of a rural service class (Cloke and Thrift, 1990; Murdoch and Marsden, 1994) where "capitalist/working class relations based upon ownership of capital and labour are overlain by social relations built on such things as skills, education, consumption decisions and political power" (Phillips, 1998, p. 135). Fundamental to this research thrust has been a desire to get away from and overtly challenge the rather simplistic (in explanatory terms) counterurbanisation driven stereo-typical division of rural society into newcomers and locals and the assumption, widely made (see above), that the former are indivisibly middle class and the latter are uniformly working class (Murdoch, 1995). Of course, this research has, itself, generated its own critiques and today, local contingencies and cultural principles are

considered as important, if not more important, in influencing social relations and rural social forces and agencies than class.

Parallel, however, to this growing interest in the new socio-spatial formations that increasingly define the English countryside, has been an associated concern for those individuals and sectors of rural society who are marginalised not only by the changing social composition and socio-economic profile of rural populations but also by the rural ideologies that are subsequently propagated. The decreasing availability of cheap homes for locals in rural England is well documented and research is unequivocal in linking this both to the urban-rural migration flows of relatively wealthy households seeking to buy rural properties and to the selling-on of council properties. Less immediately discernable, but equally important as a driver of marginalisation and exclusion, has been the construction and reinforcement of notions, images and ideologies of rural idyll and a rural way of life which, by their very dominance and ubiquity, serve to exclude those for whom they are inaccessible (Cloke 1997; Cloke et al., 1995a, 1995b; Little, 1997; Milbourne, 1997; Shucksmith, 2000; Shucksmith and Chapman, 1998).

4.3. Changes in socio-economic profile

"He was born in Winford (the nearby town). He wasn't born here like I was.
He's been here just 50 years, so he's really a town boy"
(Childerley resident talking about another resident,
quoted in Bell, 1994, page 105)

"I'm really a foreigner, I come from Norfolk"
(Akenfield resident, quoted in Blythe, 1969, p. 186).

In his book 'Akenfield', published in 1969, Ronald Blythe enumerates the members of the East Anglian village that forms the subject of the book. They include; farm workers, teachers, a doctor, a rural dean, a farrier, a forester, a blacksmith and a forge worker, a thatcher and a sadler, farmers, shepherds and ploughmen, a magistrate and an odd job man.

In his book 'Childerley, published in 1994, Michael Bell identifies the characters in his study of a South Eastern village:

a field rep for a brewery	an architect
a mother, married to a London commuter	a skilled worker
a cleaner, married to a farm labourer	a hardware engineer
a part-time cook in a pub	a schoolteacher
a retired civil servant	a microbiologist
a farm worker	a retired businessman
a housekeeper	a management consultant

The social composition of rural England today is very different from what it was 30 years ago. Ray Pahl's (1968) categorisation of commuter village populations into 'large property owners', the 'salariat', 'returned urban workers with some capital', 'urban workers with limited capital', 'rural working-class commuters' and 'traditional ruralites' seems archaic today particularly as he describes 'urban workers with limited capital' as those "who do not particularly want to live in this settlement type but owing to the high price of urban land are forced to seek cheaper housing 'in a village'" (page 272).

Professional and managerial workers accounted for around 30% of the 'remoter' rural population of England in 1991 and 40% of the rural South East. Hoggart (2000) reports that the rural South East displays longstanding over-representations of these categories, reinforced by a highly selective in-migration pattern that favours the more well-off. Although in remoter rural areas the proportion of rural residents in these categories is not so dissimilar to the national average, unskilled manual workers are a declining component of the remoter rural population, largely as a result of the unavailability of affordable housing, while urban professionals constitute the major in-migrating group. "The picture that emerges", writes Hoggart (2000, p. 25) "is of rural areas being significant recipients of urban professionals who commonly move considerable distances to their rural home".

An interesting variant on this middle class influx is provided by Buller and Hoggart (1994a; 1994b) and Bolton and Chalkley (1990) who show how members of this class are often prepared to take significant leaps of faith into relatively unstable financial and social positions (such as selling up and buying a French property or run down rural retreat) in order to realise their own particular vision of rural life.

