The Agribusiness and Economics Research Unit (AERU) operates from Lincoln University providing research expertise for a wide range of organisations concerned with production, processing, distribution, finance and marketing.

The AERU operates as a semi-commercial research agency. Research contracts are carried out for clients on a commercial basis and University research is supported by the AERU through sponsorship of postgraduate research programmes. Research clients include Government Departments, both within New Zealand and from other countries, international agencies, New Zealand companies and organisations, individuals and farmers. Research results are presented through private client reports, where this is required, and through the publication system operated by the AERU. Two publication series are supported: Research Reports and Discussion Papers.

The AERU operates as a research co-ordinating body for the Economics and Marketing Department and the Department of Farm Management and Accounting and Valuation. This means that a total staff of approximately 50 professional people is potentially available to work on research projects. A wide diversity of expertise is therefore available for the AERU.

The major research areas supported by the AERU include trade policy, marketing (both institutional and consumer), accounting, finance, management, agricultural economics and rural sociology. In addition to the research activities, the AERU supports conferences and seminars on topical issues and AERU staff are involved in a wide range of professional and University related extension activities.

Founded as the Agricultural Economics Research Unit in 1962 from an annual grant provided by the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research (DSIR), the AERU has grown to become an independent, major source of business and economic research expertise. DSIR funding was discontinued in 1986 and from April 1987, in recognition of the development of a wider research activity in the agribusiness sector, the name of the organisation was changed to the Agribusiness and Economics Research Unit. An AERU Management Committee comprised of the Principal, the Professors of the three associate departments, and the AERU Director and Assistant Director administers the general Unit policy.

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CHAPTER 14 RURAL RESEARCH - EXTINCTION OR RENAISSANCE? by Heather Little 103

CHAPTER 15 RURAL SOCIETY AND THE SOCIOLOGY OF AGRICULTURE: RESEARCH PRIORITIES FOR RURAL SOCIOLOGISTS IN THE 1990s by Perry Share, Ian Gray and Geoffrey Lawrence 113
On 7, 8 and 9 December 1990, Lincoln University hosted the Sociological Association of Aotearoa (N.Z.) Conference on Transitions. Included in the conference was a well-attended Rural Economy and Society Section in which 14 papers were presented. Since there are no general conference proceedings, the AERU is pleased to publish the proceedings of the rural section in order to help communicate current research to a wider audience.

Tony Zwart
Director
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The conference at Lincoln University was judged by many to be a great success and we acknowledge the contribution from the conference convener, Bob Gidlow, Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism, Lincoln University. Errol Costello of the Education Unit at Lincoln also gave valuable support.
This Discussion Paper records the 14 papers presented in the Rural Economy and Society Section of the Sociological Association of Aotearoa (N.Z.) held at Lincoln University 7-9 December, 1990.

The papers cover development issues, rural history, contemporary research and issues relating to the discipline of rural sociology in New Zealand. The development paper examines landownership in Northern England and the tensions surrounding different land uses. The history papers examine the impacts of transport technology, long-term trends in agriculture exports, and Shelley's activities in rural education in Canterbury. The contemporary research papers, while wide ranging, include common themes such as how farm people have responded to the economic downturn in recent years by seeking off-farm income. Another focus is the rural community with one paper examining local politics and another paper examining public drinking. The disciplinary papers look back at our rural research and then examine prospects and priorities for research in future.
CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In 1986 Lincoln College hosted a one-day seminar for the first meeting of the New Zealand Rural Economy and Society Study Group. Two papers were presented and participants discussed research issues generally, and supported the ideas of a newsletter to communicate among researchers and a longer conference. In 1987 a symposium on rural research needs included papers from ten people and then went on to discuss concerns, goals and problems relating to rural research. Topics considered important for research then were: rural decline, deteriorating urban-rural relationships, coping with change, rural powerlessness, low farm/rural incomes, and the use and bias in information. These two meetings provided a focus for rural researchers in New Zealand. Despite their success there was no formal establishment of a Rural Economy and Society study group.

The Sociological Association of Aotearoa (N.Z.) Conference on Transitions held at Lincoln University in December 1990 provided an opportunity to host a rural economy and society section and to continue the themes of the earlier meetings. The call for papers resulted in a good response and four themes emerged, namely: development, historical topics, contemporary research, and disciplinary issues. The papers are presented here in this order and thus give a broad indication of current work and, in particular, highlight current thinking on appropriate research agendas.
CHAPTER 2

LANDOWNERSHIP AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN BRITAIN:
A CASE STUDY OF THE PENNINES
(EXTENDED ABSTRACT)

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The aim of this chapter is to contribute to the on-going debate about rural development in Britain, more specifically upland Britain, with a case study of the North Pennines, an upland region of Northern England. It is argued that landownership exerts a significant negative influence on the region's economy and society, and poses an obstacle to the region's development. The nature of this influence reflects the specific landownership structure of the North Pennines and is to some extent also dependent upon the national political climate. The paper looks first in general terms at the ways in which landownership can affect rural community development, and then focuses on the North Pennines.

Landownership has been identified by Newby (1980) as the key to understanding rural society, but this assertion has been challenged (see Barlow, 1986). Agriculture is no longer the major source of employment in many rural areas, and landowners are no longer necessarily the only elite group in rural society with the migration of middle class non-landed property owners into the countryside. The significance of landownership in any one locality today is contingent upon its economic and social structure. More empirical research is needed to establish the contemporary nature and significance of landownership in the rural development process.

How can landowners influence the rural economy and society and rural development process? In very simple terms two related influences can be identified. First, landowners exert a direct influence through the ownership of land. How land is used and managed can affect the local economy in positive or negative ways. Second, landowners can exert an indirect influence through the exercise of political power: at local level as leaders in the community, or at national level through their influence over rural policy. Rural policy in the post war period has been dominated by agricultural policy, which in turn has been largely controlled by the farm lobby (Cox et al., 1986). Thus, far from challenging the power of farmers and landowners, state intervention has actively reinforced this power.

Recent changes in the national climate have altered the balance of power in rural policies with increasing public criticism of the agricultural industry (Cox et al., 1988). The power of the farm lobby has to some extent been undermined whilst the power of the environmental lobby has increased. This has important implications for rural policy, with the farm lobby already making some concessions to the environmental lobby, and will affect the politics of development at local level in individual rural localities.

There is evidence to suggest that landownership may be a significant negative influence on the development of upland Britain. MacGregor (1988), in a study of landed estates in the Scottish Highlands, found that many landlords did not use their land to its full potential, with serious negative implications for local employment and the local economy. The upland regions of Britain face particularly severe socio-economic problems. Traditional forms of employment such as mining and agriculture have declined over the 20th century causing depopulation and the closure of services. In addition, in the post war period the
Uplands have faced increasing land use conflicts between productive activities such as agriculture, forestry and water on the one hand, and increasing demands for recreation and conservation from the growing urban population on the other (Cloke & Park, 1985). Despite over 40 years of public intervention, the problems of upland Britain, far from being solved, appear to have magnified. There is a need for a better understanding of the processes of development in upland Britain, and an analysis of the role of landownership could help towards this.

The North Pennines is a marginal agricultural region based on sheep and cattle rearing with few alternative employment sources. The landownership structure is highly traditional, dominated by landed estates and common lands (Wilson, 1990). An analysis of the management of four landed estates and the common lands suggests that landownership does have a significant direct and indirect influence on the rural economy and society. It appears that although tenant farmers do not appear to be disadvantaged in comparison to their owner occupier counterparts, the estates pose a threat to the local agricultural economy with recent attempts on the part of the estates to reduce levels of grazing on the private moors and commons to protect the grouse. Grouse shooting is becoming an increasingly important commercial activity on the estates and commons, but it is an exclusive sport and has few positive spin-offs for the local community.

There is increasing tension between the management policies of the estates and the policies of outside agencies for the region. Tourism is seen by the state as an economic growth area for upland Britain, but it is a policy which, because it is being promoted by outside agencies, threatens the autonomy of the landed estates to make management decisions. This was illustrated by the opposition of the landed estates to the proposal by the Countryside Commission to designate the North Pennines as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in 1976. More recently a direct threat has been posed to the future viability of grouse shooting by the proposal by the Common Land Forum to allow general public access to all common land. It appears, however, that landed interests in the region are rapidly loosing their political power to influence local development. With the changing national political climate, landowners in the more peripheral regions of the country can no longer be assured of the support of the farm lobby.

The opposition of landed interests in the North Pennines to tourism has been so fierce because they have enjoyed a longer period of autonomy than landowners in many other upland regions. They also now have a major economic interest in protecting this autonomy because of grouse shooting. The change in the national political climate may not benefit the interests of the landed estates but should be beneficial to the rural population. Landowners may well be forced to adopt a more conciliatory approach to the question of rural development. As long as the landed estates survive they will exert an influence on the North Pennines, but the nature of this influence will change.
REFERENCES


The extended version of this paper will be submitted for publication.
CHAPTER 3

RURAL NEW ZEALAND AND THE SECOND
INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION

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ABSTRACT

This chapter aims to provide an overview of the impact of transport technology on New Zealand rural society from traditional Maori canoe to the motor vehicle. The author has recently won a contract to write a history of transport and New Zealand society, and hopes to use his chapter to bring together and test some preliminary ideas on the rural side of this work.
This chapter looks at some of the effects on New Zealand's rural society and economy of what has been called the Second Industrial Revolution.¹ At a time when this country's rural sector is experiencing some substantial technological change, in addition to other changes, it is as well to reflect that such transitions have happened before. The emphasis in this paper is on the impact of changes in transport technology, but it also touches on the effects of other technological changes on rural areas during the same period.

Most people have some awareness of the First Industrial Revolution. This development can be said to have got under way during the first half of the Nineteenth Century, initially in Western Europe and the eastern United States. Technologically it was characterised by the application of steam-power to industrial processes, largely through the burning of coal and coal gas. In the First Industrial Revolution steam was the general means of transferring energy, coal was the main fuel, iron was the typical material, there was a heavy emphasis on the production of capital goods, and the railway and steamship were the characteristic means of transport. The Second Industrial Revolution began in the technologically advanced world from the end of the Nineteenth Century, but only really took hold in the period between the world wars. It was built largely on electrical and petroleum technology. Electricity was the typical means of transferring energy, oil was the fuel, steel the material, the emphasis in industry switched increasingly to the production of consumer goods, and the motor vehicle was the characteristic means of transport. This picture of the two revolutions is greatly simplified. There were numerous overlaps, chronologically and technologically. However, the general pattern holds good.

The First Industrial Revolution effectively created rural New Zealand for Europeans and certainly transformed it for Maori. Without the great demand from the mills of Yorkshire, New Zealand's wool industry would never have arisen and European settlement here would have withered. Without steam engines and railways, the refrigeration (or even canning) of meat and dairy products and their transportation to markets on the other side of the world would just not have been economic. Without railways the timber industry, the necessary pioneer for agricultural settlement in much of New Zealand, would have faded away with the exhaustion of coastal forest resources. Railways and steam-traction engines also had a profound influence on other forms of farm production, both for the local and overseas markets.

The Second Industrial Revolution was not as vital as the First to New Zealand rural life. Nevertheless, its influence was profound. The motor vehicle in its various forms provided a much more rapid means for the farmer to get his produce to the factory or the railhead, to get inputs such as fertiliser onto the farm, and to take advantage of the services provided in major towns and cities. Furthermore, it is likely that refrigerated motor transport and the development of electrically powered

¹For example, D. Landes, The Unbound Prometheus (Cambridge, 1969), p.4.
refrigerators for small commercial premises played a big role in the expansion of the British market for butter and lamb. This expanding market underpinned the very substantial growth in farm production in New Zealand during the 1920s and 1930s. On the farm itself the stationary oil engine and the motor tractor permitted more rapid harvesting, initially of wool and seeds, later of fodder crops such as hay. The tractor also speeded soil preparation, sowing and care of growing crops. Oil engines and then electricity increased the speed and ease of harvesting milk and cream through milking machines and mechanical separators. The application of electricity to communications in the form of the radio and the telephone also spread rapidly in rural New Zealand between the world wars.

The social impact of these changes was vast. Perhaps the most obvious was the reduced demand for labour in rural areas, despite large increases in production. The proportion of the workforce employed in farming dropped by a fifth between 1921 and 1951, while the number of sheep shorn rose by half and the numbers of dairy cows in milk and lambs tailed doubled. Some of the reduced demand for labour on the farm was almost certainly hidden, for the not unusual reason that it had been performed by women and children. It is evident that very long hours of farmwork continued to be done by the wives, daughters and youthful sons of farmers, particularly on smaller and poorer units. Nevertheless, the interwar period does seem to have seen an overall reduction in the proportion of outside work done by these categories of workers. The milking machine and mechanical separator were particularly important in this development. Of course, the movement of women out of farmwork did not necessarily mean less work for them. The cult of domesticity and rising standards of housework doubtless took up much of the difference. More years of schooling for children (less of them spent sleeping off the four a.m. milking) meant more work for their mothers.

Another social effect of the Second Industrial Revolution was that the motor vehicle reduced the extent of rural isolation from major urban centres. Frequent trips to town were now possible for people living in isolated areas well away from railways and navigable waterways. School buses gave access to district high schools, usually located in larger rural towns. Radio brought urban entertainment and concerns to the country listener. As a contemporary observer noted, the overall tendency was to "urbanize rural patterns of living". By the same token, increasing numbers of city dwellers were able to travel into the country, leading to the development of new villages of baches along beaches and river banks. In the long run the advent of the motor car led to substantial numbers of city people, mostly from amongst the better-off, living in rural areas and commuting to work in town. Suburbia had acquired six-league boots.

Greater access to what had previously been regarded as

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essentially urban facilities was undoubtedly seen as an advance by most rural people, particularly by those who could afford to own motor vehicles. There were also economies of scale and other savings with the new technology. However, it can also be argued that there was a considerable social cost. Following the publication of Miles Fairburn's *The Ideal Society and its Enemies* last year, New Zealand historians have been much exercised of late about the question of "community" in their country's rural history. Without getting too caught up in the debate, it seems fair to say that the general influence of the Second Industrial Revolution was to reduce the level of communal interaction in many rural areas. Before the development of motorised collection, dairy farmers had taken their own milk or cream to the small local skimming station or creamery. They generally had to wait in a queue while their produce was separated or weighed and tested. Such waiting encouraged a far greater degree of social interaction between neighbours than the few words exchanged with a lorry driver that were all the motorised collection could permit. Similarly, although the school bus definitely promotes social interaction amongst the children riding it (the extent of such interaction varying with the tolerance of the driver), the resulting closure of a number of small rural schools probably distanced education somewhat from many country parents. More generally, the pace and noise of motor transport seems to have reduced interaction between neighbours. Rollo Arnold makes this point very well in an article in the *New Zealand Journal of History* published earlier this year, an article which was effectively a challenge to Fairburn's thesis. Arnold draws on extracts from the diaries of settlers and maintains that

Before the motor age the highway itself was an important social setting. Travellers on foot or horseback, in gigs, carts or wagons, driving bullock teams or pack-horses, passed the time of day as they met. On 14 April 1869 William Wastney went to see if neighbour Mackay had pigs for sale. He had none, so William discussed his problem with those he met on the road home, including his neighbour Bell, who agreed to exchange six little pigs for two fat ones. If William had been motoring this would probably not have happened.¹

One certainly shouldn't take this argument too far. The sight of rural people conversing between cars parked on either side of a road is far from unknown. Nevertheless, it is much more difficult to decide that one will chat to a neighbour and signal one's intention to that neighbour when you are closing on one another at a combined speed of over 150 km/hr than if you are approaching each other at a combined speed of about 15 km/hr. On the main road such impromptu conversations between neighbours are virtually impossible. Certainly there is no question of


driving along side by side discussing the state of the local
countryside. It is tempting to suggest a statistical basis for
some of the reluctance to stop and converse when motoring, as
against using real horsepower. If your journey is going to take
five hours, half an hour's conversation breaks the monotony and
only increases the time taken by ten per cent. If the journey
is expected to take thirty minutes, that half hour of
conversation doubles the time it will take.

Much rural travel had already been mechanised before the advent
of the motor vehicle. That product of the First Industrial
Revolution, the railway, provided country people with a means of
travelling to large towns which was rapid in comparison with
horse-drawn transport. However, unlike the private motor car,
which atomised the travelling population, the railway brought
people together. In the 1950s update of his classic study of a
small rural area, Littledene, H.C.D. Somerset described the
journey from Oxford to Christchurch.

The whole journey of 40 miles, with all the many stops on
the way, took a full three hours. But few ever found it
tedious. The train was as much a meeting place as a means
of conveyance — a kind of club on wheels. Everyone knew
everyone else, and so a trip to town had the excitement of
a dozen neighbourly visits in one. The silence of people
who work in the isolation of farming was broken in talk and
one arrived in town briefed and relaxed with the latest
gossip. As one farmer remarked in recalling times past,
"The train was a good place for an occasional loaf and a
yarn". 

Service cars and buses provided similar opportunities for social
interaction, albeit limited to some extent by the smaller number
of passengers and the more cramped seating. But it was the
private motor vehicle rather than motorised public transport that
was dominant by the 1950s.

At least one feature of the Second Industrial Revolution operated
in the contrary direction, towards greater social interaction
between neighbours. The telephone permitted them to communicate
(and often to eavesdrop) without moving outside the house. The
availability of this form of communication was particularly
important for women, who generally did not have the same
opportunities as men to travel out on business. Some local
communities installed their own telephone systems — the Mangamahu
Valley, north of Wanganui, provides one example of such a system.
Ngati Porou, up on the East Coast, installed another.

Then there is the question of the effect of the Second Industrial
Revolution on the very small townships, effectively villages,
which were a major feature of rural New Zealand at the turn of
the century. Most of these settlements owed their existence to
the fact that local consumers could not afford the time and
expense of travelling to major towns in order to shop. Hence
they purchased many of their needs locally, and undoubtedly spent

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6H.C.D. Somerset, Littledene: Patterns of Change
(Wellington, 1974), p.149.
much time exchanging gossip with the village retailers and other locals. Limitations on the distance that an individual could journey each day by horse or cart also created a demand for overnight accommodation for man and beast in villages along the way. In 1920, when private motor cars were still comparatively rare, but service cars and buses were already popular, an individual at Onga Onga in Central Hawkes Bay remarked that Christmas and New Year passed away very quietly as far as business was concerned. There was no talk about the hundreds and thousands that were taken by the shopkeepers of late. I have been talking to a good many grocers, drapers and butchers and bakers and they all say Christmas preparations are not worth five minute's consideration. The attractions of the big centres are too great.  

Five years later another inhabitant of Hawkes Bay declared that "small centres scattered throughout the countryside were then the rule, but the motor car has killed them. Among them were Woburn, Wimbledon, Herbertville, Wallingford, Wanstead, Patangata, Onga Onga, Tikokino...". By the 1940s the decreased demand for labour on farms was also having an impact on some small townships, particularly in arable areas. Rural workers might not have been generally well-paid, but partly for that reason they had tended to patronise local businesses. Fewer workers meant fewer customers for those businesses.

Another aspect of the Second Industrial Revolution in rural areas was the increased capitalisation of agriculture. Even in the 1880s and 1890s observers were stressing the need for prospective farmers to have a significant amount of capital; the mechanisation of farming during the Second Industrial Revolution greatly strengthened this trend. Machines cost money. Moreover, a certain level of income was necessary to pay for their running, and a host of small farms could not attain this level. Consequently they tended to be absorbed into larger units. Between 1921 and 1952 the proportion of rural holdings under fifty acres dropped by over a sixth. Arguably even the small farmer was becoming more of a capitalist.

The Second Industrial Revolution also had implications for New Zealand's international dependence, not least in the provision of farm inputs. By 1900 a high proportion of the equipment used on farms was actually produced in this country. Traction engines were imported, but most carts and drays, and a great range of farm implements were made here. New Zealand produced leather

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9Ibid.

which local tradesmen, often located in those small rural townships, turned into harness and saddles. The main engine in farm mechanisation and rural transport, the horse, was locally bred and was fuelled on locally-produced grass and oats. Produce was conveyed to the main centres of population and export by rail, often pulled by New Zealand-made locomotives, almost always powered by coal mined here. With its vast acreage of oats and its quality coalfields, the South Island was disproportionately important as the source of the country's energy. On the other hand, a high proportion of the technology of the Second Industrial Revolution was manufactured overseas and was powered by imported fuel. Even when government regulations obliged the great international motor manufacturers to assemble their vehicles and farm machinery here, the most expensive components were imported and the profits of assembly were exported. International oil companies replaced local collieries (including those owned by the state) and grain and feed companies as the main providers of fuel for farming and rural transport.\(^\text{11}\)

On balance, the Second Industrial Revolution appears to have reduced the sustainability of New Zealand agriculture. The fact that most of the electricity consumed on farms here was produced from hydro power stations does somewhat alter the balance of the argument in comparison with countries where most electricity was generated in stations fuelled by coal or oil. Nor should we fail to recognise that coal-powered traction engines and rail locomotives produced considerable air pollution and toxic waste. Nevertheless, the great increase in consumption of fossil fuels through the use of motor vehicles and machinery was clearly a step in the direction of non-sustainability. This was particularly so when compared with horse-powered technology. As was frequently pointed out at the time, tractors do not reproduce themselves. Nor does what they excrete help to fertilise the soil. Horses even provided a good means of recycling straw rather than burning it. Conversely, the increased speed and ease with which artificial fertiliser and poisonous chemicals could be applied with motorised machinery undoubtedly encouraged their use. The amount of soil cultivation, with the resultant destruction of soil structure was similarly encouraged.

The State played a major role in the adaptation of New Zealand to the Second Industrial Revolution, particularly from the point of view of rural dwellers. The Government was responsible for putting in place the large hydro-electric generating stations which brought a massive fall in the price of electricity during the interwar decades. It also made a big investment in the reconstruction of roads to withstand the much greater impact of motor transport on their surfaces. Country people were especially well looked after. The Reform Government promoted the creation of electric power boards to ensure that supply reached them. It also instituted the Main Highways Board, which took funds raised from taxation on all motor vehicles and distributed them in roading subsidies, mostly to rural local bodies. The

State made great efforts to see that country people received the benefits of the Second Industrial Revolution, partly because of their disproportionate political clout, but also because they were perceived as economically and socially essential to the whole dominion. If the task had been left up to private enterprise, rural services would have been poorer and much more expensive.

This chapter has argued that the Second Industrial Revolution lowered the demand for rural labour, led to the decline of most rural villages, reduced the distance between city and country, lessened the degree of social interaction in the countryside, increased New Zealand's international dependency, and made its farming less sustainable. It was also marked by a determination by the State to see that rural areas would have almost the same access to the new technology as urban areas. The development of electronics, and possibly that of biochemistry, may be said to have ushered in a Third Industrial Revolution, one that is just beginning. It is certain that this latest wave of technological change has substantial implications for New Zealand's rural economy and society. I leave for your consideration the question whether its effects will be different or similar to those of the Second Industrial Revolution.
CHAPTER 4

CYCLES AND BOOMS IN NEW ZEALAND AGRICULTURE EXPORTS

(ABSTRACT ONLY)

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ABSTRACT

It is commonplace that demand for primary products in the industrialized world core had important effects upon the structure of the New Zealand economy and society. This paper aims to examine this process (in a preliminary way) especially through a study of how the rhythm of economic activity overseas impacted upon New Zealand agricultural exporters.
CHAPTER 5

BOX, CAR AND ACE: SHELLY IN
RURAL CANTERBURY, 1920 - 1936

(ABSTRACT ONLY)

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ABSTRACT

This paper considers the range of quasi-sociological action research undertaken in rural Canterbury in the 1920s and 1930s under the direction of Janes Shelley, Professor of Education at Canterbury College. Particular attention is directed to underlying conceptions of 'the rural' and of rural problems.
CHAPTER 6

WOMEN'S ECONOMIC CONTRIBUTION TO THE FARM

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ABSTRACT

The Otago Women's Health Survey collected data from a random community sample of urban and rural women in 1985 and 1988. This chapter focuses on the 43 farm families in the study, especially those in financial difficulties. The economic contribution the women make to their farms in their domestic work, farm labouring and off-farm work is essential to the financial viability of the farms, yet its importance appears to be poorly recognised by both the women and their partners.
6.1 Introduction

In 1985 the Otago Women's Health Survey commenced a study of the mental health of urban and rural women. The previous year the Government had removed the Supplementary Minimum Prices (SMPs) from the farming sector after more than a decade of encouraging farmers to develop marginal land using low interest loans. The SMPs had originally been introduced to give farmers an assured basic income, protecting them from serious market fluctuations in product prices so to increase exported produce (Taylor et al., 1987). At the same time interest rates rose steadily to over 20 percent and rural land prices fell. This meant that some farmers had loans to service greater than the equity in their farms as well as their large seasonal finance from the stock companies. In 1985 the farming sector was in a state of shock at the about face of the Government and was very angry, as was amply portrayed by the media. However, they were also convinced that the Government would not persist with these policies and that this would be another temporary financial downturn to farming the same as with droughts and floods.

