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| Institution: Aberystwyth University |
| Unit of Assessment: 19, Business and Management Studies |
| Title of case study: Application of a systems approach to hill and upland development policies in Wales |
| <p>1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)</p> <p>Research led by Midmore over the past two decades has improved understanding of the impact of external pressures on hill and upland farming systems, and consequent effects on the wider social, demographic and environmental context in which they are set. This provided evidence for improved agricultural and agri-environmental policymaking, of particular usefulness in the context of a newly devolved administration, and also stimulated the development of practical initiatives involving individual farm and non-farm beneficiaries, recreational visitors and eco-tourists, and other stakeholder beneficiaries. It helped to counteract adverse economic trends, and heightened public awareness of the interdependence of cultural assets, recreational potential and natural beauty with agricultural methods to achieve a sustainable hill and upland economy and society.</p> |
| <p>2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)</p> <p>Research into the problems associated with fragility of economic, social and environmental systems in hill and upland areas began in the late 1990s. Midmore led this working in conjunction with a variety of colleagues, at various times, both in Aberystwyth and elsewhere. The initial impetus came from a review, commissioned by the Welsh Office in 1997, of the effectiveness of agricultural support for hill and upland farms in ensuring the continuation of farming as a means of “maintaining a minimum population level or conserving the countryside” (EU Directive 75/2767). The report (Midmore et al. 1998), using interdisciplinary perspectives and methods, contained three distinct but related strands. The first, policy analysis, resulted in a collation and comparison of findings of the original study with parallel evaluations conducted for the other three constituent nations of the UK, and developed a comprehensive set of recommended reforms (Midmore et al. 2001); the second established the theoretical basis for a systems approach to evaluation of peripheral rural economies (Midmore and Whittaker 2001); and the third developed and applied the scenario approach to enhancement of policy foresight (culminating in Fuller-Love et al. 2006, with regard to rural enterprise development).</p> <p>The economic circumstances of the hills and uplands worsened in the 2000s in the aftermath of the foot-and-mouth epidemic. These resulted in further outmigration pressures, declines in services provision, and adverse environmental changes (Scott et al. 2004). These concerns, and the reputation developed by Aberystwyth through third mission activities arising from the foregoing analyses, prompted the commissioning of the output for which the main research impact is claimed. Brecknockshire Agricultural Society sought to celebrate its 250th anniversary through a piece of rigorous academic work which could draw attention to the situation of hill and upland Wales and reflect on how policy development for the future might best be stimulated. The resulting output, <i>Cherished Heartland: the Future of Upland Wales</i>, consolidated the three strands of hill and upland research in a widely accessible framework. It provided a stock-take of contemporary Welsh uplands, based on analysis of the historical evolution of the interdependent economic, social, cultural and environmental systems which they comprise. It illustrated the present state of the hills and uplands through a set of six case studies examining upland family farms representing the extensive variety of circumstances in terms of geography, economic viability and their perspectives and aspirations with regard to further, and potentially adverse, reforms to policy support. It explored the future through a policy-focused scenario analysis identifying the influences which may interact to create different futures for the uplands. It highlighted the critical nature of the economic challenges facing Wales’ rural heartland, with profound implications for the cultural and environmental heritage. The conclusion of the overall analysis was that, across the range of possible futures, outcomes could be adverse for interests of at least some of the stakeholders, and highlighted the need for wide-ranging debate to develop a fresh perspective.</p> |

3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

- 3.1 Midmore, P., Sherwood, A-M., Hounsome, B., Hughes, G., Jenkins, T., Roughley, G., Russell, S., 1998, LFA policy in Wales: a review of the socio-economic and environmental effects of the HLCA scheme, report for the Welsh Office, Aberystwyth: Welsh Institute of Rural Studies (The University of Wales), 144 pp. (ISBN: 0902124722).
- 3.2 Midmore, P., Sherwood, A-M., Roughley, G., 2001, "Policy reform and the sustainability of farming in the uplands of the United Kingdom: conflicts between environment and social support", *Journal of Environmental Policy and Planning*, 3(1), pp. 43-63, (doi: 10.1080/15239080108559293)
- 3.3 Midmore, P., Whittaker, J., 2000, "Economics for sustainable rural systems", *Ecological Economics*, 35(2), 173-189. (doi: 10.1016/S0921-8009(00)00195-6)
- 3.4 Scott, A., Christie, M., Midmore, P. 2004, "Impact of the 2001 foot-and-mouth disease outbreak in Britain: implications for rural studies", *Journal of Rural Studies*, 20(1), pp. 1-14 (doi: 10.1016/S0743-0167(03)00032-9)
- 3.5 Midmore, P., Moore-Colyer, R., 2005, *Cherished heartland: the future of upland Wales*, report for Brecknockshire Agriculture Society, Cardiff: Institute of Welsh Affairs, 42 pp. (ISBN: 1904773060).
- 3.6 Fuller-Love, N., Midmore, P., Thomas, D., Henley, A., 2006, "Entrepreneurship and rural economic development: a scenario analysis approach", *International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behaviour and Research*, 12(5), pp. 289-305 (doi: 10.1108/13552550610687655)