Confirmation of the growth of professional and managerial workers in the rural population comes from many sources (for example, Findlay et al., 1999; Leon and Strachan, 1993; Fielding, 1989, 1997; Jamieson, 2000; Phillips, 1993) though Hoggart, in particular, has been persistent in his assertion, backed by a number of studies drawing upon longitudinal data sets, that what is certainly true for the South East, should not become a conventional model for the rest of England (1997a, 1997b) where the evidence for the middle class takeover is far less convincing.

4.4. Gender implications

As an issue in its own right, the gendered dimensions of rural demographic change does not appear to have attracted much research attention (though see Boyle and Halfacree, 1999). More often than not, ‘gender’ is dealt with in an unproblematic way, for example, when tabulated migration data are presented and broken down into ‘males’ and ‘females’. Furthermore, gender is sometimes disguised / implied within, for example, discussions of migration and marriage (e.g. Grundy and Fox, 1985). Migration research that considers gender is more likely to be of a general nature than focused on rural areas per se. However, the work that exists on gender and demographic change in rural areas can be organised into the following two areas:

Gender differences within migration flows

The limited research that has considered explicitly the gender differences within migration flows is slightly contradictory in its findings. Thus, Leon and Strachan (1993) found that males and females show similar inter-regional migration patterns, with the probability of migration increasing with age, although, at each age, females had a slightly higher probability of migration than males. Meanwhile, Owen and Green's work (1992) revealed that males are slightly more likely to move, and more likely to move a longer distance than females (supported by Hall et al (2000) in an investigation of household transitions to live alone). It should be noted that all of these studies were not focused on *rural* population changes but migration in general. More recently, Frontier Economics (2001) found no significant differences between male and female *out*-migration from rural areas.

Gendered labour market outcomes of rural population change

A key theme that emerges from the literature is the extent to which women who migrate to rural areas (typically as part of households comprising married couples and often with dependent children) are then disadvantaged in the labour market as a result of this move. Research has revealed that women rarely move into a rural area because this would entail employment opportunities for themselves. More typically, their spouse's employment is a more important driver, particularly in those areas where local labour markets are relatively buoyant, such as Wiltshire (Little and Morris, 2002). As one commentator has argued, while a rural location may be deemed advantageous in 'housing' and 'environmental' terms for some individual household members – particularly young people and women – such a location may be judged 'disadvantageous' from a 'labour market' perspective (Green, 1999). This commentator goes on to argue that in-migrants face employment constraints with a limited number of poor quality, low paid jobs available unless willing and able to travel long distances. However, this is particularly the case for young people, women seeking full-time employment in high level non manual employment, and men in specialist occupations.

Two recent studies (both based on primary survey and qualitative interview evidence) both suggest that women migrating in to rural areas face difficulties in accessing appropriate employment. Two-thirds of the women surveyed in the East Midlands by Hardill (1998) who held jobs (both professional and non-professional) before the move to the rural area found jobs after the move, but often with some downward mobility. The other third either became full time carers or unemployed. Some of those (number not specified) who became full time carers revealed that the problems of finding jobs in rural areas were just too difficult and as a result they had withdrawn from the labour market. These findings broadly support those of Little and Morris (2002) in a study undertaken in three rural areas Wiltshire, Cornwall and West Yorkshire, and are illustrated by the comment of one woman in Wiltshire:

> "The problem in rural areas is that you have to be adaptable. You cannot look for jobs for which you are trained…Most of my friends are doing things that they are not directly qualified for, but they have adapted quite

> well…They have the best qualified support assistants and lab technicians in the schools around here. They are making the best of the situation".