In 1988 the Otago Women's Health Survey (OWHS) returned to their sample to see what effect the economic downturn and the social changes had had on the women. In the intervening two and a half years the Government had held fast to its rural economic policy as well as pursuing a process of "Corporatisation" in industry. The effect of this policy was to close down a number of rural services such as post offices and banks which, together with the already declining rural public transport system and the recession in the retail industry, accelerated the depopulation of the rural areas. Farmers now knew that there was to be no relief from their financial plight and were making adjustments accordingly. This paper looks at the effects of the social and economic changes between 1985 and 1988 on women living and working on farms.

6.2 Method

In 1985 postal questionnaires were sent to 3044 women chosen at random from five contiguous electoral rolls; three urban and two rural electorates. Towns over 1,000 population were removed from the population so as to obtain a sample of urban women living in areas of high population and a sample of rural women living beyond the immediate services of a small town. Details of the methodology of the first phase of the study are published in Romans-Clarkson et al. (1988). An interview sample of 314 women, randomly stratified to include more women with high levels of psychiatric symptoms, was obtained from the questionnaire respondents. The interviews were held in the women's own homes by two trained interviewers (one a psychiatrist and one a sociologist).

In 1988 the interview sample was followed up to examine the effects of the social and economic changes, in the intervening two and a half years, on the mental health of the women. This interview asked the women to talk about the changes in their lives since we had last visited them. This interview was recorded and annotated.
6.3 Findings

The response rate to the 1985 postal questionnaire was 74 percent and to the initial interview was 90 percent (314 women). Two hundred and eighty two women responded to the second interview. Forty three women identified themselves as farm women in 1985 and 40 in 1988.

Describing their role on the farm one of the women owned and worked her own farm, 13 of the women described themselves as partners on the farm, 16 described themselves as housekeepers and 10 as unpaid workers. The work the women undertook on the farm, in addition to housekeeping and book-keeping, involved drenching, tailing, crutching, draughting, rousting, fencing, general labouring and cooking. Cooking for shearing gangs was generally viewed with resentment and some women had withdrawn this service but were being forced to reintroduce it due to the economic situation.

In 1985 18 (42 percent) of the women had paid off-farm work, 11 part-time and seven full-time. In 1988 15 women (37.5 percent) were working off the farm, eight part-time and seven full-time. In 1985 42 percent of the farm women worked off the farm compared to 56.2 percent of non farm women who worked outside the home. There were no statistical differences between the rates of farm women working and non-farm women in either period although in 1988 14 percent more farm women were out of work.

6.3.1 Families who Left Farming, 1985-1988

In 1985 the interview sample contained 43 women who identified themselves as farm women. Three of these families had left their farms by 1988. One of the sales involved a family who had bought a farm in 1980, but by 1985 their financial situation was too drastic for them to continue. They left the farm and went to live with relations until the woman found a full-time job and shifted the family to a new area. In the meantime the woman's husband became depressed and she continues to support him economically and emotionally. The second case involved a marriage breakdown in 1986 with the man walking off the farm. The farm was sold and the woman and her son moved to town where they both gained employment. The third family involved a dairy farm that had been sold in 1985 as after 24 years the farmer was "sick of milking" and thought "the writing was on the wall" as he saw farm prices falling (Interview 4178). A smaller farm was accepted as part payment but this proved difficult to sell and was sold at a loss in 1987. On leaving the farm the husband gained employment and the woman set up a small business.

6.3.2. Characteristics of Farms in Financial Difficulties, 1988

In 1988 there were 40 farms left in the survey. Between 1985 and 1988 two of these families had sold their farms but were still involved with farming. Another seven of the women described the farm finances as 'difficult' or in 'crisis', one of these being involved in a sale at the time of interview. There was no statistically significant relationship between the type of ownership of the farm, the size of the farm or the period of time the family had been on the farm and financial distress. The
details of these nine farms are shown on Table 1, and this group of nine farms in financial difficulties forms the basis of the following analysis.

The table shows that four of the women had no financial stake in the ownership of the farm and five of them did not perceive themselves as participating in the decision making on the farm. All of the women worked on the farms for no pay, some working full-time. On Farm four the woman had replaced the full-time male worker, on Farm five the woman had sole responsibility for the farm while her husband and son worked off the farm and on Farm six the woman had sole responsibility of the farm five days per week.

All of the women who were in a position to do so worked off the farm. On Farm one the woman did part-time book-keeping while also working on the farm. When her husband became manager of the farm she worked full-time off the farm. On Farm two the woman was forced back to full-time teaching because of the financial situation on the farm and, with the sale of the large farm and purchase of a smaller farm, has continued to teach full-time. Farm three drew no income from the farm for three years, the woman being the breadwinner roasting full-time on other farms as well as cooking for shearsers on her own farm. Farm four was too isolated for the woman to work off the farm, but the women worked full-time on the farm replacing the male farm hand. On Farm six the woman worked the farm five days per week and picked up any local seasonal work that she could such as fruit packing. The woman on Farm seven had limited mobility and lived with constant pain due to arthritis and was suffering from depression but still managed to drive the school bus part-time and make a small contribution to the farm. Farm eight was too isolated for the woman to take off-farm employment and she was also suffering from depression. On Farm nine the woman, who had pre-school children, was made to work part-time for her housekeeping money as none was drawn from the farm and was made to work on the farm instead of employing staff.

6.4 Discussion

Being taken from a random community sample the 43 farms in this study can be seen as generally illustrative of the range of farms in the Otago/Clutha area. The number found to be in financial difficulties appears to be in line with those found in other New Zealand studies (Fitzgerald and Taylor, 1989).

The contribution that farm women make to the economic viability of agricultural units has been understated in the literature due to the limited definition of work to 'paid labour' (Haney, 1982). Only 15 of the women considered that they derived any income from the farm: one as owner, 13 as partners and one as a "fee paid cook". However, all of the women worked on the farms and on a number of the farms the women's labour was vital to its running, e.g., where the woman had completely taken over the farm allowing the men the freedom to engage in waged labour, where the woman had replaced the paid male labourer.

The domestic labour of women is more important on farms than in non-farm households. The farm wife produces a greater number of
Table 1

Farm Ownership and Work Roles for Nine Farms in Financial Difficulties

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ownership</th>
<th>Role on Farm</th>
<th>Work on Farm</th>
<th>Work off Farm</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Individual (not them)</td>
<td>Managed shop</td>
<td>Shop</td>
<td>P/T book-keeping</td>
<td>Farm sold Man Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tea maid</td>
<td></td>
<td>to F/T book-keeping</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Partnership (H &amp; W)</td>
<td>Partner Housekeeper</td>
<td>Accounts</td>
<td>Forced back F/T</td>
<td>Large farm sold Small farm bought</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Housework no pay</td>
<td>Teaching 1986</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Cooking (phased out)</td>
<td>F/T roaster</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>breadwinner</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>for 3 years</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Partnership (H &amp; W)</td>
<td>Partner</td>
<td>Rousting</td>
<td>F/T roaster</td>
<td>Farm sold</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Cooking for shearers</td>
<td>breadwinner</td>
<td>Nothing left</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>No pay</td>
<td>for 3 years</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Individual (man)</td>
<td>Worker Unpaid</td>
<td>Replaced F/T male worker</td>
<td>No - isolated</td>
<td>Rural Bank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Cooking for shearers</td>
<td>Farm F/T</td>
<td>Debt restructuring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>No pay</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Partnership (H &amp; W)</td>
<td>Partner Unpaid</td>
<td>F/T</td>
<td>No - works</td>
<td>Husband &amp; Son</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Full responsibility</td>
<td>Farm F/T</td>
<td>Work on dam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>No pay</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Partnership (H &amp; W)</td>
<td>Partner</td>
<td>5 days p/w</td>
<td>Seasonal fruit picker</td>
<td>Husband in town all week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sole responsibility</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>No pay</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Partnership (H &amp; W)</td>
<td>Housekeeper</td>
<td>Draughting</td>
<td>Bus driver P/T</td>
<td>Limited mobility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Cook for shearers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>No pay</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Partnership (H &amp; son)</td>
<td>Housekeeper</td>
<td>Cook for shearers</td>
<td>No - isolated</td>
<td>Younger son</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>No pay</td>
<td></td>
<td>forced to leave</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Partnership (husband &amp; other relation)</td>
<td>Unpaid worker</td>
<td>Labouring</td>
<td>Nurse P/T</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Draughting</td>
<td>Earns house-keeping money</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>tailing/shearing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>No pay</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
products for home consumption than other women and the organisation of the family farm requires an interdependence between the domestic and the farm work spheres that is not common in other areas (Reimer, 1986). James (1979) points to the integration of the farm system and the family system and the high degree of co-operation needed between men and women to make the farm economy work. It is only now with the economic squeeze that women are becoming aware of the economic contribution they make to the farm (Alston, 1989). Again, this contribution is not quantified in economic statistics.

Women's paid work off the farm can often be the means of retaining farm residence and the rural lifestyle (Molnar, 1985) and of enabling men to remain as full-time farm operators (Haney, 1982). This is well illustrated in this study: farm three showed the woman being the breadwinner for three years, farm nine showed the woman having to work for the family housekeeping money and on farm two the woman was forced back to full-time teaching to help maintain the farm.

As well as the lack of recognition of women's economic contribution to the farm a number of women have no part in the ownership of the farm. Twenty four of the women were joint owners but the remaining 40 percent may be in a vulnerable situation in the event of separation despite having contributed labour and possibly money to the farm business.

The economic downturn did not just affect the rural areas financially. The decline in numbers in agriculture has an important impact on the social and economic viability of rural communities (Lawrence, 1987). The costs are not simply personal but include the deterioration in the social life of the community, the loss of farm families and of young leaders (Heffernan and Heffernan, 1986). This is illustrated in Tarras, in Central Otago. The roll of the school fell from 74 to 33 in four years due to the withdrawal of the Rabbit Board and the Ministry of Works. The depopulation affected the village social life; there was no longer any tennis club, country library services or post office. The nearest service centre was a distance of a 50 kilometre round trip (Interview 1113). These effects further increase the isolation of women on farms and further reduce their opportunities for off farm employment.

This study shows that the farms in financial crisis rely on women's domestic services, book-keeping skills, labouring and off-farm income to survive. Future studies of farm economics need to document the many facets of women's contributions to the farm and set the farms in their community context to recognise the options available to the farm families. The economic downturn and social changes of the last five years, together with floods and droughts, have affected a small but significant group of farm families and emphasised the interdependence of the farm and the family system to the maintenance of the farming lifestyle.
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Romans-Clarkson, S.E.; Walton, V.A.; Herbison, G.P.; Mullen, P.E. Marriage, motherhood and psychiatric morbidity in New Zealand. Psychological Medicine, 1988, 18 : 983-990.

CHAPTER 7

DAIRY FARM WOMEN

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ABSTRACT

In New Zealand, research on dairy farm women is minimal. This chapter attempts to present the social reality of dairy farm women as perceived by them. The research method is a phenomenological approach. The fieldwork material is divided into two parts. First, participation - domesticity, farm work, off-farm work and keeping financial and farm records. Second, interaction - the farm partnership marriage, and child rearing along with off-farm activities and communications.
Although New Zealand's export economy is heavily dependent on the rural sector, very little has been written or researched on the rural social scene and especially rural farm women. I chose to study 21 dairy farm women living in Piako County (see Figure 1) which is in the Heartland of the Waikato dairying scene. A feature of most dairy farms is that they are a joint family undertaking, that is, the husband, wife and family all take some part in most of the farm operations.

The methodology used for the study focused on the work of Alfred Schutz (1962, 1967, 1970) who laid the groundwork for a "phenomenology of social life". For Schutz the take-for-granted reality of the "commonsense world" was the paramount reality. All other realities, for Schutz, were modifications of this taken-for-granted reality. It was this "common-sense world", "world of daily life" or "everyday world" of the farm women that interested me most.

Because Schutz's work focuses more on procedures for analysis, additional data gathering techniques were implemented. The women kept daily diaries for two weeks during April-May 1986. This was followed by an interview with each woman based on a questionnaire. Also I arranged informal discussion groups with three or four women present at a time. Throughout I kept a personal diary of qualitative field notes.

Figure 1 Location of Piako County
There was nothing unusual or distinctive about the 21 dairy farm women participants in the study. They are typical of many farm wives and mothers but not necessarily of all women residents in the area. All are married, have children and with their husbands are dairy farmers. The women differ in terms of age, number of children, length of residence in the area, employment status both on and off the farm, and in the ways they conducted their lives. It was the similarities in the experiences of the women which I chose to emphasise in the study.

From their biographical descriptions, provided by each of the women, I divided them into four categories although there is considerable overlapping between the groups. These categories clarified their situations and spread of experience. The four groups and their ages are shown in Table 1, and other background data are shown in Table 2.

Table 1
Current Situations and Ages of Women Participating in the Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Age of Women</th>
<th>20-29</th>
<th>30-39</th>
<th>49-49</th>
<th>50-59</th>
<th>60+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Women who are sharemilkers with their husbands</td>
<td>Tess</td>
<td>Rosemary</td>
<td>Pamela</td>
<td>Sarah</td>
<td>Belle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Women who with husbands have become owners within past 10 yrs</td>
<td>Norma</td>
<td>Lynne</td>
<td>Margo</td>
<td>Helen</td>
<td>Veronica</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Women who with their husbands have been owners for over 10 years</td>
<td>June</td>
<td>Anne</td>
<td>Mildred</td>
<td>Jenny</td>
<td>Susan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Women who with their husbands have been owners for over 20 years</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Jane</td>
<td>Peggy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: All names are pseudonyms.

The backgrounds of the women varied. Eight had been brought up on farms, nine had been brought up in rural towns, while four had been brought up in a city. Prior to marriage five trained as teachers. Of these five, four had university degrees. One trained as a physiotherapist, one as a nurse and one had done some university study part-time. Seven of the women had worked in commercial operations. Four of these had attended business courses. Three had worked in ships while two had gone home after leaving school to assist parents on the farm.
In our society much of women's work is unpaid and as a result can go unrecognised and not appreciated. For the study of farm women, I chose to define work broadly as effort resulting in some form of product or service. It can be done for pay (such as wage or salary) but at times receive no payment. It can be done in the home or outside it (Rosenfeld, 1985,5). Most of the work done by the farm women was for the home and the farm and did not involve any weekly or monthly payments even when they took on the work of a farm worker. Many women on family farms do work that falls into all the above categories.

My main concern in the research was to attempt to ascertain the perception that the farm women themselves hold about attributes of their lives which might be considered relevant to an understanding of their "social reality" as they saw it. The starting point of the social inquiry was therefore at the level of "the world of everyday life". As an accepted member of the group, not as a researcher, I was committed to an exploration of their "taken-for-granted" world.

The data collected during field work included background information, house work, farm work, paid employment and keeping farm records, marriage and child rearing, the farm partnership and off-farm communication. Direct quotes from the participants recorded the farm women's understanding of their social world.

Except for a few quotes, what follows becomes my interpretation of their experiences, and complexities of their activities, interactions and interpretations of their lives. As researcher, I now construct "second-order constructs" from their "first-order constructs". This brings together the research theory and everyday understanding of the farm women.

Unlike urban women, for farm women the farm is the place of work, business and home and they saw in this many advantages - space and freedom, being their own boss and a healthy environment for the upbringing of children. They liked learning about the farm and keeping in touch with farm activities.

There were some disadvantages admitted by the women although these were not rated highly - being tied to milking times, early morning starts, the difficulty of taking a summer holiday, long hours at the height of the milking season and the uncertainties that go with farming either from the vagaries of the climate or from fluctuating prices for dairy products.
Table 2
Farm Sizes and Herd Numbers on Each of the Participant's Farms in the Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Groups</th>
<th>Participants in Partnership with Husbands</th>
<th>Area of Farm (hectares)</th>
<th>Number of Cows</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group 1 Share-milkers</td>
<td>Tess</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>Leasehold. Sharemilking on husband's parents farm. Run as one.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rosemary</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>180</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pamela</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>170</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sarah - unit 1</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>70</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- unit 2</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>250</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Belle</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>187</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 2 Owners under 10 years</td>
<td>Norma - unit 1</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>Leasehold - contract milkers. Freehold.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- unit 2</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>160</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lynne</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>200</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Margo</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>110</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Helen</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>160</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Veronica</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>135</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Christine</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>200</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 3 Owners over 10 years</td>
<td>June</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>143</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Anne</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>180</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mildred</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>115</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jenny</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>180</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Susan</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>130</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rita</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>200</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 4 Well estab-lished owners</td>
<td>Jane</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>Contract milkers employed. Sharemilkers 29% Sharemilkers 29% Sharemilkers 50/50 Sharemilkers 50/50 Sharemilkers 50/50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Peggy - unit 1</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>180</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- unit 2</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>180</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- unit 3</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>140</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mary</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>140</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- unit 2</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>140</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>55</td>
<td>172</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition, living costs had to be faced. Shopping meant travel to town or paying to get goods delivered. Taking children to their activities also involved travel and the lack of jobs in the local area for school leavers especially girls, were also cited as disadvantages.

All dairy farm women, like women elsewhere, have household tasks to perform: housework, laundry and childcare. For the farm women this involved at times the preparation of extra meals for a farm employee (if one was employed), seasonal workers and people who called from time to time on farm business such as advisers or stock agents.
Farm work involved additional laundry such as washing heavily soiled farm clothes. Until they kept a diary for the purpose of this study few realised how repetitive all this was and how much of it was taken for granted not only by the women themselves but also other members of the family.

Their attitude to housework varied. Some saw it as secondary to farm work because farm work was their livelihood. As Joy stated:

Farm is income, has to go through - if necessary first - housework can wait.

Others again took a more balanced view and were not willing to relegate housework to a secondary role. Mary's feelings were:

Yes, environment of the home is important and it does make a difference to the income but tends to be thought of as less important because it is unpaid.

There were, however, realists who realised that there were times when farm activities had to be paramount. As Sarah put it:

A certain level of housework is important at a functional level but not be carried away. If cows get bloat it is important to save them - saving the animal is money saved.

Besides household tasks all the women in the study were involved in some farmwork. Their age, education and experience of farm life affected the extent to which they were involved. The ages of children and the farm circumstances also dictated the various activities of individual women. Even those women employed off the farm did some farm work as well as their usual household work. Some of the older women mentioned the pleasure of achieving a degree of financial security and decreased work commitment as their farm became established.

Some of the women were actively involved in milking throughout the season either because they liked outdoor farm activities or they were not in a position to employ farm labour. Seasonal activities also dictated the degree of farm work undertaken. The rearing of calves was very much the women's work, as was helping with milking at the height of the season. Perhaps this was because of their patience or a greater understanding of the skills needed - the motherhood role? Perhaps the men just left it to them. Pamela told me:

We calve about the 14th July and when we do start it is my job to feed the calves being reared, because if it was left to my husband we would land up with no calves at all - he is not very patient. I always help to milk morning and night until about November. This is what I am always told but land up going through to February or longer.
At hay or silage-making time, it was the farm women who provided the additional labour needed. Other tasks which involved women in farm work were tending sick animals, feeding out and herd testing.

Economic conditions also determined the degree of farm work that women were involved in. When there was an economic downturn as in 1986, it was the women who became the unpaid farm workers. Their labour was essential for the economic survival of the farm. Small children did not always inhibit their participation in farm work. Some had a special room near the cowshed where small children could amuse themselves while Mum was busy milking, or they installed two-way communication between the house and milking shed. Older children were often left to get themselves up and ready for school.

A few women had sought off-farm paid employment as a way of helping economically. Coping with this was not easy as housework had to be done in the evenings and weekends. The farm women involved were on farms purchased at high prices in the last ten years and had high mortgage and interest payments. Production income wasn't always adequate to meet expenses. Lynne explained:

Well even though I'm teaching full time at present, I milk a weekend a month to give our worker the weekend off. I also help my husband to get the cows and calves from the paddock, mow the lawn and keep the garden going. I find that with teaching and home jobs, I cannot be involved with the farm as much as I would like, but my pay is more important at present.

One of the farm women did work for payment at home, making soft toys while another acted as an agent for a retailing firm. Farm women are handicapped if they wish to seek paid work off the farm not only by the availability of employment but by their duties within the home and farm, and lack of child care facilities.

It was financial circumstances which largely dictated to what extent the farm women were involved on the farm. Young couples getting established either as sharemilkers or owners depended on the women to provide the extra pair of hands. In the case of established farming people, women did less of the practical farm work. Often their husbands were semi-retired and employed farm managers, or sharemilkers, or sons had taken over much of the responsibility of farm management. As a consequence these women were more involved in community affairs but were there to help on the farm if required.

Successful farm management today depends very much on good record keeping. The keeping of accurate stock records, preparation of farm budgets, cashflow records as well as records needed for the payment of G.S.T., income tax returns and bills are crucial tasks for the smooth financial running of the farm. It is here that the work of farm women is very significant. Only two of the
women in the study, whose husbands had agricultural degrees, and one of the older women felt that their husbands were better able to handle the records. In the main it was the women who had more formal education or previous work experience in the commercial sector which equipped them better to do this task. It was the women who had the patience for detailed record keeping. As Mildred said:

I find it is the wives who keep good records and if wives don't do the records they don't get done because men say they haven't got the time. There is a lot of time and work involved. I just sit down in the office and do them.

The business and record side of farm management was a sphere in which farm women were heavily involved. Good financial records save accountancy fees and many of the women had attended seminars on business management courses, and keeping G.S.T. records. On the animal production side, be it herd testing, mating and herd records necessary for compiling production and breeding indices; it was the women who did this detailed work. It is the women who know the financial situation of the farm and they who know or can easily locate the detailed information about each cow's production capacity. This placed the farm women in a very knowledgeable position regarding the whole farm enterprise.

Another important aspect in the lives of the farm women was interaction. Interaction is taken here to mean the distinctive character of communication as it takes place between human beings. As mentioned earlier, all the participants in the study were married and living with their husbands and children although some of the children were now adults living away from home. They all felt strongly that interaction was basic to the success of marriage and the farm partnership. A "give and take" situation was a phrase frequently implied by most of the women. As Rosemary summed up:

Well there must be communication plus forgiveness on both sides - you know "give and take".

When expressing their views on marriage they all emphasised the importance of companionship and communication. Tess felt that:

Companionship and partnership - sharing ideas gives rise to growth - men and women think differently and the skill is bringing the thinking together.