Outputs 3.2, 3.3, 3.4 and 3.6 are articles in peer-reviewed journals and are either internationally recognised or internationally excellent. Two of these have been cited in major review articles (3.3 in Léon, Y., 2005, "Rural development in Europe: a research frontier for agricultural economists", *European Review of Agricultural Economics*, 32(3), 301-317, and in Mingers, J., 2010, "A review of the recent contribution of systems thinking to operational research and management science", *European Journal of Operational Research*, 207(3), 1147-1161; 3.6 in Dwyer, J., 2011, "UK Land Use Futures: Policy influence and challenges for the coming decades", *Land Use Policy*, 28(4), 674-683), and one in a major review text (3.4 in McAreavey, R., 2009, *Rural Development Theory and Practice*, Routledge Studies in Development and Society, Vol. 19, 1-164). Output 3.1 is a report commissioned for the purpose of evaluating or enhancing policy, which was welcomed by the responsible Secretary of State at the time (HC Deb. 22 April 1998 vol. 310 cc. 804-5).

4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

The impact of *Cherished Heartland* took three major forms:

1. It made a significant contribution, through the executive and legislature of the devolved Welsh administration, through *shaping and influencing policy* towards rural Wales in general, and the dominant landmass of upland Wales in particular;
2. It stimulated the development of a *collaborative commercial enterprise* which drew constructively on the recommendations which emerged from the overall framework of the underpinning research, and has subsequently acted to achieve improved social, cultural and environmental sustainability;
3. It provided focus and impetus to the development of a *third sector organisation* concerned with the sustainable conservation of the upland system, working to promote public awareness of the environmental assets of the Welsh uplands and to promote its recreational use in ways which avoid damage.

The *shaping and influencing policy* was led, primarily, by the convening of a conference to respond to the report for which impact is claimed (output 3.5), by the then Minister for Environment, Planning and Countryside. This occasion was used to announce the setting up of a Task and Finish group on "Sustainable Farming and Environment: Action Towards 2020" (source 5.1). The group had an independent chair, and included Midmore among its membership. Its remit was to

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develop a vision for 2020 on sustainable farming and land use, taking account of environmental issues, rural communities and social welfare, and to report on policy options for the Welsh Government. The chair's introduction states "The 'Cherished Heartlands' report, commissioned by Brecknockshire Agricultural Society to look at future scenarios and make policy recommendations for the hills and uplands of Wales, concluded that a prosperous future for farming in upland Wales can be achieved only if appropriate policies are adopted by both government and the industry itself." (p. 5). The 67 recommendations made in its report were incorporated into a Welsh Government policy document in 2009, "Farming, Food & Countryside: Building a secure future - A new strategy for farming" (source 5.2), which embraced wider issues such as rural tourism, community development, climate change and collaborative enterprise, and were given statutory expression in reforms to the EU Rural Development Programme in Wales (source 5.3).

Also in 2009, the National Assembly Rural Development Sub-Committee established an inquiry into the future of the uplands, in which written and oral evidence drew extensively on the Cherished Heartlands report (sources 5.4 and 5.5). The prospects of approximately 17,000 people who work in full-time in farming in the Less Favoured areas are directly affected by these policy developments, and 3,000 work in the meat processing industry. Leisure and recreation opportunities generate almost 24,000 jobs in Wales as a whole, and a further 10,000 full-time equivalent jobs in environment-related activities (sources 5.10 and 5.11).

A collaborative commercial enterprise was established in 2007 in the form of a multi-stakeholder consortium, initiated by Powys County Council and the Prince's Charities in Wales, to pursue sustainable rural development objectives. The impetus came from the policy issues raised by *Cherished Heartland*, and is directly acknowledged in the feasibility study of the Cambrian Mountains Initiative (CMI). An overview document states "The 2005 Cherished Heartland report ... provided the stimulus for collaboration between the local authorities of Ceredigion, Powys and Carmarthenshire, the Countryside Council for Wales and The Prince's Charities to establish the Cambrian Mountains Initiative" (source 5.6). Although not formally a cooperative, the Cambrian Mountain Company Limited (the operational vehicle) is managed by farm and tourism business owners, along with local and national environmental NGOs, and support from a public sector steering group which ensures that programmes are tailored and funding streams pooled to achieve maximum impact. The CMI has worked closely with a range of stakeholders to improve marketing of food and tourism, to enhance community development and to improve environmental and ecosystem management (source 5.7). It has developed producer involvement in branding and marketing for "Cambrian Mountains Lamb" as a premium, high profile product, and has established the locality as a distinct, quality tourism destination by achieving widespread support for its Destination Development Plan, and a growing number of Tourism Ambassadors. Each of the main communities in the locality belongs to the Cambrian Communities Network, part of which involves preparation of an area Action Plan as the main tool for improved community engagement. Finally, it has led research on ecosystem service delivery including whole-farm carbon footprinting analyses and adaptation of ecosystem service delivery to climate change. Five project groups focus on delivering targeted objectives in the areas of tourism, produce marketing, ecosystems, capacity building, and the built environment, heritage and communities. The initiative is also designed to develop a model for the Welsh Government to influence future rural policy delivery.