The structure and operation of rural labour markets, together with a number of other structural constraints such as lack of affordable childcare and public transport are evoked as explanations for the difficulties that women experience in accessing employment in rural areas. However, feminist informed research suggests that "the circumstances under which women become involved in paid work are as relevant (or possibly more relevant) to their employment experiences as the configuration of the rural labour market. The domestic and community responsibilities of women, the activities and interests of other members of the household, the attitudes of the family, the community and employers, for example, all act to influence the practical and ideological contexts of women's employment" (Little, 2002, p.113). Thus, it has been established that cultural constructions of rurality, in which the importance of the family, domestic and community work are seen as central to rural women's sense of identity, also play an important role in shaping the paid employment opportunities and experiences of rural women. While the perceived advantages of a rural lifestyle (e.g. a 'strong sense of community' or a good environment in which to bring up children) may not be a substitute for employment they may be amongst the factors that influence the choices made by both women and rural families and which result in some of the characteristic features of women's employment participation once they have moved into a rural area.

While the work discussed above is typically based on small scale, qualitative research, a forthcoming study that draws on the census suggests that the differences in women's economic activity between rural and urban may not be as great as the qualitative research has suggested (Henderson and Hoggart, forthcoming). These authors find that:

> "there is little to distinguish urban from rural rates of women's economic activity in four of the five rural area-types explored here, confirming Agg and Phillip's, 1998, p.259, observations of shared features in gender divisions of labour between suburban and rural areas on Leicestershire and Warwickshire".

Further investigation of these issues using large scale statistical data sets is suggested, possibly in combination with qualitative evidence.

4.5. An ageing rural population

As has been already stated in this report, the average age of the rural population England is growing. Furthermore, the proportion of the overall rural population made up of people over retirement age is also expanding (from 20.3% in 1991 to 20.9% in 2001 - DEFRA, 2002). As Lowe (2003) reports, people over 65 account for nearly one quarter of the rural population (compared with 16% in urban areas). Many observers assert that the impact of this general demographic ageing is particularly felt in rural areas and is compounded both by the perception of the service issues it raises and by the out-migration of younger age cohorts.

The shifting geography if the elderly population has been closely examined by Warnes and Law (1984) and the regional trends are well described. The 2002 census confirms the dominance of the rural SW and SE in hosting a significant post-retirement population (22.8% and 20.6% of the total rural population respectively) but even in those regions characterised by low proportions of retired people at a regional level, individual districts exist where the post-retirement population attains 30%.

Of critical concern here of course, are rural service provision, also the subject of an expanding research literature. We include here a recently published table draw from unpublished Countryside Commission research into the differences between urban and rural areas in service provision for the elderly.

Table 4.2 Some indicators of the current shortcomings in the provision of UK rural services

For every 1000 people over 65:	Remote rural areas	Accessible rural areas	UK urban areas
Number receiving help from social services to live at home	59	63	81
Number receiving intensive support from social services to live at home	7	7	10

Source: Lowe, 2003

For Lowe (2003), there exists a key distinction between local elderly, who are essentially the residual working class and established middle class, and the non-local elderly who have moved into the area. This distinction shapes the quality of life of elderly people in such issues as housing and health care access.

5. POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND RESEARCH NEEDS

This report has emphasised the considerable changes taking place in rural Britain as a result of major demographic shifts, both internally within the rural population and at a broader national scale. These changes are both quantitatively and qualitatively important. Not only is the English rural population growing, in real terms, but it is also changing in its composition.

To a large degree, these trends lie beyond the reach of public policy mechanisms. They are driven, as the research has shown, by economic forces and business cycles that are profoundly reshaping the spatial organisation of employment. Yet they are also driven by more subtle changes in consumer aspirations and preferences leading to pro-rural migration even if these are accompanied by longer commuting-to-work patterns and by more restricted spousal employment opportunities.

Of course, as some have argued, addressing the urban-push factors both by seeking to reduce the impact of those urban characteristics that drive people from cities and by actively making them attractive as places to life, might stem the tide of counter-urbanisation (Greenhalgh, 1998). Limiting new housebuilding in rural areas, a policy move widely and consistently advocated by rural preservationists and local rural councils, would also reduce the numbers (but not the demand) but with serious equity consequences. It might be argued that the British rural planning system is still largely characterised by a form of institutionalised and highly selective NIMBYism. Furthermore, as the research cited here has demonstrated, without an incoming population, the rural population is irrevocably decreasing. Even with a huge influx, it is still ageing.