A constant view throughout discussions was that it was the wife who kept the marriage and family together. Rita said:

She's the one who talks and mediates ... she is the one who makes sacrifices and real effort to save the marriage.
There were varied opinions about interaction through farming (i.e., where husband and wife saw a lot of each other) helping to bring about a successful marriage. Some felt that having a husband around all day was inhibiting and that it would be nice to be free now and then and do their own thing. Others again felt that they were bonded to their husbands by common interests. Belle said:

We are bonded by common interests and knowledge of what is going on. We understand each other. I walk in his gumboots - you know what I mean. We communicate without talking.

Some felt that farming didn't help a marriage. They were tied to milking cows making it difficult to get away and that working closely with a husband often meant that the wife bore the brunt of his frustrations.

Having a family was seen by many as a very valuable aspect of marriage and that the links forged in childhood continued after the children had left home. As mentioned earlier they saw significant benefits from raising children in the rural area and referred especially to the quality of life that the farm provided. Sarah felt that:

There are so many opportunities for something for them to do. Plenty of space, time, animals and farm walks. The children have more contact with their father. Even when children are young they see their father frequently.

The women in the study strongly identified with the home and family so that marriage for them supplied the supportive, secure environment for bearing and raising children. Perhaps this is not surprising in a traditionally conservative sector of our society.

Just as there were valued aspects in the marriage partnership, so too were these same valued aspects important for the farm partnership. All the farm women participants were in a farm partnership. Anne however, wondered what the real motive was in making her a partner:

I know I have been make a legal partner but I wonder if it had not make a reduction to Income Tax whether we wives would have been make partners.

Most of the women experienced a free open discussion with their husbands and asserted that, like marriage, the farm partnership should be equal. This in turn raised the question of just what each of the women meant by 'equal'. Most had not considered the concept of equality in their partnership in any depth. Discussion and further talk on the idea revealed that equality
was associated with many activities on the farm such as decision making, work and financial matters.

On the other hand, four of the women felt that they were not treated as equal partners as far as work was concerned. Mary revealed:

> My husband is impossible to work with. He is traditional in his ideas about women working and he doesn't delegate. Why should I be abused? So now I don't go out because I don't want to put myself in that position.

Some women felt their contribution was being ignored. As Rita commented:

> I don't mind doing the work in the house and caring for the children as long as it is given some recognition. By that I mean not putting the farm first all the time. I get sick of hearing about the farm being this and that. One day I said to him, (my husband) "are you in love with the farm or me"?

The question of "equality" however was marked by variations, contradictions and ambivalence. In general most women and their husbands commonly view the farm enterprise as a joint undertaking and this may partly explain their attitudes.

On the census form over half identified themselves as farmers or sharemilkers. The farm women who identified formally as being farmers reported that this was a change in self-perception during their own lives and also a change from the self identities of the women in their mothers' generation. Because many younger farm women are now changing their self-identity to that of being a farmer, it would appear that they are deriving more personal gratification in being a farm partner.

Equally important to the on-farm interaction was the off-farm interaction which includes their interaction with service people whose work brings them into contact with farmers and who don't always recognise the position of the farm women. As Mildred explains:

> I get so angry when a stock agent or salesperson rings up or comes to the door and asks "is the boss in?" I reply sharply - yes, what can I do for you? They soon get the message. If they don't, they miss out altogether.

Concern was expressed by some women because the word 'farmer' was automatically seen as having a male occupational label and that this was reinforced by some radio interviews when male gender pronouns such as 'him' and 'he' when referring to farmers. Often invitations to conferences and seminars were addressed to the
husband only. Many farm women are now attending Dairy Company meetings when once women were absent. Mildred said:

Well June and I went and we were the only two women there at first. Now the attendance is about half and half.

Shopping took the women into the local service town at least once a week and during busy periods such as calving, it was the women who made emergency trips to town to collect replacement machinery parts or repairs. The local school is still an important centre for community activities and most of the women had been, or still were, involved with the school committee or Parent Teachers Association. They saw support for local institutions as important. The church also figured prominently and most voluntary work was done through this institution.

Group interaction occurs in other organisations and clubs which include the Women's Division of Federated Farmers to which three belonged and two participants belonged to Plunket Mothers and the National Council of Women. -It may be argued that some of these organisations, by reinforcing domestic skills, have helped to maintain farm women in subordinate domestic roles.

By far the most popular group was the Ladies Discussion Group to which over half of the participants belonged. The group, held under the auspices of the Livestock Improvement Association, concerns itself very much with matters relating to farming. Invited speakers cover topics such as obtaining loans, how to budget, G.S.T. returns, farm investments, genetics, keeping records and many practical demonstrations such as treating bloat, herd testing and so on. As well, the group makes day visits to places of interest such as Ruakura, Newstead Artificial Insemination Centre and longer visits to other farming districts such as Northland and Bay of Plenty. All this is not only educational but also a means of socialising. As partners in the farming enterprise the farm women were most interested in gaining and exchanging knowledge about farm management. The younger farm women especially were anxious to broaden their horizons and increase their knowledge and ability as farming partners.

This study has necessarily focused on farm women's activities and the meaning of these activities as understood by them. But, it is limited in that it has not examined the experiences of the husbands, although husbands were spoken to informally during the study. Systematic investigation of men's work is also needed. One cannot merely assume who does typically "male" and "female" work. If we do not go out and see what exists in this sort of detail we may miss indications that changes are occurring. This study of what happens in Piako County raises questions and requires explanations for variations in activity among dairy farming men and women, on a national basis.

Other limitations include the fact that rural women other than dairy farm women were not included in the study, nor have women from other types of farming been included, for example, sheep, goat, deer and horticulture. Women store keepers, school
teachers, dairy company employees' wives and so on, all operate in a different social reality. Many of the professional people working in the farming sector, such as herd testers, veterinarians, herd improvement advisers, are now women and the effects of their influence need investigation. To understand the part women undertake in farming and the effects of changes in the sexual division of labour requires that these other groups of rural workers should be considered.

The study of women's work on and for their family farms does demand an approach somewhat different from that used for other work. Farm women are very much confined to the home which is the focal point on the farm. Thus, the domestic role becomes a major force in regulating the position of women. This role is often undervalued, unpaid and taken for granted. Family farms are both economic enterprises and social units. The work that women do needs to be examined in such a context. At the same time it must be realised that the maleness of the term "farmer" (although this notion has changed slightly recently) and the family nature of the farm can lead to overlooking women's role in the operations of such economic and social units. Farm women's work becomes invisible and they have received little acknowledgement for their contribution to this part of the country's economic life.

All the farm women in the study were in a legal partnership with their husbands. The women perceived this as an equal partnership. The concept of equality was not considered in any depth, nor was it considered in any abstract sense. It was associated with activities and not used as a concept in understanding and managing their lives. They have extensive farm knowledge and they participate in farm operations. Yet the part the women played in the partnership was undervalued and often ignored, especially by off-farm people. Government and farm organisations must recognise that farm women as much as the traditional "male farmer" play an essential part in contributing to the economy of New Zealand. Farm women need to be involved in the formation of national farming policies and until this happens the partnership is not equal.

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CHAPTER 8

PLURIACTIVITY IN NEW ZEALAND'S AGRO-COMMODITY CHAINS

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ABSTRACT

Agricultural restructuring in New Zealand in the 1980s has been characterised by farm household, family and business adjustments. This has included changes in off-farm employment by farm household members and some accompanying alterations in farm production patterns. This chapter outlines results of recent survey work in New Zealand which address differential responses of agricultural producers in three agro-commodity chains.
8.1 Introduction

During the 1980s theoretical evidence steadily mounted suggesting that contemporary developments in farm production, farm businesses, farm households and families connected with farming needed to be conceptualised as part of the wider evolution of capitalism. By the end of the decade a consensus had been reached (Goodman and Redclift, 1989; Holland and Carvalho, 1985). Capitalism was seen as entering a new era, and the 1980s in particular was labelled a period of intense restructuring, accompanying the breakdown of the growth and regulatory apparatus of monopoly capitalism. Intensified restructuring in the agricultural sectors of most national economies stood in sharp contrast to the expansionary and relatively stable conditions of the post-war long boom. The history of national agricultures, reinterpreted under the general umbrella of capitalist periodicity, has received attention recently. Friedmann and McMichael (1989), in a synthetic statement theorise the emergence of distinctive historical relationships, which they refer to as food regimes, into which national agricultures have been inserted. They delineate two food regimes. The first regime arose from the mix of colonial expansion, industrialisation of agriculture and nationalism, and paved the way for first-third world links. The second regime, considered to be a more complex and contradictory set of production and consumption relations, stemmed from strong state protectionism and organisation of the world economy under US hegemony. The enormous expansion of US and European agriculture and support was the hallmark of this food regime (Kenney, Lobao, Curry and Goe, 1989). Latterly however the second regime has itself undergone restructuring, from shifts in Government policy and transnational capital. In this general context of the development of capitalism and world capitalist agriculture, consisting of different structural conditions and accumulation possibilities, the social relations of production have progressively evolved.

One important consequence of this reassessment of the origins, nature and significant dynamics of farm level adjustments has been the growing interest in pluriactivity as a survival and accumulation strategy of farm households. Pluriactivity can be defined as work in activities other than a principal activity area (Fuller, 1983; Friedland and Pugliese, 1989) or as Hetland (1986: 385) describes for rural areas, "the diversification of activities carried out by one household on and off the (farm) holding in order to secure the household's economy and welfare". The recognition of pluriactive households and pluriactivity on the part of individual household members has resulted in a growing reappraisal of the links amongst farm businesses (the traditional unit of analysis in most literatures), farm households and farm families. The general direction of reassessment has been towards a view that any discussion of developments in farming must be comprehended as part of more general tendencies in economy and society. When this view is applied to the work interactions associated with farm production, it is immediately apparent that a range of households, both on and off farms, are implicated in farming. This interpretation is a richer conception of household interactions than the term
part-time farming which is a largely a-theoretical notion which over emphasises farm activity. A major conclusion of the theoretical work is that pluriactivity is an integral part of the adjustment strategies of households in general, though the level of development of pluriactivity in particular sectors of production, such as agriculture, will vary widely in form and degree, reflecting diverse histories of production experience in different nations and regions. Although pluriactivity is now regarded as a standard response by households and individuals to changing structural conditions brought about by industrialisation and capitalisation of agriculture, its significance was undoubtedly blurred by state support of national agricultures after World War II. Intervention created conditions for intensification of agricultural production, conditions which favoured the retention (or slowed the disintegration, depending on perspective) of the family farm based on the labour input of several family members.

This chapter is a preliminary report on research into the dynamics of farm business, household and family restructuring in different agro-community systems in New Zealand in the 1980s. The research framework situates New Zealand agriculture in the context of the international farm crisis (Goodmann and Redclift, 1989). As Lawrence (1989: 259), convincingly argues for the Australian scene, "structural change is being forced upon agriculture". The New Zealand situation parallels that in Australia, with the adverse conditions of all farming in New Zealand in the 1980s constituting conditions suitable for the appearance or upsurge in pluriactivity. Reynolds and Sri Ramaratnam (1989) show substantial reductions in pastoral farm expenditures in the late 1980s. The general impression of farm monitoring information (across all agro-commodities) is that farm businesses are under strain. Has this financial pressure flowed through to farm adjustments, especially a move to pluriactivity?

The chapter focuses specifically on the incidence of pluriactivity in farming households involved in apple, dairy and sheep/beef production. The chapter consists of a short review of key findings from overseas studies and a summary of results from three separate random sample surveys of New Zealand farm households, drawn from Department of Statistics Agricultural Statistics farm address list. The first survey (Benediktsson, Manning, Moran and Anderson, 1990) covers 105 sheep and beef farms in Raglan County in the early months of 1989. The other surveys, of 32 apple orchards in the Heretaunga Plains and 23 dairy farms in the Manawatu, were conducted in late 1989 and early 1990. Although the latter surveys had rather different objectives, consultation between the research groups at Auckland and Massey University in design of the research and the questionnaires used in the surveys has resulted in the collection of comparable data in the area of pluriactivity. This is reflected in the presentation of the findings in a form which allows direct comparison and discussion of the situation in three very different commodity systems.
8.2 Pluriactivity - Some Issues

Friedland and Pugliese (1989), argue for a general treatment of pluriactivity as a trend increasingly pervading all labour markets, not just agriculture. There are two dimensions to this view. First, both the labour requirements of agriculture and the insufficiency of the agricultural sector as an employment generator can be discussed in terms of labour sourced from a range of households and families, on and off the farm. Second, this in turn forces a rethink of the social relations of production. Following Friedland and Pugliese (1989), a multiplicity of social locations can be said to arise from the participation of households in pluriactivity. To facilitate discussion of pluriactivity they propose the use of the terms 'agriculturally-based bourgeoisie' and 'agriculturally-based proletariat' to capture the accumulation implications of flexible responses by individuals under the new material conditions of labour markets in late twentieth century capitalism. Their framework is an affirmation of the 'contradictory class location' thesis which has been successively developed with respect to agriculture by several researchers (Buttel, 1983; Hedley, 1981, 1985; Mooney, 1983; and Newby, 1982). This thesis suggests that pluriactivity represents both a strategy for survival and expansion of capital, depending on the financial positioning of the farm business. In the former case, it is essentially a rearguard action, postponing eventual loss of the farm property, and a shift in class status from the ambiguous 'middle' category (Buttel, 1983) to the agriculturally-based proletariat. In the latter instance, pluriactive households/families could by raising their total income succeed in acquiring more land or other productive assets, which help reposition the farm business, and so the household, into the agriculturally-based bourgeoisie. It also implicitly assumes that class location can be assigned on the basis of the labour force involvement of a single person, in the case of farm households, the principal farm operator. This conception is clearly inadequate for farm households composed of members engaged in different occupational areas.

The above essentially North American theorisation is also consistent with the work of British workers, especially the University College, London research group (Marsden, Whatmore, Munton and Little, 1986; Symes and Marsden, 1983) who assert from empirical analysis that the growing economic centrality of farm production (a diminished importance of the farm business in relation to the farm family household and other business activities) means strong and multiple external pressures can be exerted on farm businesses, farm households and farm families. The adjustments open to farm families include farm enterprise change, labour change, business structure change, tenure change, gender change, economic centrality change and diversification change (Gilg, Griffiths and Halliday, 1989; Munton, 1990). This classification of elements of farm adjustment strategy accommodates the many constraints farm families might bring to strategic behaviour. In doing so it acknowledges the necessity to grasp not only the context of adjustment but also the way those involved are variously constrained in their actions (Wilkening, 1981).
Pluriactivity thus evolves in the context of particular structural conditions and constraints facing individual families and households. Though some credence has been given to the role of agro-production systems in bringing about differentiation in agriculture (Friedland, 1984; Le Heron, Roche and Anderson, 1989) the implications of different agro-commodity systems for the development of pluriactivity have not been considered. Such differentiation will be specific to different national contexts, where the macro economic and social environment will set the context for adjustment. Overlaying the possible differences in experience that might arise from commodity-specificity are regional differences springing from varied regional labour market conditions, infrastructure and farming conditions. For farm households, structural options and the perception of options are critical to the formation of strategies and the eventual patterns of interaction and outcome.

8.3 New Zealand Evidence of Pluriactivity

Some hint of the extent of pluriactivity can be adduced from recent surveys investigating farm change in recent years (Alexander, 1990; Benediktsson, Manning, Moran and Anderson, 1990; Hughes, Jose, Parker and Anderson, 1989; Johnston, 1990; Pomeroy, 1986). These studies have all been concerned with farm production or household responses during the 1980s. This period was one where the Government reduced assistance to agriculture, did so at a time of fluctuating world agricultural commodity prices. With the exception of the sheep/beef study of Pomeroy (1986), the other investigations were able to document the situation on farms in both the early and late 1980s.

Despite the timing of Pomeroy's study it is still suggestive of the potential response by sheep/beef farmers to increasingly adverse farm financial conditions. Pomeroy prefaced her analysis by noting the minimum use of unpaid labour on New Zealand farms and the generally low amount of hired farm labour. What farm labour is hired is normally contract labour rather than permanent labour, with casual workers being used for farm development work. She found for instance that 23 out of 127 (about 17 percent) farm households interviewed had a male household member engaged in off-farm work, and a further 14 had previously held off-farm jobs (Pomeroy, 1986, 266). Approximately one third of spouses were engaged in off-farm work. While she did not record trends in workforce participation, it is reasonable to assume her 1985 survey predated the main impacts of reduced assistance to agriculture.

Table 1 indicates a general incidence of pluriactivity in each commodity chain, equalling or exceeding that of the early crisis situation in Australia. Lawrence (1989: 261) puts the figure at 20-30 percent of family farm members. In percentage terms, about one half or more of the farm households surveyed were pluriactive in 1989. This broad indication may be an underestimate. All surveys sampled farm households which were identified on the basis of principal farming activity, a criterion of selection that biases the sample towards 'pure' or 'specialist' farm operations. Moreover, the data summarise farm household labour
market participation at a time of high unemployment in New Zealand.

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pluriactive Households, 1989</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Commodity Chain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apples\Dairying\Sheep\Beef</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No pluriactivity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15\7\56\70\53\47\53\53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pluriactivity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17\16\49\47\47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32\100\100\105\100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: 1 Survey
2 Benediktsson, Manning, Moran and Anderson (1990: 45)

The pioneer work of Benediktsson, Manning, Moran and Anderson (1990) revealed a marked shedding of hired labour following agricultural deregulation and the low prices for meat and wool. To some degree, their finding was contradictory, especially when put along side Pomeroy's observation that the absolute level of hired labour to begin with on New Zealand pastoral farms is, in world terms, quite low. However, farm advisor evidence for the Wairarapa for instance, confirms the wholesale release of permanent labour in the 1980s and minimal hiring of contract labour at present. Table 2 shows little change in permanent labour in apple, dairying and sheep/beef farming. Again this is partly indicative of a low initial rate of permanent hired labour input on the farms and orchards surveyed. The figures are of interest to interpreting pluriactivity. At least for the apple and dairying operations, farm adjustments during the 1980s did not include reorganisation of the basic units of permanent labour used in farm production. Although not shown in Table 2, the use of contract labour on orchards and dairy units did not alter markedly either. The preliminary conclusion must therefore be that little pressure for household adjustment, either to enter off-farm work, or alter the pattern of off-farm involvement to free up time for on-farm work can be traced directly to adjustments connected with the hired labour input.
Indeed, Table 3 highlights the heavy involvement of most adult farm household members in farm work. The category 'regular farm work' is a meaningful one for the principal farm operator (mostly male) but includes a wide spread of steady part-time input into the farming operation by women. The part-time contribution differed by commodity area. For apples, women were involved in both high and low level tasks, but for dairying the bulk of the input was confined to higher-level work such as the farm accounts and wages. In addition each system has some scope for non-involvement in farm work. Table 4 suggests this may reflect the desire of one spouse/partner to pursue non-farm careers. Personal satisfaction scored highest amongst women in the sheep/beef farms (see the sheep/beef column in Table 3). Table 4 also confirms some economic pressure for income generation in the sheep/beef sphere, but not in a major way in either of the other systems.

The nature of pluriactivity is summarised in Table 5. The proximity of urban centres (Hastings/Napier, Palmerston North and Hamilton respectively) is roughly matched by rural jobs (both farm and non-farm). For some, the farm served as a base for non-farm activity, especially consultancy. The geography of available off-farm work is echoed in the occupational breakdown, with the first two categories accounting for most of the urban jobs and the agricultural/production occupations dominating the rural jobs.
The supposition of regular and relatively stable on-farm labour processes is sustained by details on the continuity of off-farm work (Table 7). The overwhelming dominance of 'all year' work suggests strong lines of individualisation in household production relations (Lem, 1988). This interpretation is strengthened by reference to Tables 8 and 9. The activity pathways for both men and women are remarkably stable (seen by examining the diagonal from Non Farm/Non Farm to Farming/Farming) in each table. The stability defines a core of fully farm orientated households and another group fluctuating in and out of pluriactivity or non-farm activity. Detailed employment histories for each adult household member reveal infrequency of change by individuals. Further, forced withdrawal from off-farm work was noted in only one case.

Table 3

Participation in General Farm Work, 1989

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Commodity Chain</th>
<th>Apples ¹</th>
<th>Dairying ¹</th>
<th>Sheep/Beef ²</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Men</td>
<td>Women</td>
<td>Men</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No farm work</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occasional/seasonal</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>farm work</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regular farm work</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: ¹ Survey
          2 Benediktsson, Manning, Moran and Anderson (1990: 40)
Table 4
Perceived Primary Reasons For Pluriactivity, 1989

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Commodity Chain</th>
<th>Apples</th>
<th>Dairying</th>
<th>Sheep/Beef</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Men</td>
<td>Women</td>
<td>Men</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using skills</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact with older people</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal satisfaction</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compensation for low farm income</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased needs of family</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matrimonial division</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources:
1 Survey
2 Benediktsson, Manning, Moran and Anderson (1990: 57)

Table 5
Sources of Off-Farm Income of Pluriactive Households, 1989

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Commodity Chain</th>
<th>Apples</th>
<th>Dairying</th>
<th>Sheep/Beef</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Men</td>
<td>Women</td>
<td>Men</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-farm work at home</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work on other farms</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-farm in rural</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban jobs</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-work income</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources:
1 Survey
2 Benediktsson, Manning, Moran and Anderson (1990: 47-49)
Table 6

Off-Farm Occupations, (NZSOC) 1989

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Commodity Chain</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Apples</td>
<td>Dairying</td>
<td>Sheep/Beef</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Men</td>
<td>Women</td>
<td>Men</td>
<td>Women</td>
<td>Men</td>
<td>Women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional/technical</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Admin./managerial/clerical</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sales</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture/forestry</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Production/factory</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>7</strong></td>
<td><strong>10</strong></td>
<td><strong>8</strong></td>
<td><strong>12</strong></td>
<td><strong>24</strong></td>
<td><strong>33</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources:
1 Survey
2 Benediktsson, Manning, Moran and Anderson (1990, 50)

Table 7

Continuity of Off-Farm Work, 1989

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Commodity Chain</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Apples</td>
<td>Dairying</td>
<td>Sheep/Beef</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Men</td>
<td>Women</td>
<td>Men</td>
<td>Women</td>
<td>Men</td>
<td>Women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All year</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seasonal</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sporadic</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>7</strong></td>
<td><strong>10</strong></td>
<td><strong>8</strong></td>
<td><strong>12</strong></td>
<td><strong>17</strong></td>
<td><strong>29</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources:
1 Survey
2 Benediktsson, Manning, Moran and Anderson (1990: 51)
Table 8
Male Activity Pathways, 1983-1989
Commodity Chain

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1983</th>
<th>NF</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Non Farm</th>
<th>0</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>0</th>
<th>0</th>
<th>0</th>
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<td></td>
<td>Mixed</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Farming</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Survey

Table 9
Female Activity Pathways, 1983-1989
Commodity Chain

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1983</th>
<th>NF</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Non Farm</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>0</th>
<th>0</th>
<th>1</th>
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<td>Mixed</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Farming</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Survey

Table 10
Off-farm Income Dependence, 1989
Commodity Chain

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Off-farm Income as Percent of Total Net Farm Income</th>
<th>Apples 1</th>
<th>Dairying 1</th>
<th>Sheep/Beef 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-20</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-40</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41-60</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61-80</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; 80</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Number</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: 1 Survey
2 Benediktsson, Manning, Moran and Anderson (1990: 46)
Rather different evidence about pluriactivity is portrayed in Table 10. The degree of household dependence on off-farm income is one measure of economic centrality (Hill, 1983; Marsden, Whatmore, Munton and Little, 1986). Table 10 should be read alongside Table 1. Two dimensions to the table are noteworthy. First, much pluriactivity is at best a marginal contribution to household income, or to farm business support, where that occurs. Second, a significant group of 'farm households' obtain substantial off-farm earnings. Those in the 61-80 and >80 percent groups might be better described as households with an agricultural income base. In some cases, even this broader terminology is inadequate since the absolute ratio of off-farm to on-farm earnings is 2:1 or more. Findings from all three commodity systems suggest the use of off-farm earnings is either highly personalised (and under the control of the income earner) or used for general household support such as school fees, house renovation, trips and so on rather than to prop up the farm business per se. The reaction of farm households in the present era, to the downturn in farm incomes, is less one of active response by way of pluriactivity and more one of reducing farm expenditure, changing farm management strategies and so on. Such a conclusion does not negate the importance of pluriactivity as a dimension of farm households. Instead, it gives some urgency to a thorough investigation of the wider development of pluriactivity by New Zealand households.