The *third sector organisation* was the Cambrian Mountains Society, established to promote the significant opportunities arising from improvement of the economy and strengthening social structure by responding to threats including the decline of agriculture and landscape degradation. It has used the *Cherished Heartlands* report extensively, in its major policy statement in 2008 arguing in favour of obtaining AONB status for the Mid Wales region (source 5.8), which states "The publication of Cherished Heartland by Professors Midmore and Moore-Colyer draws attention to the problems of agriculture in the uplands of Wales, and to the likelihood that decline will continue", p. 4) and, in common with the RSPB and the Welsh Association of National Parks, in evidence to the 2010 National Assembly Sub-Committee inquiry noted above. Its activities closely parallel those of the Cambrian Mountains Initiative, but as a charity rather than an enterprise whose revenue partly consists of public funds, it is able to engage directly in lobbying and

campaigning (source 5.9). The society continues to flourish, in campaigning and in providing educational and recreational events for its growing membership.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

- 5.1 Report of the independent group examining future prospects for farming and the environment, *Sustainable Farming and Environment: Action Towards 2020*, available at: <http://www.physicalactivityandnutritionwales.org.uk/Documents/740/Sustainable%20farming%20and%20the%20Environment%202020report-e%285%29.pdf>
- 5.2 Welsh Government Strategy Document, *Farming, Food & Countryside: Building a secure future - A new strategy for farming*, available at: <http://wales.gov.uk/docs/drah/publications/090507ffcmaindocen.pdf>.
- 5.3 The civil servant responsible for developing the Welsh Government's agriculture strategy between 2009 and 2012 can be contacted to corroborate impacts on policy development.
- 5.4 The 2010 National Assembly for Wales report of its inquiry into the Future of the Uplands is available at <http://www.assemblywales.org/cr-ld8028-e.pdf>; evidence by the RSPB is at http://www.assemblywales.org/6_rspb_formatted.pdf.
- 5.5 Evidence by the Cambrian Mountains Society to the Future of the Uplands inquiry is at [http://www.assemblywales.org/cy/bus-home/bus-committees/bus-committees-scrutiny-committees/bus-committees-third-rd-home/bus-committees-third-rd-agendas/rdc_3_-18-09_p1_-_cambrian_mountain_society.pdf?langoption=3&ttl=RDC\(3\)-18-09%20%3A%20Papur%201%3A%20Ymchwiliad%20i%20Dyfodol%20Ucheldiroedd%20%3A%20Tystiolaeth%20gan%20Gymdeithas%20Mynyddoedd%20Cambria%20\(PDF%2C%20124KB\)%20\(Saesneg%20yn%20unig\)](http://www.assemblywales.org/cy/bus-home/bus-committees/bus-committees-scrutiny-committees/bus-committees-third-rd-home/bus-committees-third-rd-agendas/rdc_3_-18-09_p1_-_cambrian_mountain_society.pdf?langoption=3&ttl=RDC(3)-18-09%20%3A%20Papur%201%3A%20Ymchwiliad%20i%20Dyfodol%20Ucheldiroedd%20%3A%20Tystiolaeth%20gan%20Gymdeithas%20Mynyddoedd%20Cambria%20(PDF%2C%20124KB)%20(Saesneg%20yn%20unig)).
- 5.6 The document providing an overview of the establishment and purposes of the Cambrian Mountains Initiative, formerly available on their website, is available. The current position of the initiative is described in a progress report at its website, http://cambrianmountains.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/CMI_Executive_Summary_July_2012.pdf.
- 5.7 The chair of the Cambrian Mountain Company Limited can be contacted to corroborate impacts on commercial developments in the Welsh Hills and Uplands.
- 5.8 The Cambrian Mountains Society's proposal for AONB status, "Cambrian Mountains – The Heart of Wales; Developing a Strategy for a Sustainable Future" can be found at <http://www.cambrian-mountains.co.uk/documents/cambrian-mountains-sustainable-future.pdf>.
- 5.9 The chair of the Cambrian Mountains Society between 2008 and 2010, and current treasurer, can be contacted to corroborate impacts on promoting conservation and sustainable leisure activities in the Welsh Hills and Uplands.
- 5.10 Data on employment and output in the Welsh farming and the meat processing sector for 2009 can be obtained from Statistics Wales at <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/statistics/theme/agriculture/?lang=en>, and at http://hccmpw.org.uk/publications/farming_and_industry_development/statistics/.
- 5.11 Further information on the multiplier effects arising from the primary sector can be found in Midmore, P. (2011), Food and the economy in Wales, *The Welsh Economic Review*, 22, pp. 29-31, and in Bilsborough, S. and Hill, S. (2003), *Valuing Our Environment: The Economic Impact of the Environment of Wales*, technical summary report for the Valuing our Environment Partnership, available at: http://www.rspb.org.uk/Images/VoE%20Technical%20Summary_tcm9-133080.pdf.