In quantitative terms, the critical demographic issues of rural Britain lie at the two opposite ends of the population spectrum, the young and the old. The former are under-represented and continue to form the bulk of those leaving the countryside. The latter are over-represented and a major component, in certain regions, of those migrating into rural areas. The two opposing migration flows they represent have significant consequences for rural Britain. The out-migration of the young, whose causes are primarily linked to employment, but also contain, as researchers such as Leyshom and others have revealed, a growing dissatisfaction with the enforced idyll of the middle class countryside, its mores, its arcadian untouchability and the sense of *ennui* it engenders, are not only prompting service decline but, over the long term, are reducing the economic and biological sustainability of rural England. Encouraging the younger age cohorts to remain in rural areas (including rural towns) by providing suitable opportunities in housing and in employment should be a long term objective of rural policy. The in-migration of more elderly people brings its own well documented pressures upon rural services. While pensions will generate a growing income in many rural parts of Britain, the needs of the rural elderly remain under-researched and arguably under-addressed in policy.

In qualitative terms, the critical demographic issues in rural areas concern differential employment aspirations and needs and changing social composition. While there is wide-scale acceptance of the changing socio-spatial organisation of the British

economy, many of the specifically rural dimensions of this remain under-researched. Although there now a raft of policies and measures designed to promote rural economic development, linking this to shifting population dynamics remains a challenge. The success of farm diversification schemes, for example, has been shown to be less dependent upon farming than upon rural population growth providing the demand for new rural 'products' (Centre for Rural Research, 2003). The growth and success of local food economies is heavily reliant upon produce purchases by local people, for whom farmers are willing to re-orientate production systems towards high quality, sustainable outputs and sell them at increasingly specialist outputs, from farmers markets to farm shops (Morris and Buller, 2003).

The research reviewed above has also emphasised the important link between rural in-migration and growing levels of self employment in rural areas. Mechanisms such as the Rural Enterprise Scheme need to be responsive to this particular dynamic and its possible contribution in encouraging the employment of rural people.

Whatever the validity of the 'rural-as-middle-class-territory' claims, research has clearly demonstrated that there is a growing sense of socio-economic *rapprochement* in rural Britain leading to a lessening of housing and employment opportunities for certain sectors of society. A great deal of research has been undertaken in recent years on issues of rural exclusion and poverty. In what might be portrayed as their increasingly narrow social homogeneity, rural communities are arguably less inclusive than they were leading, for example, to pronounced divisions in certain areas between the agricultural community, ever more encapsulated, and an ex-urban rural residential class. The dynamics of rural communities, their declining capacity for inclusiveness, the effects of the growing separation of place of work and place of residence on the very concept of community are all research issues that require further investigation. So to are the mechanisms and procedures that reinforce social and cultural capital in rural localities, be they partnerships, new fora of local representation, community involvement and so on.

Finally, and returning to our opening remarks, the critical dynamic for rural England is the relationship between what is, on the one hand, a dynamic, though demographically selective, trend of population growth and, on the other, a declining primary sector which nonetheless remains critical to the overall management of rural land and landscape. Researchers have been referring for some time now to the emergence of a consumption-based rurality in Britain, one that is replacing the original production-based economy. That consumption economy drives a differentiated process of commodification and favours the emergence of what some have called a new environmental economy that seeks to derive economic benefits from the environmental resources (be they direct or implied) of the countryside. Here is an area of research need and innovative policy response. Economic multipliers and local economic integrity (viz, the attention currently being given to the New Economics Foundation and their 'leaky bucket' model), the stimulation of a local, rural enterprise culture and the establishment of facilitation networks enjoining the public and private sectors are all at the forefront of this new research agenda and, as such, should be actively pursued.

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