8.4 Conclusions

Pluriactivity is a relatively recent term, coined to facilitate investigation of complex developments in household labour force participation. The significance of pluriactivity, with respect to agriculture, is under researched. Nowhere is that more obvious than in New Zealand where longitudinal information on off-farm work patterns are almost non existent. As a result, it is difficult to attach historical significance to the established presence of pluriactivity in New Zealand's main agro-commodity systems. Indeed, the more general issues of the division of labour of farm production and farm households and the interconnection with family capital is poorly documented in New Zealand. In spite of the lamentable paucity of benchmark studies, some tentative conclusions about pluriactivity can be advanced.

Perhaps foremost is the need to conceptualise pluriactivity as part of the general trend towards dual incomes and workforce casualisation/marginalisation and individualisation of even the nuclear family household. Interpreted in this fashion, pluriactivity is but one aspect of a dense set of relations of production and reproduction. What was very significant in the interviewing in each survey was the limited presence and development of multi-family or multi-generation farm operations. When children still lived at home, their earnings and orientation were usually off-farm. Pluriactivity as revealed in the surveys was largely confined to spouses/partners.

A second conclusion reiterates that of Benediktsson, Manning, Moran and Anderson (1990: 75). Some 'farmers' buy their
properties "as a place to live", but participate actively in the wider labour force. From this standpoint pluriactivity may not be particularly relevant to explaining the fortunes of these farm businesses, as this group farms well and seriously. Indeed, income from the farm forms one of perhaps several major income streams which contribute to individual/household accumulation.

Finally, there is no doubt that a further group of farm households resorted to off-farm work as a strategy to service debt or supplement meagre cash drawings from the farm operation. The group must however be put in perspective. That it exists is consistent with theory about the systemic tendency of capitalism to enlarge the wage earning group. What is perhaps the surprising result of the present research is the potential size of the downward-transitional group of households associated with farming in New Zealand. If household expectations and requirements of the present era compel multiple job holding, then the capacity to earn a living wage or more favourably, accumulate from farming activity, is available to fewer people. The realities of New Zealand farm households deserve close scrutiny from international and theoretical perspectives if they are to be better understood.

Acknowledgements

The support of the Massey University Research Fund is gratefully acknowledged. The willingness of farm householders to participate in the surveys is greatly appreciated.

Our thanks to Toni Snowball for typing the manuscript.

REFERENCES


CHAPTER 9

ISSUES AND NON-ISSUES IN RURAL LOCAL POLITICS

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Wagga Wagga
Australia

ABSTRACT

The paper draws on observation of political processes in a case study of rural local government to offer a warning that newly-instituted environment action organisations may fail to bring social equality to allocation of their resources. Local Government is a political arena in which significant public resources are allocated, but its ability to do so fairly and equitably has often been questioned. Analysis of the process of allocation around social areas in a rural shire suggests mechanisms which may render equitable allocation problematic. Rather than a product of conscious manipulation by an elite, or the ability of an elite to win resources in political conflict, an inequitable distribution may arise because of differential capacity among local people to raise issues for consideration. Some issues arise as people express their interests, while other issues which one might expect to be raised do not surface, or are not expressed effectively. The paper points towards the local and peculiarly rural ideological climate as a possible source of explanation for the issue and non-issue processes revealed.
9.1 Introduction: Rural Political Arenas

Rural areas in Australia have many of their local and regional affairs conducted by organisations whose leaders are either elected or appointed to a board or council. These organisations include local government, and others which handle such matters as pest control, and water and electricity distribution. In recent years Australia's rural environmental problems have added to the list of service-providing and coordinating agencies. The most notable addition in New South Wales has been Total Catchment Management Committees set up in each of the major river catchments, charged with responsibility for coordinating the activities of all individuals and organisations whose activities impinge on the ecology of their catchments. All these agencies have revenue-raising capacities, although some may be circumscribed by State regulation, and many have punitive powers.

While each of these is a management organisation, it is also a political arena. Each has to decide how to allocate its resources and spread its costs. In doing so each must determine its priorities. Those resources allocated to one service area or group of people cannot at the same time be allocated to another. While most of these organisations take on very few of the appearances of political institutions, they must all resolve conflicts over allocation, and hence become political arenas as interest groups struggle for priority. That is, of course, assuming a pluralist rather than an elitist power structure.

It is unlikely that the elected or appointed members of these organisations would readily look upon themselves as actors in a political arena. Even in the case of local government, which of all the agencies mentioned above resembles most closely, although remaining very different from, a parliamentary situation, the existence of 'politics' is frequently denied (Halligan and Paris, 1984). The same may be said of other organisations. At a field day held in October 1990 by the New South Wales Soil Conservation Service, the chairman of a 21 member Total Catchment Management Committee said that all its members had agreed to act together as individuals rather than represent interest groups. They prefer to look upon themselves as an elite rather than as participants in a pluralist apparatus.

Australian local government is a product of English tradition and the dispersed pattern of settlement in Australia (Chapman and Wood, 1984). Local councils were established by colonial and later State governments to provide infrastructure services essential to development, such as roads and water supply. Colonial and State governments did not seek to create local governments which were either independent or in any way parliamentary. The local councils of New South Wales are still products of, and subject to, State legislation. They lack many features of a parliamentary system, like full-time salaried membership and 'parliamentary privilege'. They have, however, taken on greater roles in service provision and local advocacy; they are partly funded from Federally collected income tax revenue and they are elected by all locally-resident adults and local property owners (unlike the earlier ratepayer franchise).

It is the presence of representatives of interest groups which
makes local government a political arena, and that much can also be said of the other types of councils and boards mentioned above. Due to the breadth of its functions and the election of its members, local government may be more potentially and overtly political than, for example, electricity councils and Catchment Management Committees, whose functions are narrowly defined and membership often appointed by either local or State government, rather than popularly elected. This does not, however, prevent the application of political analysis to all such organisations. The analysis which follows draws on the local government context, as discussed from case study material in Gray (forthcoming), to raise possibilities for consideration in others.

9.2 Issues and Political Power

The analysis of local politics, in the context of so-called local power studies, has a long but unhappy history, largely due to its dominance by a persistent but "rather silly" (Bell and Newby, 1971:218) debate between those of elitist and pluralist persuasions in the United States. Although the basic question of who rules remains pertinent, this debate is now largely irrelevant. Social theory offers prospects for a more penetrating analysis of power in locality studies, and attempts have been made to carry out such work. These include, in the rural Australia context, Poiner (1990), which focused largely on gender relations, and more relevant to the present application, Gray (forthcoming) which analyzed social processes and their structural and ideological antecedents in a rural shire.

The concepts of issues and non-issues are central to studies of power, as they have been carried out in Australia recently and elsewhere (see Saunders (1979) for a British example). This follows the work of Backrach and Baratz (1970) and Crenson (1971), as conceptualised by Lukes (1974). Luke's approach, which is essentially that adopted here, is that power should not be conceived, as the American pluralist tradition has, in terms of ability to win political fights, because a power relation can be manifest when no fights are apparent to an observer. Power can accrue to those who are able to prevent issues from arising. They may do so either by controlling an agenda so that interested parties are not able to express their interests, or more subtly be deflecting subordinates from recognition of their interests.

This model has many applications to rural local and regional political analysis. To borrow a term from economics, there may be many 'barriers to entry' into rural political arenas. Barriers to entry are obstacles to the raising of issues. Issues are a process, one which may be very long when an arena is pluralistic, but more likely to be short in elitist conditions if potential issues remain non-issues. The process is set out in the model shown in Figure 1, which resembles most of Saunders (1979:29) "non-decision-making filter".

A matter which one might expect to become an issue may fail to emerge as such, either because it was not perceived as a threat to interests, or because after being perceived, the person(s) or organisations(s) who perceived it could not, or chose not to, communicate their perception to others. For those who have successfully perceived and communicated their interests, there
remains one more hurdle before they enter the pluralist arena. The possibility remains, as pointed out by Saunders (1979), that an issue could be subject to negative decision-making. That is, an elite might choose not to make a decision about it.

Figure 1
The Issue/Non issue Process

9.3 Local Pluralism

The country town discussed in Gray (forthcoming) offers examples of an elitist, but historically pluralistic, local government arena. The pluralistic period will be described, before analysis of some issues and non-issues offers illustrations of processes which result in elitist power relations. The town is Cowra, New South Wales, which in 1986 had a population of about 8,000 people. Data on Cowra were collected in the course of a community study, mostly while the author lived in the town over a 12 month period.

Cowra had a period of pluralism in local government during the 1950s and 1960s, which had earlier antecedents. This can be attributed to the activity of 'progress associations' at times of rapid population growth and to apparent dissatisfaction with local government. Groups of energetic citizens in the growing town suburbs and the rural areas of the district organised themselves to fight for better facilities, by lobbying the council and through their own fundraising. The establishment of one 'suburban' progress association in 1932 was announced in the local newspaper with the comment:

"...they should have had an organisation of this character in existence years ago, as the Council has had its own way far too long. He hoped they would be able to wake that body up, and that it would be found that they were a power for good in the life of the community".

The progress associations were revived after World War II. One

1This model was developed for Francis and Gray (1990).
raised enough money to establish a park and successfully moved the Council to extend the sewerage service into its area. Another laid a cricket pitch in its first year and later tussled with two rival associations over Council's priorities. They put up candidates at municipal elections, and occasionally won a seat, but despite consideration by the council, the town was never divided into wards. An alderman from this pluralistic period told me that the Council operated as a continual tug-of-war.

9.4 Social Areas

Coincidence of geographic and social boundaries in the town may have facilitated pluralism. The town is divided by a railway, a river and a hill. Amalgamation of the town's council with that of its rural hinterland in 1980 produced a political arena with an additional division provided by town and country. To this one can add a category to cover the several villages, to show seven social areas across the urban and rural areas of the present Shire of Cowra. Two of the 'suburban' areas, Mulyan and Taragala, have the names of the farms which once occupied their land. Figures 2 and 3 indicate the social dimension of these spatial divisions. This analysis has been facilitated by the fortunately close correspondence of the features which separate the areas to census collection district boundaries.

![Figure 2](image)

Deviations of Area Percentages from Shire Percentage of Households with Annual Incomes Less Than $9,001 (Shire = 19 percent)

Source: 1986 Commonwealth Census of Population and Housing
Analysis of high socio-economic indicators, shows the complementary pattern, as illustrated by the distribution of high income households (Figure 3).

![Figure 3](image)

Villages Rural Mulyan Taragala West C. North C. Central C.

Deviation of Area Percentages from Shire Percentage of Households with Annual Incomes Greater Than $32,000 (Shire = 15 percent)

Source: 1986 Commonwealth Census of Population and Housing

While the rural areas and North Cowra in particular had relatively few low income households, they also had a relatively large proportion of high income households. Mulyan, Taragala, Central Cowra and the villages showed the reverse: relatively few high income and relatively many low income households. Central Cowra is more heterogeneous: it contains expensive housing occupied by professionals and business people on the hillside close to the main street, and the smaller homes and flats occupied by pensioners and other low income earners. Although the town had expanded, this spatial structure had not changed significantly since the pluralist period.

The standard of service provision had, however, improved since the post-war period. A look around all areas of the town and the villages would show that all the streets were sealed and in good condition, the parks were well provided with sport and playground equipment; water and sewerage were available. Cowra Shire was particularly proud of its record in rural road sealing and maintenance.
Nevertheless, residents had different perceptions of the standard of services. These perceptions were indicated by a 'Community Needs Survey' (Gray, 1987), which collected data from 509 randomly selected adults. The questionnaire asked people to rate the provision of facilities on a four point scale, from one when the facility was perceived to be unavailable in their area, to four when it was felt to be good. Numbers of respondents ranged from 32 in West Cowra to 129 in North Cowra, and were approximately proportional to the population of each area. The results are illustrated in Figure 4.

![Figure 4](image_url)

**Figure 4**

*Deviations of Area Mean Scores from Shire Mean Score on Perceptions of Availability/Quality of Playgrounds (Shire mean = 2.43)*

Source: 1986 Commonwealth Census of Population and Housing

While North Cowra respondents felt themselves to be well provided, those from the rural areas, Mulyan, Taragala and West Cowra felt at least a little deprived. When other facilities, including sports fields, parks and meeting rooms are also considered, the only consistent results were North Cowra above the mean and West Cowra below, although Mulyan and Taragala people were below the mean on most items. This suggests a class dimension to allocation, and that at least West Cowra residents may have reached the perception stage of the issue process.

### 9.5 Policy Apparatus

West Cowra confronted a system of decision-making which aimed for efficiency while it minimised interference. A document called the 'policy register' was the heart of the system. It was drawn up by the Council to state its chosen order of priority for allocation of resources. The only dispute among councillors was over need for the system at all. But nobody questioned its
efficiency. Some, however, questioned the relevance of a concept of policy in local government. They saw local government as a management process rather than political decision-making. The councillors who liked the system did so because it reduced the prospects for the earlier pluralistic structure. Those who did not like the system felt their management would prevail without it. Pluralism was nobody's ideal, and as mentioned above, the policy apparatus had produced an allocation devoid of glaring inequities.

9.6 Allocation Non-issues

Despite the efficiency of the policy register system, people did act collectively from time to time, as the survey results reported above suggested they might. Analysis of such action shows how a potential issue can be diverted and effectively turned into a non-issue through what Saunders (1979) would call negative decision-making, even though the matter had been raised.

The still active West Cowra Progress Association asked a councillor to raise drainage problems at the August 1986 meeting of Council. The councillor neglected to do so. The West Cowra people soon wrote to the Shire Clerk seeking attention to the matter. The Clerk put it before the Council's Works Committee, at which a councillor asked if the work requested appeared on the priority list. It did not, as the Shire Engineer explained, because it would have been too expensive. Discussion went no further. On another occasion the Shire Engineer had recommended priorities for the sealing of lanes. Councillors accepted that the lanes most expensive to maintain should be sealed first. The idea that those people who suffered most from dusty lanes should be able to put their case was not expressed.

Another West Cowra water matter also illustrates the non-decision process. In this case the problem was extensively debated, and in the debate, was redefined. West Cowra had for a long time suffered from low water pressure, and decided, in 1982, to augment the water facility. In 1986, final design decisions on the last stages of the augmentation were made.

Debate on the issue opened with discussion about the diameter of pipes to take water across the river to West Cowra. Two councillors felt that the size recommended by the Shire Engineer was inadequate. They implicitly disputed his judgement. The councillors won the debate. The next round occurred after a consultant's recommendation for other design features was tabled. The same two councillors who objected previously produced an alternative design, and claimed that the consultant's plan was inferior. A long debate followed, between those councillors who wished to accept the legitimacy of the consultant, and those who rejected it. While both sides in the argument sought a water service for West Cowra equal to others in the town, equity was not the issue. The legitimacy of consultants became the issue, as the competence of the Shire Engineer had been earlier. He was left exasperated, and the people of West Cowra were left disappointed. Their issue, frequently empty water pipes, seemed to have been forgotten amid a debate about engineering principles. Again the councillors saw their job as maintaining efficiency. This was their way of responding to the demands of
the people.

Another non-issue illustrates an extended process of non-decision making. This time interests were pursued, but largely ignored in the Council. In 1975 a wool scouring plant commenced operation across the railway from houses in Taragala. While not actually sited adjacent to houses, it was close to some, close enough for the odours from its effluent ponds to make life unpleasant for many Taragala residents.

Eleven residents complained to the council head surveyor, who said, according to the local newspaper, that he could do nothing. Eight-five residents petitioned the Council and formed a committee. The Council also formed a committee, which in 1976, asked the company to cover the ponds. The company complied, but the smells persisted. By 1978 complaints were again loud, and the council asked residents who wished to complain to complete forms so it could document the problem. The form read:

Information Regarding Smell Alleged to Come from Lachlan Industries, Cowra.

Please fill in this sheet as accurately as possible. DO NOT EXAGERATE [sic] OR record the time that the smell lingers in the house afterward.

These dates and accurate times are needed to try and track down any particular process of action causing the smell to arise.

Return the completed sheet to Health Surveyor’s Office, preferably each Monday.

An informant assured me that the Health Surveyor had done all he could. He needed documentary evidence for the Council. Very few people filled in the forms: three were returned in three months (Health Surveyor's report to Council, 28 March, 1978). He visited Taragala, but at times when the smell was not bad. The Council wrote to the company, which again promised modifications, which again were unsuccessful. More correspondence, but little action, ensued, eventually involving State government authorities. The enthusiasm of Taragala people for the fight was withering. The State authorities were not moved by the problem, perhaps due to guidance from the views of the Council.

By the end of 1985, ten years after the plant had opened, the smells had ceased to be noticeable. At no time was the Council moved to take decisive action on the matter. The debate in Council was dominated by questions about the reality of the problem. In 1986 two councillors who had taken part in the debate told me they still believed that it did not warrant such a fuss, a very different perception from that of my neighbours where I lived in Taragala. This was another instance of people perceiving and communicating their needs, but failing to elicit a decision either to act or not act in the direction they sought. To that extent both West Cowra's water problems and Taragala's air pollution remained non-issues.
9.7 Some Issues

One might ask if it is possible for a spatially, or loosely class-defined group to raise an issue and carry it through to positive decision-making. The answer to this question is certainly yes, if one considers relations between town and rural people.

The formation of Cowra Shire Council was the culmination of an issue, but not one that was raised locally. The Council was formed from the former Cowra Municipal Council and the Council of the Shire of Waugoola in 1980 after amalgamation imposed by the New South Wales Government. The two Councils had cooperated with only occasional friction since 1906. Their offices were opposite each other in Cowra. When amalgamation was seriously mooted in 1974, the Town Clerk expressed satisfaction with the plan, but Waugoola's councillors did not agree. When amalgamation was announced in 1980, Waugoola attacked the Government. The rural people believed they would lose representation because their area had about one-quarter of the new Shire's voting population, and moreover, they expected development of town facilities to become a sponge for their rate payments.

Amalgamation proceeded without establishment of wards or ridings, but the rural-urban representation issue was only occasionally pursued. Its dormance was explained to me by the Shire Clerk: although urban dwellers outnumbered farmers on the Council, some town councillors had farms and some farmer councillors had town property. The issue did, however, arise during 1986. After a councillor resigned, an urban resident councillor suggested that no by-election be held, and the number of councillors be reduced to nine at the next four-yearly election. The rural councillors objected. They expressed fear that the rural people would lose representation, and they won a brief debate. A by-election was held, and eleven councillors took their seats in the new (1987) Council.

The ability of rural people to raise issues which proceed to decisive action can also be illustrated by controversy over rating. At the time of amalgamation, the new Council decided that the relative revenue contributions of the old Councils should be maintained, with adjustments for those town facilities which had been and would continue to be used by rural people. This required some adjustment, which was deferred during the drought of the early 1980s. The 1987 budget estimates offered an opportunity to finally bring the relative contributions into line with the amalgamation agreement.

The Shire Clerk drew the attention of the councillors to that arrangement when presenting the 1987 Budget Strategy, referring to an entry in the Policy Register. He added that under this policy, rural rate revenue in 1987 "would increase from 49% to 50%". On 6 October the local newspaper reported on page one that:

"This year ratepayers living in residential areas can expect to pay one per cent less than they did last year for their rates while rural rates will increase by one per cent and commercial rates will remain the same."
The President of the Livestock and Grain Producers' (Farmers') Association wrote to the Shire Clerk to raise his members' objections, stating that the Cowra Branch of the Association was "concerned at Council's decision to raise rural rates for 1987, when rural industry's capacity to pay is at the lowest level for many years". The farmers had assumed that an increase in the rural share of rates implied an increase in the rural rate. This was an understandable interpretation of the Clerk's proposal, as he had indicated it in his report to the Council's Finance Committee with the words "I had proposed that the increase in rural rate in 1987 could be avoided ...".

The strength of Council's reserves allowed the Clerk to budget for a decrease in general rate revenue, so avoiding raising the rural rate by lowering the residential rate in order to raise the rural share. That is how he presented the estimates to a later Finance Committee meeting. Regardless of any effect or otherwise of the farmers' letter on the Clerk's decision, it was reflected in his presentation of the estimates to Council. His emphasis appeared in the statement that: "The General Rate Revenue is DECREASED by 2% with the decrease being entirely on residential properties where rates will fall by 5.5% but with NO RURAL RATE INCREASE ...".

The farmers had perceived a threat, raised an issue and been responded to. Council decided to offer to meet with them, and it discussed the terms of its reply to the questions in their letter. The reply told the farmers that they had not understood the way the rate burden was shared, but they got their zero rate increase.

The amalgamation virtually guaranteed that rural interests would be represented in the arena. Even if no farmers were elected, it is unlikely that access to Council would have become as difficult as it was for Taragala. Separation of rural and urban interests was readily perceived on both sides, unlike spatial interests within the town.

However, the amalgamation alone cannot simply explain the farmers' ready and effective access to the arena, when in terms of senior staff the Municipal Council virtually took over Waugoola and rural area resident representatives had been a minority on Council. The Council did not divide into opposing rural and urban forces. No councillor jumped to defend the farmers' position on the rates issue; they did not need to. Farmers were more powerful than their numbers on Council, because in the rural ideological climate (discussed in Aitken, 1972; Poiner, 1990; Dempsey, 1990 and Gray, forthcoming) in which deference to rural interests is legitimated, rural people assumed a right of access, which they were accorded.

In this climate, the interests of the rural people were identified with those of the area as a whole, and it was the area as a whole that councillors wished to serve. To gain access to this local political arena, an interested group must be able to define its interests as common. The above analysis suggests two possible avenues to such definition: raising an issue as a matter of management efficiency, or raising it as a matter of concern for the whole 'community'. The people of West Cowra...
could not seek interpretation of their problem as a collective woe, and as it became a management issue, their interests were submerged among other management concerns. The people of Taragala were in a worse predicament: their interests were seen as contrary to the interests of the whole. The farmers, on the other hand, were, with little effort, able to portray their concerns as a threat to everyone, and therefore a legitimate issue for the council.

This suggests further consideration of a class dimension in rural local politics: a class relationship in which the local political apparatus acts as a catalyst for continuing domination. As Dempsey (1990) discusses, farmers exert a high degree of closure and cohesion, while rural working class people show few signs of solidarity. They do not perceive a common local enemy. The fragmentation of Cowra's working class was illustrated by the dwindling of support for those Taragala residents who fought the Council over the air pollution problem. Cowra's Municipal and Shire Councils have had members who were also members of the Australian Labor Party (two in 1986), but other than one who was the only councillor to pursue the Taragala air pollution problem, none chose to pursue anything like a class interest. Pursuit of class interests is defined out of the councillor job by ideologies of local government (Halligan and Paris, 1984).

9.8 Local Environmental Politics

As suggested earlier, the ideal of service to the whole rather than an interest group, facilitating the operation of a pluralistic arena, appears in other contexts, including Total Catchment Management Committees. The question, then, to be posed with regard to such bodies as Total Catchment Management Committees is: will they also constrain admission of issues:

1. To those which can be shown to be in the interests of some locality or region as a whole, or
2. To those which, being questions of management, can also be construed as such?

There are reasons, however, to suspect that many potential environmental issues will not even approach Saunders' negative decision-making stage. Consideration of environment issues focuses on the early stages of the issue process (Figure 1) because issue raising may be problematic at the point of perception. This is particularly so with regard to soil salinity, something which catchment managers know to be a potential issue. While rising levels of salinity in irrigation land have been well known for some time, the prospect of serious problems from soil salting in dryland farming areas has loomed relatively recently. It is becoming a problem for many farmers, one which could be placed on the agenda of Total Catchment Management Committees. There are, however, two impediments to the raising of salinity as an issue. One is lack of awareness of it among those affected, and the other is the complication which arises when those detrimentally affected by salting are not...
those on whose land the cause of the problem has occurred. 2

If farmers do not accurately perceive salting they will not be able to raise it as an issue. If they do not understand it they may not be able to communicate their perceptions, and hence still fail to raise an issue. Happily, evidence gathered in several areas to date suggests that a large majority of farmers are aware of salinity or potential salinity problems on their land, and many, although fewer, understand its causes (Barr and Cary, 1984; Blake and Cock, 1990; Dunn and Gray, 1990; Vanclay and Cary, 1989). Less happily, evidence of farmers feeling that, although salting is a serious threat, it will probably only affect other people, has also been found (Barr and Cary, 1984; Francis and Gray, 1990; Vanclay and Cary, 1990). This suggests that many will not reach the perception stage, because only those who see salting as a threat to themselves are likely to pursue the issue. Dunn and Gray (1990) found that although many farmers were aware of a threat from salting, few felt that they knew the extent of the problem in their district. This suggests that little communication among those who might raise an issue had occurred. It seems that passage of a salinity issue through perception and communication stages of the issue process will be uncertain.

The political significance of the spatial spread of causes and effects of salting has not yet been revealed by research. Dryland salting typically occurs below recharge areas where trees have been lost or removed and groundwater moves through salty soil to create problems in discharge areas as salt moves toward the surface and affects vegetation. Recharge and discharge areas may be some distance apart, and would often be on different properties.

Allocation of costs and benefits can thereby become problematic. So far public concern seems only to have gone as far as calls for awareness of the fact that salting crosses farm boundaries, but allocation of the costs of remedial action has the potential to become a significant feature of salinity issues. It contradicts the view of a singular totality of interests. What is best for the local or regional farming community could become very expensive for some of its members, just as local industrial development was for the people of Taragala. On the benefits side, if decision making follows rational management criteria, those who are most affected by salting may see remedial action take place only in situations in which it can be done most efficiently. The land care movement, in which farmers cooperate to encourage and carry out salinity remedial and preventive action may help to share costs and benefits, but reliance on it assumes that all affected farmers will participate in it, and, moreover, its decisions will also have equity impacts. The case studies of Cowra Shire indicate the dangers of approaching these matters as management problems.

2 One can imagine a situation in which those farmers, whose land has set up salting problems elsewhere, might want those who are suffering to remain unaware of the threat to their interests, or maintain a hegemonic relationship with them, but this type of power analysis is probably not widely applicable.
There are and will be many potential issues which, unlike soil salting, do not affect only farmers. Water quality, for example, may be a threat to the interests of town dwellers and industry. It is simplistic to assume, following the discussion about Cowra above, that farm interests will always prevail, but the possibility that town deference may become a threat to town interests is worth suggesting. Environmental local politics may contain a class dimension to that extent.

There may be a more apparent class dimension if one considers farmers not to be a homogeneous group. This introduces a conceptual complexity which cannot be explored here, beyond noting that farmers are socially heterogeneous. Some are rich while some are poor; most are families or individuals while some are corporations; and some are well educated while many are not. The ability to perceive, communicate and act upon environmental threats to their interests is unevenly distributed. So then are the resources required to raise issues and pursue them to decision. Those farmers who lack resources will be dependent upon the sound administration of environmental programs and maintenance of equity goals. As found in the case studies above, the former by no means ensure the latter.

9.9 Concluding Comments

My conversation with senior staff of Cowra Shire Council, after they had read a draft of the above discussion about non-issues, indicated their awareness of a need to balance equity and efficiency, and the difficulty of doing so. I am sure that the councillors shared this awareness, although their perspective was different. Explanation of unintended equity consequences must consider the history and development of the rural local government apparatus in New South Wales, to reveal the structural constraints and demands on councillors, and the manifestations of them in the rural ideological climate (Gray, forthcoming).

I do not wish to implicitly advocate a 'squeaky wheel' model of local or regional politics, in which those interest groups who 'squeak' most loudly obtain the 'oil' (Bowman, 1983). As Summers (1983) noted, there has been a constant struggle between equity and efficiency as criteria for judgement of public agricultural programs. That struggle will probably continue, alongside what Summers observed as growing demand for public participation. That public participation is no certain recipe for equity has long been appreciated (see, for example, Sandercock, 1978). Participatory management, like local government, which is often said to be close to the people, can develop similar characteristics to the bureaucracies whose undesirable aspects they are intended to avoid. The belief that the interests of individuals are best served by pursuit of the interests of the group, locality or region leads to assumption of a singular interest. All who contribute to the resources of local government and other bodies have an interest in efficiency, and as Cowra's experience suggests, efficiency may be seen as the singular interest to the exclusion of others, including those whose interests may be under greater threat than others.
REFERENCES


CHAPTER 10

FORMAL QUALIFICATIONS AND FARM EMPLOYEES:
DOES GETTING SCHOOL CERTIFICATE REALLY HELP PEOPLE
BECOME FARM OWNERS?

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ABSTRACT

Cora Vellekoop-Baldock suggested in the 1960s that farming was seen as a manual occupation which did not require formal educational qualifications. Nevertheless, those who intended to farm, but whose social position dictated that they should attend a boarding school rather than a local secondary school, did intend to acquire higher formal qualifications than those who went to local secondary schools. My own research shows a relationship between moving from farm employment to ownership and education. The question is, is this a matter of socio-economic background, in which other factors associated with education are more important as determinants of ownership, or is some personal attribute involved. I will review the literature relating to this issue and use the results of my own and other surveys to attempt to disentangle the different factors involved. The issue may be complicated by local factors such as availability of schooling, and availability of alternative jobs, which cause the relationship between background, education and farm ownership to vary.
10.1 Introduction

The relationship between class and education is one of the classic debates of sociology. Numerous studies have proved that education systems tend to preserve social class differences across generations. They present children with an educational package which maximises the formal qualifications of those from the middle class and therefore their access to well paid white collar work. At the same time this package is less appropriate to working-class children, channelling them into lower paid occupations as they fail in the school system (Nash, 1982).

Studies done in the New Zealand context show that our educational system fulfils a similar role, in fitting children's aspirations to the less desirable jobs available, to those identified overseas. Rather than repeating these findings in this chapter I will attempt to look at a slightly anomalous case: the significance of education in an occupation which has traditionally required manual skills, but has a socio-economic status closer to that of white-collar work.

The ability of some well paid occupational groups to limit access to their ranks on the basis of formal qualifications, and the consequent escalation of qualifications among the general population, through competition for a limited number of places in these occupations, has been well documented (Collins, 1979). However the case of farm ownership is somewhat different. Entry into farm ownership is also limited, but by access to capital and credit, rather than through acquisition of tertiary qualifications. Under these circumstances, does the relationship between social class and educational success break down? Boudon has already identified two central relationships in the question of education and social class, that between socio-economic background and achievement in the education system, and that between qualifications and subsequent income (Nash, 1982: 64). Beyond this is the vexed question of whether qualifications do in fact lead to increased productivity. Farming intersects with all these questions in unique ways. The title of this chapter suggests I am concerned only with ability to achieve ownership, but the same issues reappear when the productivity and viability of the farm itself are being assessed, so I will not restrict my attention to the moment of farm acquisition.

The relationship between socio-economic background and educational achievement is the most easily addressed. An earlier study of the way background influences educational and occupational aspirations confirms their relationship for most New Zealand school children (Baldock, 1971a: 145). But evidence from the same study also suggests ways in which occupation might cut across this relationship (Baldock, 1971b). Educational aspirations from farmers' sons were lower than those of others who could have expected similar rewards from their occupation. Those of farmers' sons in different educational situations also varied, reintroducing social class through differences in socio-economic standing among farmers themselves. Evidence from my own study of class mobility among farm employees confirms differences in the ability of farm owning families to reproduce
all their sons as farm owners, and this is almost unheard of with daughters (Loveridge, forthcoming).

The second question, on the relationship between education and income, has also been addressed in New Zealand already (Davis 1982). Those with higher qualifications do tend to earn higher incomes. Yet the role of qualifications is less clear cut where farming is concerned. Unlike some occupations, with farming there is no need to present credentials before permission to practise is given. The criteria for success are the skills of the farmer and access to sufficient capital or credit to make the enterprise viable. The same factors will bear on the level of income of established farmers. Education may improve decision making, and give access to useful information which can be converted into increased income, but positions as managers and sharemilkers are also open to those with just practical experience. The most commonly gained farming qualifications are Trade Certificates in farming or short courses, for which experience is more important than formal education. Education could have a direct influence on income if it were a criterion in access to credit. Evidence suggests education is not a key factor for farming loans. Because of this, there seems to be no necessity that education will determine the income of farm owners, though it may in fact do so in indirect ways.

Education may be related to success in farm ownership, but the nature of the relationship is less clearcut than with some occupations. In turn the link between class and education may also be weaker. Lowe (1985: 76) presents evidence which could be used to suggest a link between education and socio-economic background. Those with higher education not only achieved farm ownership more quickly, but also retained greater assets long after they have acquired their first farm. I will try to follow up his lead by looking at whether results which might appear to be attributable to education, are in fact related to class, and the more tangible assistance which the members of the petty bourgeoisie and bourgeoisie can give their offspring.

The third question follows on from the second. If those with higher educational qualifications earn more than other farmers, is it because education is independently associated with having a better capital base or similar factors, or are those with higher qualifications more productive? Once the question of social class versus education has been examined I will return to this area. In the case of farming this issue can not be addressed without controlling for a myriad of factors from farm type, to climate, to debt loadings. Socio-economic status has considerable influence on productivity through the latter. This question was asked by Attwood (1985), who provides some insight into the problem but few answers. Much of my discussion of this area, and these of others, are speculative.

The first step in looking at whether School Certificate can help people achieve ownership is to look at whether people from farms seem to have different aspirations with regard to qualifications, followed by their actual achievement. I will look at the relationship between class and educational achievement for farm
people using Baldock's study of educational and vocational aspirations (1971a; 1971b). I will then look at the significance of education in achieving ownership, using my own data, focusing on the respective importance of class and education. This is important as the role of school qualifications can only be taken seriously if confounding factors, particularly class, can be controlled for. Finally I will return to the implications of my results for productivity, and the likelihood of aspirations towards improvements in farm productivity being met by education.

10.2 The Relationship Between Background and Education

Education is related to background but it is a complex relationship, involving ability, aspirations, socio-economic background and changing levels of education. The fullest investigation into the relationship between background, educational achievement and vocational choice carried out in New Zealand confirmed that the situation of farmers' sons differed from those of other school pupils (Baldock 1971b). A nationwide survey of the vocational aspirations of fourteen year old boys, which correlated these with socio-economic background, was carried out in 1967. This study found that boys from farm backgrounds had lower educational success and vocational aspirations than would be expected considering the socio-economic status of farm ownership. Educational success was loosely measured by the position of the boys in academic, general or vocational courses. Baldock attributed this to the manual nature of farming and the nature of schools in small or middle-sized towns. In these schools academic courses have been less emphasised and many pupils see them as irrelevant to their choice of work. Those who wished to farm had educational aspirations between those who intended lower white-collor work and those who intended blue-collar work, although farming provided much higher socio-economic status than those jobs.

The only exceptions were the sons of professional or executive parents who were interested in farming, and sons of farmers who went to boarding schools - these groups had higher educational aspirations (Baldock, 1971b: 130, 170). Others with farm backgrounds who had high educational aspirations, and were more likely to have high abilities, generally intended to go into the professions. But unlike them, farm boys attending boarding school were more likely to choose farming than average. Baldock considered that their close association with students from professional and managerial homes, in schools where academic achievement was emphasised, led to assimilation of other standards. However another factor in this result may be that choice of boarding school was related to the differing status of farmers as well. Baldock's information can not answer the question as to whether School Certificate helps people become farm owners, but it does confirm that farming differs from other occupations in respect to education. By 1986 it was no longer possible to say as confidently as Baldock did that farm owners had high socio-economic status, but changing signals may take time to change the course of those already committed to a plan of action.
The potential differences in education found by Baldock are confirmed by census data from 1966. Those who were involved in farming were under-represented in any type of qualification and over-represented among those without School Certificate. They showed a similar record to those in craft-based jobs such as manufacturing, construction and transport, but lacked their trade-based qualifications (Livingstone, 1973). These results validate the expectations of the boys in Baldock's sample. The numbers involved in farming who have gained qualifications at secondary and tertiary level have risen since then, the percentage with no qualifications has fallen from 79 percent in 1966 to 70 percent in 1986. However they still fall well behind those of the general population, 75 percent of whom had no qualifications in 1966, but 48 percent of whom had none in 1986 (New Zealand Census of Population and Dwellings, 1966 and 1986).

These figures tell us that there is a difference between those who are involved in farming and others they but can not take us further to look at the significance of education for those who do acquire formal qualifications. Does it actually lead to higher income before ownership is achieved? Does it lead to easier access to farm ownership? There are problems in following up these questions with the census because the link with parent's social class is lost. These problems can be tackled by survey data which answers appropriate questions. I will look briefly at the relationships of education, social class and farm ownership using a survey I carried out in 1986.

The original sample was drawn from people who said they were farm employees or sharemilkers in the 1975 Northland electoral rolls, who were then traced to the 1985 rolls. Because all farm owners in the final study population had acquired their farms between 1975 and 1985 they were considerably younger than the average farm owner (37 years compared with 43 years). Their educational level reflects this: close to the 60 percent of my sample had no qualifications, 27 percent had School Certificate only and 14 percent had a higher qualification. Even within a ten year period changes in educational levels have been large and can create a spurious relationship. Many who do not have qualifications, who may appear less successful, are just those who took longer to get to ownership because of less family help rather than less ability. Many of their contemporaries were already farm owners when the sample was drawn in 1975. People who came to farm ownership after careers outside farming are not represented either. Other issues to do with the validity of survey data have been dealt with in more detail elsewhere (Loveridge, 1987).

My own investigation of class mobility among farm employees found some evidence to support the contention that School Certificate is one of a set of factors which helps people get farms, but I can not exclude the possibility that socio-economic background also accounts for the results. They are not caused by different access to education for farm families. There was no real difference in the educational achievements of farmers' offspring and others in my sample (p of chi square showing significant
difference is 0.8). Nor was there a difference between the proportions of farmer's offspring and non-farmer's offspring gaining farm qualifications (p was 0.9). However within each group there was a range of qualifications held.

Members of my study population, many of whom would have been at school when Baldock's study was carried out, showed significant differences in their ability to achieve ownership according to their background. Those who came from a farm owning family were more likely to become owners, but having School Certificate or higher qualifications enhanced their chances further. The enhancement also showed up for non-farmers' offspring, except that those with the highest qualifications were more likely to leave farming and take well paid work elsewhere (See Table 1).

The zero order Gamma of 0.25 for the relationship between outcome and education suggests it is slightly masked by father's occupation (the First-Order Partial Gamma for this was .27).

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Father = Farmer</th>
<th>Father = Non-farmer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&lt;SC</td>
<td>SC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N=</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Left Farm</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farm Worker</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farm Owner</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Number of missing observations: 62

Key: <SC = No qualification  
SC = School Certificate 1 subject of more  
>SC = Higher than School Certificate  
T = Total

A more detailed analysis than is shown in this table supports the view that length of time at school is related to the socio-economic status of parents and this in turn promotes farm ownership independently. Spending three years at school without getting any qualification has a closer relationship with owning a farm than being two years at school. A considerable number of those who were at school for four years or more but did not acquire a formal qualification (71) became farm owners, a higher proportion than for many of those who came out of school better qualified. Those with parents in white-collar jobs had slightly higher levels of education, 27 had a higher level than
School Certificate, compared with 14 of the whole sample. There was also an increase in ownership for those with parents in white collar jobs over and above the level attributable to School Certificate, but it was not significant.

In order to assess the relative importance of father's occupation, education and aspiration for ownership I carried out a log linear analysis of these variables. From this I calculated ratios of the likelihood of becoming an owner under different conditions (See Loveridge (forthcoming) for formula). The results confirmed that father's occupation or aspiration were more important than education in predicting ownership (See Table 2). Education seems most effective for non-farmer's offspring, who must substitute their own resources for family help.

Table 2

Likelihood of Ownership by Fathers' Occupation and Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fathers' Occupation</th>
<th>Aspiration</th>
<th>Education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td>1.60</td>
<td>Own farm 1.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>Other 1.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If fathers' occupation contributes more to chances of ownership than education, this should show up in the two main sources of help which farm owners can pass on: giving their offspring lucrative employment opportunities such as sharemilking on the home farm, and loans or gifts when they come to purchase a farm. However analysis of sources of finance by education provides ambivalent information as to the help received by those with better educational qualifications in farming. It is not possible to separate out the effect of being farmers' offspring from education here because of the high non-response rate¹, but we know that fathers' occupation is more important. Virtually no non-farmers' offspring got help from parents, but they were compensated for this to an extent by access to Rural Banking and Finance Corporation (Rural Bank) loans. If those with and without School Certificate are compared, the differences are much less significant. Those without received fewer gifts or inheritances ($22,890 compared with $72,828) and spent less on their farms ($137,501 compared with $159,985). The amount that each group had saved was very similar, and the Rural Bank did not seem to be picking out the transactions of those with School Certificate as more worthwhile for funding. Those with qualifications may have been achieving farm ownership faster in

¹Non response was higher for the question on farm finance than for any other. It was exacerbated because some people, who had not stated themselves as farmers in the electoral rolls and who were not asked this question, turned out to be owners.
Lowe's (1985) study but there was no evidence of other advantages from this part of my study.

The same problems occur when comparing job histories. There are significant differences in outcome related to fathers' occupation and sharemilking, but none for education. The two factors tend to counteract each other, education tends to lessen differences between those with and without the advantages of a farm background, but having one softens disadvantages relating to lack of education.

Since formal education seemed to be of limited significance when other factors are controlled for, although it is not completely eliminated, I was interested to see whether farming qualifications were more important. Farm qualifications might provide access to better paid work or experience which was viewed favourably by lending agencies. After all, school qualifications may have seemed irrelevant to those anticipating a farm career and be a poor indicator of ability, but this should be less of a problem with farm qualifications since those seeking them should be well motivated. Most courses require some practical experience and except for courses run by universities they do not require formal educational qualifications. However the results were similar to those for School Certificate. Those with school qualifications, who were also younger, were more likely to have farm or other qualifications (17 compared to 38). In all, 16 had a trade certificate or an equivalent diploma, 10 had attended a short course, and degrees were almost non-existent. Farm qualifications are equally common among those from farm and non-farm backgrounds, and should be less tied to parental income in that many are limited to people who have already been in the workforce.

Farm qualifications may be related to upward mobility for some who missed out on other advantages, but in many cases it is another element related to socio-economic background. They make little difference to the life chances of farmers' offspring, but they are related to improved chances for non-farmers' offspring (p was 0.0003). The percentage of non-farmers' offspring with a farming qualification achieving ownership is as high as that for farmers' offspring with no qualifications. This is consistent with my previous assertion that School Certificate, in itself, is more significant for achievement of ownership for non-farm people. People who have both School Certificate and farm qualifications are more likely to become farm owners. A mixture of socio-economic background, motivation, and ability to learn seems to be involved.

10.3 The Significance of Education and Productivity

The lack of differences in success in ownership related to farm qualifications leads directly back to the question I asked at the beginning about the relationship between education and productivity. With gatekeeping in farming involving finance, did education only become important after the farm was established?

Research carried out in the diffusion of innovation tradition
suggests that farm owners who are younger and have more education are more likely to take up new technology and methods (Rogers 1983). This is not conclusive though, as again, economic factors such as the ability to bear risk and to purchase additional inputs may be the key determinant of adoption. In New Zealand there has been a considerable amount of direct intervention in farm productivity in the past, through subsidies of inputs, research and development, and low interest loans. Promotion of education for farm owners and workers has been one element in that programme (Attwood, 1984: 59).

A study of the performance of Department of Lands and Survey leaseholders after a few years of settlement confirmed the value of appropriate experience against education (Attwood 1985). The evidence was tentative but those who did best had trade certificates, and those who had been exempt from the need for qualifications because of their wide experience and those with qualifications from universities did better than those with short courses, such as are offered from Flock House or Telford. Unfortunately these are not a typical group of farm owners, they must be more competent, experienced and motivated than the average farmer to enter the scheme.

An analysis of the information farmers use to make decisions (Lively and Nuthall, 1983) suggests that where information is sought from traditional sources education may not make a big difference to ability to gather and assess information in traditional ways. Off-farm advisors were most likely to have input into decision making, followed by information from other farmers, with written material used by 40 (Lively and Nuthall, 1983: 15). Another factor which limits the importance of any individual in farm decision making, which Lively and Nuthall's study did not appear to address, is the role of farm wives. These women may be involved in decisions and keeping the farm accounting records, and often have the formal qualifications their husbands lack (Gill et al., 1975; Maunier et al 1985). Given these inputs into farm decision making, the fact that not all information comes in a written form, the fact that formal education is less likely to represent ability in farming and the possibility farmers will seek specific skills to fill needs, formal education may be less likely to have an impact on productivity.

Pomeroy (1986) looked at various indications of management and found that those who were highly productive i.e., had expanded their enterprise recently) were spending more time planning, and less on physical work and making more use of credit. However she also made the point that marketing was generally through cooperative organisations, and farmers had few alternative strategies to choose from. This points to the promise of education, to promote a more market-oriented approach, but as with previous discussion on what is involved in decision making, it also reminds us that there are limitations to the difference it will make with our current ownership and marketing structures. Production systems, such as horticulture, where a higher proportion of owners come from non-farm careers and marketing is more varied, education may have quite a different relationship
with productivity. Pastoral farmers with less family backing, who may need to be more responsive to factor costs, and who may have more education, may also show a different relationship between education and productivity.

Those who see the benefits of vocational education may also be looking forward to a situation where there is an increase in the size, technical complexity and division of labour on New Zealand farms (Pryde, 1987). It does not seem likely that education will have the kind of "gatekeeping" effect that finance has now for a while yet. But in a context of structural change, education for farming could, like education elsewhere, become an element in a process of class reproduction comparable with the reproduction of professionals and administrators. Those from larger enterprises could continue to expand, while others, who could not afford to pay for technical/business education continued to drop behind.

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CHAPTER 11

PUBLIC DRINKING AND SOCIAL ORGANISATION
IN METHVEN AND MT. SOMERS

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ABSTRACT

This chapter provides a summary and overview of public drinking which attempts to integrate action and structure by way of interpreting the practice of public drinking. Results show that public drinking occurs on a regular basis in which men interact in networks in order to achieve status within and between groups. Regular attendance and local knowledge are important factors in successful interaction which features exclusion of different occupational groups. Women are also excluded and the men's world accentuates the values of masculinity and opposes the values of femininity in an attempt to control leisure time.
When men in small rural towns drink at the pub and at clubs they form groups to gain status and to exclude other men and most women from their male world, in ways that reflect broader divisions in society.

11.1 Introduction

The Alcohol Liquor Advisory Council funded a detailed study of public drinking in Methven and Mt. Somers in 1989 and 1990. A full report of that study has been prepared and sent to the Council and is available from the AERU, Lincoln University. Another report is available on Methven and Mt. Somers socio-economic history. In this chapter we provide a detailed summary of the full report.

11.2 Background

The objective of the study was to describe and interpret everyday public drinking in Methven and Mt. Somers, and account for daily patterns of public drinking and associated interactions. Alcoholism or problem drinking was not included in the study, nor was private drinking. The task was to examine drinking in pubs and other locations like sporting clubs.

A review of pub studies in both anthropology and sociology shows that they tend not to include the surrounding context of the pub in their interpretations. We advocate using integrated ethnography and including key aspects like class and gender, for example, to advance an improved interpretation of pub behaviours. Four examples of integrated studies of pubs in different small communities show that culture, gender, and class are key elements of the working-class pub. Specifically, the pub in Western societies is a cultural solution to the structural conjuncture of home, work and leisure. That is, the pub is a place for specific behaviours for men who go to work but enjoy leisure in the pub before returning home. Typically, men have economic responsibility and work for wages away from their homes. The pub is a male domain in which men seek to escape the constraints from work and home, and in which alcohol is a symbol of the male club, symbolising power that is shared among "equal" men. Men go to the pub to escape moral constraints on their behaviour, constraints deriving typically from women. Conversation in the pub reflects an antagonistic relationship between men and women, and it constantly reinforces male values which excludes female values. Verbal interchanges exhibit teasing, joking and laughing, and they are used to gain status among men or to control the presence of women.

11.3 Methods

The integrated style of ethnography that we advocate assumes that the cause and effect of alcohol use can not be understood within a delimited study area itself (e.g., the pub). We also assume that ethnography must include the history of the location being studied. We use practice theory to guide the research and we
focus on everyday social processes that are linked to class and gender, and which illustrate the dynamics of inclusive and exclusive group formation and maintenance.

In order to study public drinking it is necessary to carefully examine daily social life by living in the community. Hugh Campbell spent one year living in a farm cottage near to Methven. He took part in community life and became involved in drinking situations in the pubs, clubs and other venues. While living in the Methven area, Hugh Campbell gave assistance to the local business association who did a survey of all businesses in Methven. This work was a small but important contribution from our research to Methven. After living in the community it is possible to build up an idea of how public drinking works. No account is perfect and ours is not the final answer. However, it does give insight into how and why alcohol is consumed.

To begin this study about half of all the pubs in rural Canterbury were visited in order to learn about rural drinking generally. We wanted to pick a town off the main roads and big enough to have a number of clubs and associations. Methven was found to be suitable because it had two pubs, an active drinking life, and was reasonably close to Lincoln University. The ski-field tourist activity is only seasonal and does not alter the basic character of Methven. In fact, the mixing of farming and tourism people in Methven tells us more about how social life in Methven is organised. Later in the study we turned to nearby Mt. Somers in order to make some comparisons to Methven.

11.4 Methven and Mt. Somers' History

Public drinking is not new in Methven or Mt. Somers. From the beginning of Methven in 1879 there were pubs as Methven developed as a servicing centre and railhead. There were many transient workers then who worked on the large estate farms that produced wool and wheat. By the beginning of the twentieth century small farms were becoming common and there was a continuing need for workers in the agricultural industries. These workers patronised the local pub. By the 1970s, Methven had experienced some downturn to the agricultural economy and ski-field development began. Farmers, some businessmen, and servicing workers are the main groups in Methven's economic history. They are still there today, although a recent change has been women taking work in the tourist industry.

Mt. Somers has a similar history to Methven. Early extraction of timber and minerals gave way to farming and mining, and these industries sustained early Mt. Somers and other nearby towns. A railway line to Mt. Somers, and the fact that Prohibition closed the pubs in the rural towns, meant that Mt. Somers became firmly established in the area. Mining for coal, clay, and limestone meant that there were, and still are, many miners in the area in addition to shearsers. There is some limited participation in tourist business activity. Today, Mt. Somers is a small rural town with one pub, which is a focal point for community and social life.
11.5 Drinking Locations, Patterns, and Interactions

There is a regular cycle of daily drinking in the Methven pubs. Men visit at lunchtime, after work, or after dinner. This regular daily pattern is accentuated on Friday nights when a regular weekly pattern of enthusiastic drinking occurs. Saturday drinking is less popular because of the presence of outsiders. Drinking also occurs in clubs and associations and varies in each location. Club drinking exhibits interesting dynamics and traditions. In addition to daily and weekly patterns there is non-regular drinking. For example, in casual work situations, like shearing on farms, drinking beer softens the appearance of occupational differences. In celebratory drinking there is music, female involvement and some consumption of spirits by men.

In the Methven pubs the physical decorations reflect male values and male drinking. Most of the decorations are sponsored by the breweries, and most relate to sport. Local decorations feature crude humour, sexual themes, and unusual trophies.

Inside the pub men drink and interact in a way that can be described as a game. The objective is to enhance one's status within the group, and conversation is the means by which the game is played. Local knowledge and being genuinely local helps in this game. Inside the pub there are high and low status positions, and men aspire to high-ranked positions and or try to maintain the position they have. There is no open display of competition because the popular view is that all men are equal. Groups form and maintain their boundary from other groups. Participants in the group portray a collective image of good fellowship.

These drinking interactions help to maintain distinct groups, especially for different occupations. Since tourist industry workers are relatively new in the Methven area, the agricultural workers exclude them from their group and maintain a distinct boundary. Also, women are excluded from drinking circles and only make an appearance at the weekend. Men in the pub emphasise the values of work, beer, casual clothes, and sports, while the values of home, mental labour, other alcoholic drinks, care in dress, and culture are seen as feminine. There is a clash of values between men and women, and men believe they must show that they can control women, especially when they are with their drinking mates. Young men spend a number of years studiously learning to become fully adult men by gaining experience in drinking beer. They also defend masculinity with stag parties because they see marriage as symbolising a loss from their group.

Public drinking in Mt. Somers is similar to that in Methven. The same competitive interactions and status games occur in the pub. However, lunchtime drinking at Mt. Somers is important to a group of retired miners and they occupy a distinct part of the pub. There are more shearers in the Mt. Somers area so that workplace drinking is regular, and the shearers occupy a distinct part of the pub. Another difference is that women in Mt. Somers are leaving the paid workforce to pursue child care roles, unlike in
Methven. Finally, the men in the Mt. Somers pub show less concern about the need to stick together because they do not feel the impact of the tourist industry so much as men in Methven.

11.6 Understanding and Explaining Public Drinking

The daily interactions show which groups are powerful in the community. Those people who attend the pub regularly and practice drinking well are able to claim most status and influence the definitions of importance in the community. Further, within the pub there is a hierarchy of status order and a constant jostling for status centred around the idea of being genuinely local. Finally, drinking for all men is a way of controlling their leisure time as the pub is strategically located between work and home.

Pub interactions are in fact the practice of exclusion and inclusion. While there is a hierarchy within the group of male drinkers, there is also exclusion of other people from that group. Ski industry members are not accepted in the daily drinking session, and in Mt. Somers there is a total distinction between retired miners and visiting shearers. Further, women are excluded from the daily interaction in the pub and this physical absence is supplemented with conversation which extols masculine values at the expense of female values. Success in the male hierarchy requires display of antagonism towards women and female values.

It is important to recognise that public drinking has a long history because it is an integral part of the daily life of men, reinforcing important norms and values, and because rural towns have always had blue-collar workers who have patronised pubs. The pub has been sustained by a favourable economic history and this factor is an important aspect of a full account of public drinking, and something that drinking interactions themselves illustrate but do not explain. Further, history shows that drinking interactions occur only between men in industries that have existed for a long time. Newly-arrived but otherwise identical social groups are excluded. Exclusion is based on the politics of maintaining status by controlling work and identity. Both farmers and blue-collar workers own or aspire to own land and share similar values and thus engage in inclusive drinking practices. But blue-collar worker's link their identity to their work, and in the absence of land defend their work from other groups. Hence, women are excluded from the daily practice of drinking because work, masculinity, and identity are linked together. The practice of public drinking is related directly to the historical nature of the local labour market. Recent changes in the labour market have allowed women to engage in new work roles.

Public drinking in Methven and Mt. Somers shows obvious parallels to public drinking overseas. The similarity with overseas findings supports the claim that the social structures and drinking interactions seen in Methven and Mt. Somers will occur in a similar way in other rural locations.
CHAPTER 12

THE STRANGE ABSENCE OF NEW ZEALAND RURAL SOCIOLOGY

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ABSTRACT

This chapter reports a 1989 survey of rural sociology work in progress in New Zealand Universities.
12.1 Introduction

This short paper reports a 1989 survey of rural sociological work in progress in New Zealand universities. Information was sought from:

1. Every university sociology department
2. Selected other departments in every university, using key informants.

12.2 Results

(a) Sociology

The Waikato, Massey and Canterbury departments reported no work in progress.

Victoria reported three projects:

1. Claire Toynbee's continuing oral historical work on family life has a rural component
2. Maria Murphy's Recreation Administration MA thesis work on The leisure of rural women in New Zealand: a pilot study
3. Marie Connolly's MA thesis work on unemployment and rural families.

Auckland reported three PhD projects under way, with a fourth on the stocks:

1. Claudia Bell on rural imagery in New Zealand culture
2. Alison Loveridge on class mobility among farm workers
3. Jill Macpherson's SSRFC-funded work on community power structures in provincial cities contains a rural control group
4. (about to start) Trevor Snowdon on agricultural interest group articulation and the New Zealand state.

In addition to this, Ian Carter has just written the first textbook chapter on rural sociology for a New Zealand audience.

(b) Other Disciplines

Some major work is under way in Geography departments that would certainly be taken overseas to be rural sociology. Examples are:

1. Richard le Heron's work at Massey, partly funded by SSRFC, on the reorganisation of food and fibre production in New Zealand, and its corporate integration with Australian capital
2. Warren Moran and Grant Anderson's Auckland work, also SSRFC-funded, on intra-household decision making on Franklin sheep-beef farms.

The Auckland, Waikato, Massey and Victoria geography departments all report thesis work in rural social geography that would provide valuable evidence for a New Zealand rural sociology. No doubt a response from Geography in Canterbury and Otago would show the same.

Relevant work is being done in other disciplines. This list does not pretend to be exhaustive, but it gives some idea of the range:

1. In social anthropology Julie Park from Auckland and her co-workers throughout the country are re-analysing for book publication their ALAC and SRFC-funded work on women and alcohol. Many of the projects in this programme had a strong rural complexion. Cheleen Maher from Massey is assisting a community group, with SSRFC funding, to replicate the Canterbury rural women survey from the 1970s.

2. Rural community health research seems stronger in the south. MRC has funded the Otago Women's Health survey for the last four years. Urban-rural differences are a major focus. Judy Martin's study of physical and sexual violence, particularly child sexual abuse, is piggy-backed on the main survey and also has a rural-urban dimension.

3. Lincoln College reports two sets of research. The first is John Fairweather's work; important because he is the only full-time New Zealand researcher tooled up to do rural sociology. John notes four current research areas: unemployment in rural Southland and Canterbury, national-level social indicators work on rural change under the present Government, a history of the Milk Board and an ALAC-funded rural community study in Canterbury. The Centre for Resource Management declares that Nick Taylor's departure has left it bereft of rural sociology, but notes work in progress on private property rights and the management of Canada geese and hill and high country, tradeable water permits, pesticide management, groundwater contamination, coppice fuelwood, public participation in floodplain management planning, and the implications of the Treaty of Waitangi for natural resource management. Little of this is rural sociology, Tracy Williams' letter notes, but these are all important rural topics.
12.3 Conclusions

For a country which derives a large and increasing proportion of export earnings from the primary sector, New Zealand has a scandalously undeveloped rural sociology. Evidence from sociology departments suggests that this is not likely to change.

There is much more rural work under way, but it is an open question how much of it would be useful for a rural sociology. 'Rural' is a difficult concept for sociology, but wider awareness of how the difficulties are being tackled overseas would help sociology meet its golden opportunity - and heavy unmet policy responsibility - in rural New Zealand.
CHAPTER 13

RURAL SOCIOLOGY IN NEW ZEALAND: DIMENSIONS; INTERDISCIPLINARY INTERSECTIONS, INSTITUTIONAL SETTINGS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

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ABSTRACT

An attempt is made to outline the history of New Zealand rural sociology, its foci historically, and what ought to be the sub-discipline’s contemporary terms of reference in the New Zealand setting. Points of interdisciplinary convergence and divergence in that setting are identified relative to future possibilities. The institutional settings of rural sociology in New Zealand are discussed with reference to both academic and non-academic settings. The overall consideration of the sub-discipline's contemporary dimensions, interdisciplinary convergence and institutional settings fuels an argument for the establishment of an independent or university-aligned, interdisciplinary rural studies centre, working with a broad, flexible, research agenda.
Many of us here no doubt identify with the concept of rural sociology. We may differ as to what 'rural' means or what it ought to incorporate; but most of us probably take for granted the concept of sociology. It is on the basis of that assumption that I begin - by addressing the concept of sociology itself.

Sociology, as an organizational concept facilitating the pursuit of certain types of knowledge, is subject to the same rationalising forces and tendencies which prevail upon all other aspects of human productive activity. These rationalising forces and tendencies have severed sociology from other forms of intellectual production through the creation and defence of territories in the form of academic disciplines. Within sociology itself, processes of fragmentation have spawned multiple realities, each neatly labelled, packaged and seemingly condemned to dwell in the cloisters of its own intellectual monastery. Rural sociology is one such reality.

The elaborate division of labour within sociology, I believe, poses a serious intellectual problem for the sociologist. The problem is to locate some common strand, some thematic unity running through all of the sociological sub-disciplines which might provide some assurance that, despite the proliferation and differentiation of sub-disciplines, the concept of sociology remains meaningful; or, to put it another way, we need to constantly reconsider precisely what it is about rural sociology, for instance, which makes it sociological. During the course of this paper, I hope to go some way towards answering that question; however, at this point I want to identify what I consider to be a deficiency attending the development of sociological sub-disciplines generally, and not just rural sociology. That deficiency is best characterized as a tendency for the sub-discipline to develop in detachment from mainstream social theory, which itself has become separated out as a relatively discrete area of intellectual endeavour. A rural sociology which fails to address and contribute to mainstream social theory, I contend, has no future.

As I see it, sociology has, or ought to have, three dimensions - teaching, research and the evaluation and formulation of social policy. It is important to discuss each in turn, and to relate the discussion of each to consideration of the future of rural sociology in New Zealand.

The teaching of sociology is conditioned by the compartmentalization of knowledge I discussed earlier. Because universities are large and very complex organizations, they tend to be governed through highly rational forms of administration which pervade the entire system, including the way in which teaching itself occurs. The university, incorporating the means of high intellectual production, commodifies knowledge in the form of certification. A degree course prescription is precisely that: disciplines and sub-disciplines are compressed, mutated, otherwise rationalised and presented to students as a consumable commodity: glossy, compact, easily digestible and clinically sealed as an academic 'paper'. Thus taking on undergraduate degree becomes like taking medication, or buying a 'Big Mac'. 
What this means, insofar as rural sociology is concerned, is that to market rural sociology to undergraduate students and to enhance its popularity, it will have to be packaged in similarly rational and attractive ways.

The second dimension to sociology which I identified earlier is research. In New Zealand, very few, if indeed any scholars work full-time pursuing their own research interests. Teaching and research are generally taken to be complementary elements in an academic career. Thus research, even for academic rural sociologists, is normally a part-time affair. One might argue that post-graduate students are full-time researchers; but I certainly would not argue that. Even Ph.D. students in receipt of a hard-earned postgraduate scholarship find themselves, in Auckland for instance, with an income which barely pays the rent for a modest two-bedroomed unfurnished flat. Thus although many post-graduate students are registered as full-time students, most are so financially hard-up that they have to take a part-time or full-time job; therefore, technically most are not full-time students at all. Furthermore, so far as I am aware, rural sociologists are not engaged by government departments to undertake research; and even if they were, it is unlikely that they would be able to work with any real degree of relative autonomy; and in the present political climate, most would probably find themselves on loan to the Social Welfare Department's 'hit squads'.

All of this leads to the conclusion that, for a country whose history is so steeped in forms of production, lifestyles and institutions traditionally deemed 'rural', the general lack of scholarly interest in that history (and, indeed, in contemporary developments) along with the conspicuous absence of research opportunities, is nothing short of scandalous and deplorable.

The third dimension of sociological enterprise I address here is the evaluation and formulation of social policy. To some extent, this may overlap with university teaching and research broadly conceived. However, social policy analysis may also be regarded as a separate sphere of intellectual activity. It would appear that few, if any, New Zealand rural sociologist are employed in government departments or agencies as social policy analysts. One might assume, on the other hand, that research relating to social policy analysis undertaken by academics and post-graduate students occasionally reaches those who make policy decisions. Yet if and when that occurs, an element of contingency is probably involved; for there are no formal mechanisms linking academic rural sociology to policy decision-making processes. To the extent that there are such corrections or articulations, they are fortuitous, ad hoc, or otherwise unsystematic and informal.

Something needs to be said at this point about the concept of rural sociology itself; and, indeed, about the condition of New Zealand rural sociology. However, that ought to entail some consideration of the development of the sub-discipline elsewhere as well as considering the extent to which those developments elsewhere might be regarded as representing (potentially) some
form of structural constraint in the development of rural sociology in New Zealand.

In the USA, rural sociology developed in relation to clearly identifiable sets of historical circumstances and it took culturally specific institutional forms. From its very inception, it was strongly imbued with certain normative elements and its earliest institutionalized forms are a reflection of that. During its formative period, American rural sociology was characterized by a fetishistic empiricism, not at all unrelated to the normative orientation. This fetishistic empiricism was later to characterize American sociology more generally, evolving as it did in something of a theoretical vacuum.

American social theory was for some decades dominated by structural-functionalism epitomized in the Parsonian epic: an epic ungrounded in social reality, to some extent reflecting ruling class ideology, unable to adequately address the phenomenon of social change, whilst considerations of power and rationality became submerged in the mystification of the 'system' concept.

British rural sociology, on the other hand, developed against a backdrop of historical and rural studies but was not so discernibly delimited from other disciplines such as history, economics and anthropology. Consequently it developed in a more interdisciplinary form and, arguably, it emerged in relation to specific and significant theoretical debates within Marxism.

The history of New Zealand rural sociology could be written on a cigarette paper; a greater cynic than I might even suggest the use of invisible ink.

In thinking through New Zealand rural sociology and its future prospects, we have to start from the premise that a New Zealand rural sociology must address the historical, social and cultural specificities of our national identity. No satisfaction can be derived from any attempt to fit New Zealand experience to that of some other country which is held to represent some kind of definitive model, norm or yardstick; nor is there much point in attempting to graft such extraneous experience onto our own unique reality. But that is not to suggest that we should not engage in comparative studies of a cross-national or international type. The point is that the usefulness of such comparisons is undermined if one set of historical, social, or cultural imperatives or assumptions is used to evaluate two or more national entities which clearly differ along those (historical, social and cultural) dimensions.

So what might a New Zealand rural sociology look like? Perhaps I can offer some conjectures in this area; though I do not think it in order to attempt to establish any research priorities. After all, we all have our own values, our own interests. However, the area in which I do not mind indulging my values concerns the way in which we as rural sociologists conceptualize our objects of study whatever those objects may be; as I see it, that does not necessarily impinge on the issue of
establishing research priorities.

I think we have to start with the knowledge that capitalism is an all-pervasive system of exploitation and that the study of capitalist enterprise is integral to rural sociology. Having both an historical and a contemporary component, rural capitalism is manifested in various forms of agriculture, horticulture, viticulture, mining, forestry, racehorse breeding, goat, deer, and salmon farming, bee-keeping, fishing (for the sea is arguably 'rural'), co-operative ventures in the dairy and other industries, freezing works and so on.

All these areas of capitalist enterprise have recently been penetrated by corporate investors. One needs to look also at the types of organization and various bodies which are representative of capitalist interest, such as farmer organizations, producer boards and so on. One needs to look, furthermore, at how capitalist interests are represented in political parties in national and local politics.

The role of the state also needs careful study in its various roles relative to all these forms of capitalist enterprise; that entails study of the dynamics of certain government departments and corporations, and their interactions with capitalist organisations, at the provision of subsidies historically, and so on.

Within all of these various capitalist enterprises relations of production - the relations between capital and labour - need to be attended to.

The lives of rural men, women and children, farm life, rural education community, town and regional studies, all fall within the range of rural sociology.

The history of New Zealand is largely a rural history - it has yet to be written by the rural sociologists.

Maori and Pacific Islands agriculture are also important areas falling within the ambit of rural sociology, as is the study of communications, such as transport history incorporating railway development, the shipping industry and so on.

The study of social policy, environmental impact studies, and ecology and conservation issues are all within the scope of rural sociology. The sociology of ecological and conservation issues is an area of immense contemporary significance and topicality; currently, it would seem to represent a missed opportunity for rural sociologists.

Rural sociology, like any adequate sociology, must be able to shift through different levels of analysis, inter-linking biography, culture and social structure through the historical study of forms of rural capitalism and the role of the state, considerations of 'power' and 'rationality', the agency-structure metaphor applied to New Zealand's historical setting within a world capitalist system; and finally, through the sophisticated
and appropriate use of social theory to focus and render optimally productive this lateral, rural sociological gaze.

In New Zealand, it would appear we do not lack people who choose to call themselves 'rural sociologists'; what we do lack is a powerfully institutionalized rural society. How might that problem be redressed? In my view, there are several possibilities, none of which I regard as unrealistic or 'far-fetched'. And considering them takes me back to an earlier section of this paper, where I spoke about the three dimensions of sociology: teaching, research and the evaluation and formation of social policy.

It seems to me, firstly, that rural sociology has to be popularized. What that means, in an academic context, is that rural sociology has to be 'sold' in the form of undergraduate 'papers' - packaged in a form which has some contemporary significance and some attractive qualities. In listing a range of approaches to or aspects of rural sociology, or what it might entail (and the list I provided was by no means exhaustive), it was intended to map out some areas in which rural sociology is either underdeveloped, undeveloped or inexplicable absent altogether. Conservation and general environmental issues intersect with the development of many of the rural industries mentioned; and in my view, represent one area in which rural sociology can package and 'sell' undergraduate papers of contemporary significance and interest. But the teaching of rural sociology to undergraduates is an issue which demands a conference of its own.

In my view, New Zealand rural sociology may be advanced through the institutionalization of a rural sociological forum in the form of an annual rural sociological conference, or through the advent of a rural sociological journal.

As for research and the evaluation and formation of social policy, the universities will, whatever other developments take place, continue to be active in both areas. But it seems to me something more is required. What is needed, in fact, is a rural studies unit or centre, either independent or university aligned. It might be interdisciplinary, though it could conceivably be a specifically sociological enterprise. It could accommodate bona fide 'full-time' researchers, post-graduate university students could make use of its facilities and expertise, and it could take on an advisory role to universities, government, and other entities. It might offer scholarships and fellowships. It would work with a broad, flexible, research agenda.

So, where would the money come from to furnish what by now probably appears as some kind of pipe-dream? Clearly, in these times it would not come from the government as extra funding, or from university budgets. But New Zealand today has many huge corporations which provide financial assistance to many kinds of organizations, people and various causes. In the USA and elsewhere, corporate prestige is enhanced through some association with educational or research organizations. This is an area in which the major New Zealand corporations have been
Slow to act. Granted that many of them are engaged in activities which I consider to fall within the range of rural sociological enquiry, it seems that their active involvement in the enterprise I propose would make some sense.

The Fletcher-Challenge Rural Studies Institute, the Fay-Richwhite Rural Studies Fellowship, or the Waitaki Postgraduate Scholarships in Rural Sociology may be just around the corner. But how to approach these corporations, how to convince them that there is something in it for them, and how to generally promote, popularize and more firmly institutionalize rural sociology generally, these are the problematical elements in the situation - they need to be addressed.
ABSTRACT

This paper retracks to the 1970s and identifies local rural research then underway. It examines the relationship between the university researcher, the rural activist and the community. Asking the question of "what might have been" had the momentum then built up between the rural community and the researcher continued, the paper looks at the advancement made in other countries who front-ran the 1970s great wave of rural research.

The paper identifies some of the international rural research institutions and explores their structures and their relationships with the community and the community entrepreneur. In identifying the links between the researcher, the community and rural development policy, evident internationally, the paper questions the New Zealand attitude towards research that appears to impede a similar relationship.

Against what the author describes as a decade of dearth of rural research she explores rural research needs today, linking the role of rural research with rural policy making, as a tool for advocacy groups and as a data bank for regional decision makers, community groups and entrepreneurs.
14.1 Introduction

Research is the fulcrum of change. It has the capacity to support the revitalisation of rural society and it has the potential to be the foundation - the data base - for effective rural policies. A variety of policies for the development of rural areas are in place in the majority of OECD member countries. These countries share a deep-seated and traditional belief in the importance to their national economies of a nationhood of agriculture and people of the land. More recently, OECD countries generally have adopted as their goal the 'retention of people in rural areas'. This is a major commitment supported by a range of policy directives based on sound and comprehensive rural research. Cross-national and longitudinal rural studies within Europe and North America fulfil critical roles in underpinning legislation. Significantly, New Zealand is not numbered amongst those countries that place high value on either rural development or the critical role of rural research.

In this country rural development policies are presumed to happen, de facto, entering rural communities on the back of agricultural policy. But here as elsewhere that has proven to be an ineffective way of ensuring the viability of rural society. Individual countries like Sweden and Canada have front-run with research initiatives purpose built to help rural people sustain themselves and ultimately mobilise and revitalise their communities.

The information base that grew out of these and similar initiatives encouraged governments to look afresh at the strengths and resources of rural society. The knowledge acquired by rural people, universities and government departments enabled them to identify what structural or institutional changes or adaptations were needed to ensure a climate that encouraged rural enterprise.

A decade ago we had an army of enterprising initiators and rural activists. The informing, educating partnership between the community, the universities and governments had begun.

Yet in July 1985 I was writing:

In the late 1970s and early 1980s there was a seemingly never ending series of land use, agricultural and rural seminars and studies and their theme was common: change, rural change and adaptation to change. And they all featured rural people and their communities. Regional and national conferences not only canvassed the needs of rural communities but rural people participated as land use, resettlement and planning matters were debated.

Rural people eloquently shared their aspirations, explained their attitudes and brought new dimensions to established urban thought on rural society - and in the process joyfully destroyed some sacred cows. They demonstrated how inflexible legislation that was urban based repeatedly limited their endeavours to provide services and create
self-reliant communities. They spelt out with singular clarity what tools they needed to revitalise those communities.

At that time we were well along the way to building a rural information base. Perhaps more importantly we were poised on the edge of a breakthrough: an acceptance of the 'differences' of rural society and an acknowledgement of the place of rural culture in our society generally. Rural communities were being identified as legitimate segments of our urban majority population, segments that contained their own particular identity and strengths that did not need to be moulded into a weaker copy of urban society.

We were on the threshold of all this and we blew it. We blew it in the most effective way possible, not dramatically with great noise and argument but in a resounding silence - we did nothing!

14.2 The New Zealand Experience in the 1970s

As a rural activist in the 1970s I was influenced by the proceedings of a rural de-population seminar held at the University of Guelph, Ontario in 1972. The depopulation symptoms described throughout that seminar exactly fitted the condition of rural New Zealand. I read of, and later saw, the positive role the universities, research and the researchers had in helping to reverse the debilitating effects of depopulation. Guelph, like Lincoln, has strong agricultural origins. Those origins have been translated into comprehensive extension activities directed at the rural community, with the result that Guelph is part of a wide range of community-based research and development projects. Not for them the rather staid title of 'Extension Services' or even the more vital one of 'Action Research', at Guelph it is simply called 'Outreach'. The Outreach function in rural Ontario is a major objective of the University of Guelph. And along the way they have attracted a considerable international reputation for the quality of their research and their innovative interaction with rural policy.

The late seventies saw in New Zealand us entering a period of great stimulation and excitement as research units and the rural community drew close. With leadership that came from both the community and the universities a whole range of valuable local studies and surveys were completed. They were in step with the rural climate and if they were to serve as an information base they were an excellent beginning. The researched/researchers partnership was proving its effectiveness as understanding grew out of familiarisation.

A series of major land-use seminars travelled the country from campus to campus in 1979 and 1980. Community participants were canvassed to debate the issues alongside representatives from government and universities. The coming together of such a diverse range of people, each of whom was bound in some form to the rural community, is best described in the Rural Depopulation and Resettlement seminar proceedings summary: "there is no easy
way to convey the sense of active participation by 260 dedicated people who, whatever their initial motives, found themselves very emotionally involved in experiencing a heightened awareness of the views of others, exposed to many conflicts and forced to think about them seriously...... one thing is certain the health and general well-being of our society is measured by how well we respond to both the large and the small questions that we face ... We must continue the dialogue begun at this seminar in the firm belief that we can find answers".

Conclusions sincerely made and sincerely believed. Instead, five years later I was writing that we had 'blown it'.

In my terms we had fallen far short of influencing policy; not even to the extent of producing a recognised rural policy agenda. Neither had we developed the community/researcher partnership into any form of action-led research. Why? Did the expectations of the participants vary? In the seventies were we just following the global cycle of interest in rural society? If so, why didn't the succeeding waves of rural development follow here as they have done elsewhere? Many of the local leaders and rural activists in the seventies were women. Did the demands of drought and farming economic upheavals sap energy? Were too many rural men and women caught up on tactics of sheer survival to concentrate on anything else? Did too many of the farm women have to take the place of farm workers or did they just find leadership too much of a hassle? We don't know, has anyone done any work on it? And the Universities, why didn't they better act on the information gathered, strengthen the relationships formed between the community and the researcher and acted as a catalyst? Was that also to do with finance? Or did it founder because of a flawed perception within the Universities of their role? Or does our combined failure lie in the general presumption still prevalent, that agriculture policies are a fitting response to rural development?

14.3 The International Experience

Since 1981 I have been attending meetings of the OECD that study rural development and rural public management. The OECD has itself become a catalyst for countries in the process of devising more effective rural policies.

I have had the opportunity to observe a variety of overseas ways of implementing research. The following examples contain a mix of the three components: research and researchers, community participation, and accent on change and development.

First the Arkleton Trust, a private research organisation based in the Highlands of Scotland solely involved in rural research, is increasingly involved in cross national studies in Europe and the United States. This is contractural research for governments reviewing rural policymaking. The Trust organises an annual international seminar focusing on rural topics and draws together a mix of rural research and decision making specialists: people in positions of influence within the global rural sector. Alongside this high-profile international specialisation the
Arkleton Trust awards annual scholarships to people working in rural community development with the objective of increasing their skills and widening their resource base - in whatever areas they choose. The scholarships are privately funded but otherwise the Trust relies on the market place for its income.

Scotland of course has a tradition of basing rural development on rural research. The Highlands and Islands Development Board, which, unlike the Arkleton Trust, is funded by Westminster, has had a major hand in the revitalisation of the Highlands and Western Isles of Scotland. The Board is a working example of the successful combination of research, policy adaptation and development. The resulting policies re-settled and revitalised a land drained of people and a rural economy in tatters.

In Sweden I have watched as Universities co-operate with local government to work alongside the rural small business person and the social entrepreneur. These are people endeavouring, and successfully so, to stabilise the rural economy and in particular to mobilise their small village or rural district. Development partnerships are formed between the community, a neighbouring University and local Government. To the researchers such involvement becomes 'action research'. One of my colleagues has gained an international reputation for refining and developing the art of action research: his philosophy is that researchers are not only needed as independent integrators, drawing together the diverse interests of the community, but that, in his words, "researchers represent what any enterprise will need beside local initiative and commitment - knowledge". I have worked alongside the Swedish action researchers and seen for myself the benefits that flow into the communities from their presence.

Communities grow in leadership and establish a self-dependency, matching their skills with their rural environment. And I have met with rural enterprises long after the withdrawal of the action researcher, the momentum continued, the activities thriving, the links between university and the community now informal, the support invisible but still there if needed. While Professor Johannisson is head of the Law and Economics Department at his University his speciality has become rural development, in my mind emphasising the need for interdisciplinary work in rural issues.

In the United States I am familiar with a range of private research agencies encompassing an 'a to zed' spectrum of rural issues. Their structure is similar: major funding from a large corporation with consumer fees bridging the short-fall, slimline office hierarchy and a spread of researchers in the field. The New Zealand mind turns off at the major corporate funding aspect but let's stay with it for a moment. The successful organisations are driven by feeding or selling research information to rural lobby groups, rural activists (or social entrepreneurs as they are now called) and rural local government. The work of these organisations was critical to the American rural renaissance that began as a ground swell of rural activism.

Perhaps because of their land grant origins the universities that
I visited had strong and direct links into the US Department of Agriculture. Does that happen here? It is not unusual for major pieces of coast-to-coast rural research to be undertaken for the Department by the Rural Sociology unit of a University.

I watched, impressed by the direct links between the rural American researchers and community groups; the networks were elaborate but strong, the researchers capitalising their access to national and federal data with their field work and so providing a formidable data base for rural community leaders. While I was awed by the funding that underpinned these organisations I was more attracted to observing the community, the type of society that saw research in such an accessible every-day way - research as the practical commonsense tool for bringing about change.

Everything else in the North American models aside, the question for us must be why does our rural society so differ in its attitude to research? For rural American society the proof of the pudding has been in the eating.

To the rural social entrepreneurs, in the countries I have mentioned, research is the workhorse of their endeavours. Universities who are committed to 'outreach' functions place themselves in a responsive role: a challenge in itself to any 'expert'-based institution. Action research, exactly as with outreach, works with rural communities, rather than on them or for them. It contributes with educational resources - it gains as it gives - knowledge.

Am I saying that institutional structures are less important than research? No, but then I cannot see one without the other. In the event of major structural change, as has happened to rural New Zealand, who decides and on what basis which institutional arrangements will be the most effective to maintain a stable society? One of the major issues that arose as a consequence of our work with the OECD was the need to review and adapt the institutional framework through which rural policies could be generated. Member countries were already beginning to treat the rural economy as an economy in its own right. For that economy to contribute to the national economic performance the rural economy should first of all be understood in terms of its own characteristics and capacities. Rural research becomes the key.

No more can I isolate research from the formulation of policy. The challenges of rural policy making is that it extends the capacity of governments and their public institutions to adapt to economic and social change and to redefine their own roles in the policy process. While institutional changes are not a guarantee of improvements in rural development, effective institutional arrangements are an important prerequisite for effective rural policies. Most OECD member countries now view rural problems from a more integrated and comprehensive perspective than in the past. They recognise that rural development policy and programme strategies must be grounded in a global, not a piece-meal, problem-by-problem perspective of rural areas and issues. It is acknowledged that effective policy
and programme strategies must be comprehensive and address issues in an integrated fashion, giving rise to substantive national studies of the rural condition.

14.4 The New Zealand Situation Now

Acknowledging the financial constraints under which all our universities are currently operating and from which research funding is reeling I believe that if the rural research role of universities is to survive there must be concerted effort to break down community resistance to research. In this country too the community must look upon research as the fundamental preparation before embarking on new activities. Lack of funds has seen universities retreat from the community. Perhaps the theme should be learning to do new things differently and old things in new ways if research is to continue to truly benefit people and continue to be in the vanguard of change. In short, it is the decade of the market place and the public relations exercise.

New Zealand rural society needs a lobby, and now more than ever we need an effective rural policy. Yet, we do not know enough about the condition of rural society today to prepare even the most rudimentary agenda for rural policy development. And this at a time when the retention of people in rural areas is a major goal in most developed countries. The fact that this goal has been identified overseas and the objectives towards achieving that goal have been worked through can rest significantly on the shoulders of rural researchers.

14.5 Rural Research Needs

So what are the present rural research needs?

If research is the fulcrum of change what do we know about the present state of our rural society? And the question that begs an answer is: if we knew more, what changes would we be making to policy directions and information services?

Who are the advocates encouraging new communications technology into rural areas? Does new communication technology follow or lead entrepreneurial endeavours? What economic and social climate is required for rural people to take up new communication networks? Internationally the level of new communication technology has been critical in the revitalisation of rural areas. Much study and action research and development has taken place overseas in this field alone.

What do we know of off-farm employment? How important is off-farm employment in the retention of the family farm? Overseas the ratio between women and men seeking off-farm employment is narrowing - will that happen here? And what will be the consequences? We know that farm family structure and change in this country will belatedly mirror changes elsewhere - we have that advantage we seldom use.

What do we know of the impact of the 1984 withdrawal of subsidies
on rural society? Were there any longitudinal studies set in place at that time? If there weren't how difficult will it be to read today's signals.

What do we know of rural entrepreneurs? How accessible are business resources to the rural entrepreneur? Do rural small business people have different needs to their urban counterparts? If we knew more about the entrepreneur what would we be seeking to change to provide them with a favourable environment? In other countries it is the rural entrepreneur who has generated much of the rural revival. If in any way they are responsible for reversing the declining fortunes of rural societies elsewhere, then in New Zealand we should be investigating who they are and as importantly, who they might be, and what they need to perform effectively. We should be in possession of a range of information and be nurturing and supporting them in every possible way. Action research is desperately needed to mobilise rural enterprises.

What do we know about the provision of rural services? The global trend sees an increasing number of rural services being provided by rural people, and so creating significant employment opportunities. Studies show that for some types of services, those with a social component, rural people are particularly well fitted to provide, while the provision of more fundamental services can more effectively be achieved locally. Rural residents are not then at risk of becoming prisoners of the services. How is it here?

If there were a policy that actively encouraged rural development on what basis would we establish that development? Are we able today to distinguish between necessary and sufficient conditions for future rural economic development? Fragmentation which promotes one sector or service as the key to rural economic development will fail. What do we know of how rural people perceive themselves? What is their level of commitment to their society? Why do they continue to live in rural areas and what do they need to stay there? Unless we have the answers to questions like these then any rural revival is as far away as ever it was.

Without a commitment to retain people in rural areas the infrastructure of the agricultural sector will be irretrievably jeopardised. While policies like those emerging overseas of actively encouraging rural society to play a major role in environmental and conservation activities will not even eventuate. In all this the role of the rural researcher is pivotal.

14.6 Conclusion

I mourn the loss of the 1970s momentum. In our development of rural New Zealand we are now so far behind other countries. If the momentum had continued what would I have expected of the present?

1. A national objective to retain people in rural areas
2. A comprehensive and integrated approach to rural issues involving all disciplines and encouraging the horizontal provision of government services

3. Firm working links between research and development, the partners being: the university, the community, the government (local and central)

4. Greater co-operation between rural research units and greater integration of research projects. I see these two factors as critical if we are to have a comprehensive rural policy where issues are addressed in an integrated manner. There is therefore a requirement for research to have a wide national base. As well as local and regional studies there is now a real need for both nationwide and longitudinal work

5. A body of accessible rural data available to the rural entrepreneurs, the decision makers and the legislators

6. A policy developed for the enhancement of rural areas evolved from a continuing source of rural research.

Is there to be a rural research renaissance? Certainly there seems to be a resurgence of interest in rural issues by researchers; there are some lone voices calling for an effective rural policy; a departmental committee is exploring the advantages, or otherwise, of a Ministry of Rural Affairs, which surely indicates that there is an appreciation that rural issues require different solutions. Or is all this just an indication that New Zealand has again been drawn into the global interest in rural society, in other words is this just another cyclical revival? If the renaissance is to be more than a cycle and if we are to begin the mobilisation process of rural communities there will need to be:

1. A firm partnership between the researcher and the researched leading to greater participation in researcher led action research

2. Universities with a commitment towards rural outreach or action research: who don't just seem to be accessible but are

3. Universities and local government co-operating in rural development.

Unless any rural research renaissance is pegged with these or similar objectives then the renaissance will bloom and flower and die.

People are politics, research is the fulcrum of change and the research of this decade must be put to effective use for rural people, if at the beginning of the 21st Century New Zealand is still to have in place a rural society.
CHAPTER 15

RURAL SOCIETY AND THE SOCIOLOGY OF AGRICULTURE:
RESEARCH PRIORITIES FOR RURAL SOCIOLOGISTS IN THE 1990s

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ABSTRACT

In line with global tendencies the rural economies of New Zealand and Australia have experienced significant and extensive restructuring. As this process continues there is the likelihood of profound alterations to the social organisation of primary industries and other rural economic activities, and in the effects on the rural populations dependent on them. It is important for rural sociologists to chart and explore processes of change in rural areas. This paper reviews recent theoretical approaches to rural social change and a wide range of rural social research. It emphasises the need for a strong theoretical basis for the critical investigation of rural change, and suggests an agenda for such activity into the 1990s.
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15.1 The Restructuring of World Agriculture and Its Impact upon Rural Society

The agenda for British and US rural sociology in the 1980s was established by Buttel and Newby's (1980) compilation *The Rural Sociology of the Advanced Societies*. This set out to challenge functionalist assumptions about the presumed gemeinschaftlich qualities of rural communities and to move beyond the hackneyed studies of community 'well being', diffusion of technologies, church attendance and the occupational and educational aspirations of rural dwellers. The phrase 'advanced capitalism' appears with great regularity and the articles chosen reflect the editors' desire to explore the contradictions of rural production, the place of the family farmer within an economy dominated by corporate firms, rural labour relations, regional inequality and the environment. The authors claimed that agriculture should assume a prominent place in rural sociological research and that rural studies should be conducted within the framework of critical theory: a Marxist inspired (but in no way exclusively Marxist) political economy perspective.

The main dynamic of agriculture was seen to be the concentration and centralisation of capital, which resulted in the creation of regional inequities, the decline of certain sections of family farming and, less directly, environmental destruction. In farming, economic forces were leading to a process of differentiation with the growth of wealthy capitalist farmers and the creation of a group of impoverished and semi-proletarian farmers. Barriers were identified that prevented the penetration of agriculture by the corporate sector (although contributors disagreed about the eventual conclusion to this process). Rural 'community' was seen to be an ideological construct: 'loss of community' was similarly considered a subjective judgement by the social analyst who longed for a return to the village life of the past. According to Newby (1980) sociologists would need to move away from theories which unconsciously glorified the bucolic innocence of the English villager. After all, this ideology was partially responsible for having turned rural England of the 1980s into a middle-class territory of restored cottages and two car garages - a place where people did not know their neighbours and where the newly rich formed an oppositional subculture to a rural district's working class.

In the same iconoclastic mood Ian Carter described the obstinate refusal of the crofters in the highlands of Scotland to 'obey' the sociologists and planners and quietly disappear. He applied the ideas of Gunder Frank, Celso Furtado and Barrington Moore, Jnr in an original and provocative extension of the theories of underdevelopment to a region within the advanced world. Ann Markusen wrote of capital expansion in the US (internal) periphery: three counties in North West Colorado. Her neo-Marxist analysis is at the 'micro dialectical' level and she identifies the limitations of 'space' as an analytical category in sociology. Her intention is to move those interested in issues of rural social change towards "a fuller understanding of capitalist production dynamics" (Markusen, 1980:428).
In the latter part of the book Philip Lowe - whose writings on the environment and countryside planning were to become a major feature of British rural sociology in the 1980s - provided an analysis of ecology and ideology (Lowe and Worboys, 1980); Buttel (1980) wrote one of the first modern theoretical critiques of the environment and agriculture within advanced capitalism; and Geisler (1980) discussed the effect of state controls in redistributing land from small independent producers to large corporate owners.

If these were the preoccupations of the 'new' rural sociology at the beginning of the decade, what was to happen at the end? The book which represents the fusion of these ideas and the extension of critical sociology into the study of agriculture is Goodman, Sorj and Wilkinson's (1987) *From Farming to Biotechnology*. The book is concerned with the industrialisation of agriculture and argues that if sociologists are to understand the changes at the local level which affect rural communities and the success or failure of particular farming systems they must recognise the potency of two broad processes, appropriationism and substitutionism.

These processes, as part of a global capitalist dynamic, attempt to confront the production process in agriculture which, because of its biological basis, has hitherto prevented full capitalist penetration (see Mann and Dickinson, 1978 and Crosthwaite, 1988). They argue that there has been something special about agriculture. Biological transformations have not been readily amenable to industrialisation due to the biological time involved in plant growth, gestation periods of animals or the way farming activities have been tied to land-based, and often geographically defined, operations. Capitalism has attempted to create an industrially-based agriculture but has had limited success.

Appropriationism, where industry takes particular elements of the production process, transforms them and then sells them back to the farmer, is one of the most important tendencies in contemporary agriculture. Industry can improve animal and labour productivity by creating hybrid varieties, bigger and better machines, new synthetic fertilisers or by evolving new herbicides and pesticides. In past generations, the year-to-year operations of farms were under the direct control of the farmer. Farm machinery such as ploughs and separators would have been purchased, but horses were bred on properties, green manure crops were used in rotation to improve soil fertility and more diversified farm operations prevented plague proportions of plant, insect, bacterial and fungal infestations, reducing the need for pesticides and herbicides. Modern agriculture, responding to market demands for ever-cheaper foods, has readily embraced the technologies of agribusiness. Corporations have appropriated the inputs of farmers and, after conversion, sold them back to farmers at a profit. The extent to which farmers in the advanced countries are on a 'treadmill' is a question open to debate (Munton et al., 1990; Redclift, 1990). But the point made by Goodman, Sorj and Wilkinson is that if we fail to recognise mechanisation as the means by which capital has attempted to confront the constraint of land as space, and seed
breeding as an attempt to transform biology into scientific knowledge and private (corporate) property, we will miss the meaning of the restructuring process in agriculture. For these authors developments such as battery hen production and beef feedlotting are the most obvious signs that the industrial transformation of agriculture is taking place. But, by and large, production remains rural.

A second major tendency is that of substitutionism. Corporations now have the technology to eliminate the 'rural' from farming. The creation of foodstuffs through processes such as industrial fermentation, addition of chemical additives to various food substrates, and other methods used by chemical and pharmaceutical companies, is leading to the substitution of organic food sources with synthetics. At present 'natural' products derived from, say, wheat or beef are being taken apart and reassembled to form entirely new products which favour the needs of food corporations for longer shelf life, high turnover, and, for consumers, convenience, dietary specificity, flavour, texture and 'look'. The 'value added' component of processed foods represents potential profit for corporations and it is easier to market goods which are processed in a certain way (Goodman, Sorj and Wilkinson, 1987:92) potatoes are potatoes: but Smiths Crisps are certain sorts of potatoes reconstituted and packaged for specific markets.

The reconstruction of the food industry will affect rural communities in a number of ways. There may, of course, be fewer farmers. Those remaining will possibly be tied by contracts to corporations who want particular substrates for food manufacturing. More ominously, many of the major nutrients such as proteins, fats and carbohydrates used in manufacturing can be obtained from non-food vegetable matter and if required through modification of hydrocarbons (Goodman, Sorj and Wilkinson, 1987:97). This means that corporations can reduce their dependence upon farming. The emerging bioindustries will ensure that the tendencies towards an industrial agriculture are not halted. Significant developments include the appropriation by corporations of plant genetic material (for example through Plant Variety Rights [PVR] legislation), the complementarity of plants with proprietary agrichemicals and potential biological nitrogen fixation in non-leguminous plants. In development are herbicide and pest resistant crops and trees, the creation of animals resistant to disease and capable of producing 40 percent more meat, wool or milk with the same food (energy) intake, and the use of artificial intelligence on farms. The general weakening of the place of (particularly traditional) farmers in food production is likely to transform agriculture and rural communities.

Theoretically From Farming to Biotechnology fits somewhat uncomfortably into a Leninist framework. It recognises changes in the social relations of production and the industrialisation of domestic food production, but rejects the notion that we will see the evolution of 'factories in the fields' and the growth of a rural proletariat as the main labour input to agriculture. The authors come close to Kautsky's formulation (of the German dairy
industry) by agreeing that the middle farmer would not be emasculated by capitalism, but would persist on the basis of contract arrangements with urban capital. But they break with Kautsky and Lenin in arguing that it is the peculiar nature of the rural production process itself which must be the focus of concern in the study of rural transformation. The state, it is argued, has underwritten agriculture by reducing fluctuations in farm income, food costs and food supplies, and now accepts and perpetuates appropriation and substitution. But what is lacking in From Farming to Biotechnology is a full understanding of the means by which various nation states are able to create conditions for industrial appropriation and substitution. There is little evidence provided of opposition to state policies by farmer (and other) groups; and finally, no connection is spelt out between what they view as the 'master processes' and the 'crisis' of farming in the advanced economies.

It is here that From Farming to Biotechnology must be read in conjunction with Goodman and Redclift's (1989) collection The International Farm Crisis where the contradictions and underlying socio-economic problems of the globalisation of agricultural production are presented. The editors argue that the period of economic growth since 1945 was 'remarkable' in that general prosperity was being fostered through international regulation and adjustment aimed at eliminating market price instability. But in the 1970s and 1980s contradictions in the system, with overproduction and the growth of transnational agribusiness, have effectively altered the rules of play. Goodman and Redclift (1989:6) identify four main features of the international farm crisis:

1. The development in the United States of a model of technological innovation and market intervention for agriculture and its international dissemination

2. The breakdown of the postwar system of regulation of world agricultural trade managed by the United States

3. The crisis of political representation and legitimation between farmers' organisations and the state

4. The failure to anticipate or contain the environmental problems associated with the new agricultural technology/policy model.

Contributors provide 'case studies', set within the crisis of world overproduction and the policies of the US as it reasserts its hegemonic role in the world food trade. One theme is that there is a new cycle of agro-industrial accumulation in the capitalist world order, reinforcing trends of rural to urban migration, declining farm numbers and the concentration and centralisation of capital in agriculture.

What The International Farm Crisis tends to overlook in its concern with global regulation, fiscal and monetary policy changes, commodity price movements, quotas, inflation and interest levels, is the 'human dimension' of the crisis. This
is the concern of Swanson's (1988) collection *Agriculture and Community Change in the US*. While not set firmly in the political economy tradition, the contributors nevertheless seek to identify the connections between the economics of agriculture and farm and rural community changes within the US. The studies in the book were commissioned by the US Office of Technology Assessment and researchers were asked to find out whether the negative social effects of large-scale agricultural production (earlier recognised by Goldschmidt in California in the 1940s) were a significant feature of agriculture today. Is the assumption that rural social interaction is shaped by farm structure and ownership patterns still valid in the 1980s?

Swanson (1988) describes the growth of regional, national and international market structures and the increasing subordination of farming to finance capital. This, together with an increasing dependence of family farmers upon off-farm work to sustain viability, has led to a 'decoupling' of many rural communities from the fortunes of agriculture. Where agriculture is the predominant activity the link remains strong, but the growth of secondary and tertiary industries (especially service and government employment) has led to a fundamental shift away from agriculture in many rural communities. Economic diversification prevents generalisation being made about how changes in the agricultural economy will affect rural communities. Swanson's own findings for Pennsylvania between 1930 and 1960 are that as a rural economy grows its non-farm business institutions will exert a greater influence on community change than will agriculture (Swanson, 1988:7). In further papers, Harris and Gilbert argue that the Goldschmidt hypothesis is not confirmed in postwar Michigan, but rather that large scale farming and rural income (one measure of quality of life) are positively correlated, while Green shows that for non-metropolitan counties in Missouri a change in farm numbers (not an increase in scale) has influenced the population level of rural towns and villages.

Swanson (1988:8-9) summarises these findings as follows:

In areas where there are few off-farm opportunities and family farming is the dominant source of community economic well being, a decline in farm numbers and an increase in farm size will contribute to a decline in indicators of community well-being. But, in areas where there has been an increase in the non-farm economic activity the changing characteristics of the regional economy will exert an even stronger influence on the persistence of former farm trade centres. This would suggest that trade centres will transfer their economic and social dependency from their farming hinterlands to the regional economy as the expansion of internal markets increases their dependency on vertical ties with the larger society.

On the other hand, in areas where industrial-type farm structures are dominant... there will be depressed standards of living... because industrial agriculture's numerically dominant class is unskilled hired workers who historically have been at the bottom of the US's labour
force and therefore amongst the most exploited.

In agriculturally dependent communities there is evidence that a shift from family farm to corporate (agribusiness) production heralds a reduction in community well-being: but most rural communities in the US are not now dependent upon agriculture. Swanson concludes that because of regional variations in US agriculture no single hypothesis (such as that of Goldschmidt) can be expected to be confirmed. The book reveals that rural class structure in the US can no longer be described as family farm dominated. The once dominant class of petty commodity producers and retailers has been replaced by a more sophisticated mix of wage labour (manufacturing, service and government employees including white- and blue-collar workers) and professionals. In the northeast the non-metropolitan population is considered relatively privileged and exhibits high income levels, low poverty levels, and has good access to government services and facilities. Most centres have a low dependence on agriculture (Buttel et al., 1988). To date in the northeast of the US technological change in agriculture has not had the impacts on farm structure which might have been predicted.

Biotechnologies are another matter and will lead to virtually inevitable changes to individual farm operations. Buttel et al. argue that it might therefore be better to directly address policy issues such as employment creation, regional income growth and rural development outside the context of agriculture as growth in production will not guarantee growth in regional towns. But the authors suggest there is considerable evidence that most US citizens would prefer to live in small locations rather than large cities (Buttel et al., 1988:230) making viable regional growth strategies imperative. Agriculture, in other words, is not necessarily the key to future regional development strategy if the northeast of the US can be any guide.

Thus it may seem paradoxical that Buttel and co-writers should now offer an enthusiastic reassertion of the central place of agriculture in discussions of rural life. In The sociology of agriculture (1990) a theoretical survey of rural sociology commissioned by the Rural Sociology Society, Buttel, Larson and Gillespie argue that rural social research of the 1990s should focus on the social and economic structure of agriculture, including its natural environment. The 'new' rural sociology will be informed by political economy and will lead researchers to investigate the social and environmental impact of technological change in agriculture, the impact of changes in farm structure upon rural communities, the evolution and impact of state policies and the development and form of the international farm crisis. A broadly similar theoretical agenda has been mapped out by the paradigm-setters of European and British rural sociology (Lowe et al., 1990; Marsden et al., 1990), who have begun to use it to inform a body of important research.

These studies have been reviewed here not to suggest that we should parrot US or British work or stand in awe of that research, but to indicate some of the findings which have emerged
from critical rural sociology. What remains is to make sense of these research findings in terms of Australian and New Zealand agriculture and rural society. We do not assume that contemporary trends in the rural regions of these economies will 'inevitably' occur in New Zealand or Australia, but that researchers should be aware of processes which have been identified as occurring abroad, as a first step in understanding the place of our rural areas within a global farm economy.

15.2 A Rural Social Research Agenda for the 1990s

Question-asking is a theoretically-informed act. Since theory is intimately linked with political practice the only logical response to 'are we asking the right questions?' must be 'right according to whom?' In Australia and to a lesser extent New Zealand, it has been agricultural economists, extension workers and state functionaries trained in the dry orthodoxy of schools of agriculture (and who tend to accept unquestioningly the operation of the capitalist system) who have been in the privileged position of asking questions about agriculture and rural society. They have often asked these on behalf of the state (which needs to solve some political dilemma) or business (which wants to increase profits). Not surprisingly the research findings - and often the recommendations flowing from them - have provided partial explanations and partial solutions, at best. At worst, the questions avoid politically sensitive issues and fail to identify causal factors responsible for social and economic decline in rural regions.

Newby encapsulated this problem well in his discussion of US sociology of the 1970s. The assumption of the time was that new agricultural technologies would benefit all in US society. Studies were conducted with the aim of identifying (and ultimately confronting) the social 'barriers' to change. As Newby (1982:9) recalls, at the end of the 1970s:

It was becoming apparent that rural sociologists had naively participated in the deterioration of the social conditions of a significant sector of the rural population - principally the poor and underprivileged - whom rural sociologists believed that they had been helping.

Hobbs and Dillman (1982:5) are quite certain about the nature of the questions which should be asked by contemporary rural sociologists:

The 'right' questions are those addressed to present and prospective rural problems - problems that, if solved, would contribute to the quality of life of rural people.

Yet, this is also naive, implying social and economic homogeneity amongst rural people. From a class or gender perspective we must ask whose quality of life? There are also concerns in relation to the methods adopted by sociologists, the generalisability of results and the relevance of incremental changes in the wider national and international economic context. Rural social research must not only seek to explain the nature of life in
rural regions, but also to advance social theory. The 'theoretical aridity' (see Newby, 1977) of the discipline has been a major deficiency and a reason for the lack of insightful research in to rural issues. Buttel (1989) has shown that the response to this has been the application of the classical theories of writers like Marx, Kautsky and Chayanov. He notes that while this was a healthy sign in the 1980s there is now an urgent need to refine these and other theories since it is clear that, as broad theories of agrarian change, they are unable to explain variations either spatially or temporally. Buttel also calls for new theorising since older paradigms and insights have little bearing on the white settler colonies which emerged outside the context of a feudal agrarian structure. For Buttel the issue, in its modern form, is how and why do family-sized farming units persist under conditions of rapid technological change? He points to the work of Goodman and Redclift (1989) and of Marsden et al. (1987, 1990) as being helpful in understanding the diversity of forks of rural production in the advanced societies.

This concern for agriculture should not, however, deflect attention from wider social issues affecting non-agricultural rural populations. Pomeroy (1989) has recently argued that academic sociologists must talk to non-academic sociologists involved in policy formation. This means developing networks between researchers or academics interested in rural social issues and those formulating policies within various government departments (concerned with agriculture and with welfare). The questions we raise in this paper are, therefore, formulated in a way which might encourage investigation of issues of concern to rural populations, which help to address problems identified by non-academic sociologists working in the field, and which will help to develop a critical rural sociology in Australia and New Zealand. They are the questions which we feel rural sociology should be trying to answer.

1. What is the 'rural' in rural social research?

Rural Australia should be as easy to define as getting cow dung on your boots, tractor diesel on your hands or a hot scone at a CWA function (Dunn, 1989)

In common sense discourse we take for granted that the 'rural' has conceptual validity and empirical reality. In asserting the importance of difference, we imply a contrast with a metropolitan or suburban 'other'. Most of the time it is possible, even useful, to use the term 'rural' in this unselfconscious way. But there are also times when it is important to focus critical attention on the concept. For example, we may wish to specify more clearly the spatial, economic or social differences that concern us. In addition, the manner and context in which the term is used may tell us much about the construction of rurality as a category.

The need to categorise, to put 'some definition into rural' (Dunn 1989) has been central to the discipline of rural studies, with two opposing views of rurality and the range of positions between
them. One representation is that of the rural as spatial entity, and identifiably different place wherein:

Rural land use, landscape and settlements are patently different from their urban equivalents by dint of scale, density, remoteness and predominant forms of economic production, especially agriculture (Cloke, 1988:3)

A critical approach must query the extent to which such a view has theoretical or empirical validity. There is a strong trend within sociological discourse stressing the homogeneity of social experience within capitalist societies. This view, supported within marxist and liberal paradigms, denies the theoretical role of spatial difference and focuses on the ways in which rural areas are integrated into national or international entities, thus denying any specificity of the rural. Cloke (1988:3) suggests that in most developed nations all people living outside cities have the same bases as those experienced by urban dwellers.

We would argue that to deny the difference between urban and rural areas is to gloss over the inequalities that exist between them. Yet it is important to reify neither the 'rural' nor the 'urban' but to recognise each as socially constructed in a continuing process. It is also crucial to grasp the indissoluble relationship (often one of inequality) that exists between city and country areas.

In a recent article Mormont (1990) traces the emergence of the concept of the 'rural' within rural sociological discourse. He argues that it emerged in the 1920s to 1930s period when expert 'rational' knowledge was brought to bear on problems of social change; a process whose repercussions for rural dwellers in Australia have been explored by Lake (1987). Rural became a category based on differentiation of values:

Rural is... not so much a category contrasting rural dwellers with others in terms of economic interests, but rather one which defines a world of (primary moral, but also cultural) values in which rural dwellers participate (Mormont, 1990:25)

The paradigm of the rural-urban continuum, in place of a more distinct and antagonistic cleavage, grew out of this value orientation. This conceptualisation of the rural has subsequently been strongly criticised. A focus on the sociology of agriculture, the discourse of planning and the ascendency of agricultural and resource economics, has seen it supplanted by economically-based concepts such as that of the 'functional economic region'.

For Mormont the concept of rural now has meaning in terms of the discursive constitution of space and identity. A space, whether conventionally 'rural' or 'urban', may be understood in terms of the outside forces that combine to confer value on it. Thus any given area of land may be subject to competing claims from farmers, conservationists, planners or tourist bodies. Local
politics is about strategies for enhancing and maintaining the value of the space (in terms of productive capacity, tourist appeal or facilities for industrial development). Space is also a form of social classification that can underpin identity. It is no longer the property of any particular community, but may form the bases for a variety of identities. Thus for Mormont (1990:35):

What is essential to analyse is what precisely the meaning of the term rural is for each... category, and to what extent they are able to mobilise resources and deploy social alliances in support of their own definition of what is 'rural'.

This discursive mobilisation of the rural allows us to understand the diverse experiences and identities of long-term farmers, transient 'spiralist' professionals or environmental activists, all of whom may be 'acting' on the same space.

The implication is that we need to specify what we understand by rural whenever we use it as a concept or variable. This pragmatic or grounded approach is mirrored in discussions of welfare and policy issues (Dunn, 1989; Nichol, 1990; Australian Housing Research Council, 1989). Any discussion of 'rural' issues should not take this category as self-evident; rather it is necessary to outline the underlying paradigm and parameters involved, to avoid importing the connotational baggage of the rural as an idea(l) into one's discussion.

'Rural' has strong connotations, and like any sign or symbol within the communication process, is a term which can be mobilised for specific purposes within specific contexts. Its meanings have been developed in a long period of social construction: the 'rural' has had a long history! 'Rural' carries with it a cluster of strongly evaluative terms: for example, 'free', 'pure', 'natural', 'traditional', 'independent' and 'conservative' which also form part of the stock-in-trade of the urban-centred communications industries (Goldman and Dickens, 1983; Tulloch and Moran, 1986).

Such evaluations long predate the modern mass media. They have played a particularly important role within political and cultural discourses in Australia and New Zealand. Recent studies have examined the way in which the rural has been socially constructed as a concept. Schaffer's (1988) *Women and the bush* and Webster's (1988) *Looka Yonder!* provide particularly interesting ways of approaching this issue. In addition the full implications of Raymond Williams's seminal analysis *The country and the city* (1975) have yet to be worked out in the local context. Often constructions of the rural emerge (like those of Henry Lawson and Banjo Patterson) from urban milieux. We can ask whether such constructions of the countryside are 'accurate' or 'authentic' and what their effects might be for those who live in rural areas. We have made some tentative explorations ourselves for the area in which we live (Share and Lawrence, 1990).
The particular nature of rural identity (in Australia) has often been termed 'countrymindedness' (after an influential article by Aitkin [1985]). This concept, while expressive, is little more than a restatement of the idea of agrarianism which has been strong in American rural sociology. We should not assume a 'different' rural identity but begin to trace out the ways in which such difference is and has been socially constructed. The ways in which rural identity and space are constituted as difference have important implications for the development of rural ideologies and politics, particularly as such policy is usually developed within urban areas for rural people. There are signs that rural sociologists, historians, cultural critics and others are beginning to explore this set of issues (Share, 1985; Australian Historical Association, 1987; Kapferer 1989) but a great deal of theoretical and empirical work remains to be done.

2. How has the rural been constructed historically?

The 'land question' is central to any analysis of the rural in history. Land has many meanings for rural societies: it forms a major part of the productive base as capital or property; as topology and environment it places constraints on and grants opportunities for rural life; it is also central to social and personal identity. This applies particularly for indigenous peoples and any history of rural New Zealand or Australia must be predicated on the dispossession of land by European occupiers.

Over the last 20 years there has been a significant attempt to incorporate the experiences of indigenous peoples into mainstream historiography, but often there is little awareness of the way in which that history shapes contemporary social relations. This applies particularly at the local level where much of 'rural history' is generated. As anthropologist Gillian Cowlishaw wryly observes:

One example... is the way local historical societies present their towns' histories. They commonly celebrate the invasion of pastoralists and show great interest in old families of early settlers. No attention is paid to the history of loving Aborigines, and the dusty collection of stone tools in the local museums is often accompanied by a patronising quotation from an early settler about the local tribe which once inhabited the area. In this case there is the denial that the Aborigines are part of the town's historical development, even where they may constitute one third of the population (cited in Beckett, 1988:4).

Like indigenous peoples generally, Maoris and Aboriginals have been constituted as 'different' (Attwood, 1989). While this is clearly important in the assertion of identity, it is also crucial to examine the ways in which the experiences of indigenous and occupying peoples have combined to shape contemporary rural societies. This interrelationship is best outlined from within the political economy approach, which finds its most eloquent representation in the work of McMichael (1984), but also in the work of Cowlishaw (1988) and Wells (1989). The constitution of land as a commodity rested (and rests) on the
dispossession of indigenous peoples. Such control of the means of production formed the basis of the market in labour power for both the original owners and the settler working class. The demand for land rights in Australia and New Zealand today lays bare the conquistadorial basis of these rural societies.

Analysis of the historical construction of rural society must also involve a comparative context. Why, for example, is the structure of agriculture different in Australia, New Zealand, Argentina or Canada? In what ways is it similar? Such issues have been explored in the work of McMichael (1984) and Denoon (1983) who work within, or respond to, the influence of dependency of world systems theory. The strength of these analyses is in the way in which they situate the development of 'settler' or 'dominion' societies within the development of the world capitalist system. Such an understanding is crucial for any understanding of the structure and direction of modern Australian or New Zealand society, particularly for the primary production sector. Counterposed to these 'externalist' arguments have been those that focus on 'internal' dynamics of change (Fairweather, 1985a). This debate reflects those at the theoretical level between Mann and Dickinson (1978) and their critics (Mooney, 1982 and Singer et al., 1983) and more recently developments in the simple commodity production debate (Friedmann, 1978; Goodman and Redclift, 1985; Marsden et al., 1986; Friedmann, 1986; Whatmore et al. 1986). The main issue is the relationship, or dialectic, between internal and external dynamics of change, both at the level of the individual farm enterprise and with regard to the agricultural sector in general. There has been little attempt to explore these issues in relation to the history of New Zealand and Australian historical development. Much scope exists for identifying the local outcomes of international processes.

For long the history of New Zealand and Australia has been represented as the struggle between man (sic) and nature, a discourse centred around ideals of masculinity, production and progress. It has been a history that has attempted to forge a national identity out of this struggle. However, this interpretation of history has come under sustained attack in Australia in the last two decades. Its Anglocentric, masculinist and romantic bias has been exposed by writers such as McQueen (1976), White (1981) and Schaffer (1989). Recent historical writings have attempted to valorise the contributions of suppressed groups to the history of rural Australia for example women (Lake, 1987) and Aboriginals (Cowlishaw, 1988). Such work must be incorporated into rural sociologists' historical understanding. Failure to do this will inevitably contribute to partial and distorted analyses.

It is important for rural sociologists to grasp the historical construction of rural society. It is impossible to interpret current developments and problems without asking "why does rural Australia or New Zealand look the way it does (and why doesn't it look like something else)"? Answers to these questions will be generated from within an historiography that is made up of competing discourses and which offers a variety of explanations
based on diverse theoretical perspectives. This may make for unwelcome confusion and uncertainty, but it is important to realise that there are many possible paths to where we are now.

3. In What Ways Are the Rural Sectors of Australia and New Zealand Being Restructured?

A broad historical view suggests that agriculture is going through a phase of significant restructuring (or 'crisis' for many of the involved) (Buttel et al., 1990; Commins, 1990). Rural society in Australia and New Zealand is being reshaped by forces of de- and re-regulation, rationalisation and globalisation of the world capitalist economy. While agriculture in these countries has, like that of nearly all western capitalist economies, been cosseted in the past, explicit policies of deregulation and rationalisation have now been applied to the rural sector, most aggressively in New Zealand (Fairweather, 1989; Cloke, 1989) but also in Australia (Lawrence, 1990).

In Australia the number of commercial farmers is declining, while in New Zealand it is increasing. One research task is to examine the bases of agricultural statistics in these countries to establish a consistent method of comparison. The way in which the 'commercial farmer' is defined may have a dramatic influence in the numbers in such categories. In any case the farmers who remain into the 1990s are likely to be linked to the national and international economy in ways different from those of today. As global restructuring takes place the forging of these links will be increasingly beyond any individual government's control, let alone that of isolated farmers.

In 1983 the now President-elect of the American Rural Sociological Society, Pat Mooney, identified five types of relationship that were changing the nature of farming and the position of farmers in capitalist society. Despite the suggestiveness of Mooney's schema, no rural sociologist has yet applied it to an analysis of Australian or New Zealand agriculture, though work has been done in particular areas. The forces for change that Mooney identified were: tenancy, contract farming, indebtedness, off-farm work (part-time farming) and increasing use of hired (especially contract) labour. Each of these trends serves to change the nature of farming, particularly in reducing farmers' control over their own work and resources. They may lead to a style of farming closer to wage labour or capitalist production.

Some of these issues have been raised in Australian and New Zealand research. For example, Burch, Rickson and Thiel (1990) have examined contract farming in Queensland's Lockyer Valley. They found that pea growers in the Valley, and others in Tasmania, enjoyed early good returns but that farmers' incomes and production conditions were squeezed as the processing market became more competitive. Similar processes applied to potato farmers in Victoria and Tasmania. Burch et al. (1990) conclude that:
The size of the processing and retailing companies, along with their structural location in the national and global system of production and marketing, means that the farmer is in a structurally weak position and will usually be called upon to bear a disproportionate share of production 'efficiencies' as both processors and retailers attempt to improve or maintain their position.

The increasing burden of debt is a feature of farming in New Zealand and Australia, and seems set to remain or worsen as the world financial system returns to a high interest regime. Fairweather (1989:3) has pointed out the effects of farmers' diminishing equity position and has argued that it has been exacerbated by deregulation and restructuring. Despite the high profile of the rural debt crisis there has been little research on the social implications for farm people (but see Bryant, 1989).

While studies of part-time farming (Barr and Almond, 1981) rural labour (Harris, 1980; Tipples, 1987) tenancy and indebtedness have been carried out, there is as yet no systematic analysis of the combined effects these structural changes have had on farming, nor an attempt to link them systematically to international financial and economic developments. A political economy of agriculture must connect global shifts to experiences inside the farm gate.

Another major change in farm structure is the increasing importance of women in agricultural production. Perhaps it is fairer to say that the women have always been there but that rural sociologists have failed to notice them or valorise their contribution. In both New Zealand and Australia partnerships are becoming the dominant form of farm property ownership (Fairweather, 1987:4-9). Frequently such partnerships involve women. The extent to which such arrangements involve real equality is debatable (see Dempsey, 1989:92) but it behoves rural sociologists to monitor the effects of this important shift in property relationships. The position of women in rural Australia has been the subject of recent publications (Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, 1988; James, 1989a; Thorpe et al., 1989; Alston, 1990) but many aspects remain to be explored. The experience of women as rural workers in farm and non-farm activities (East, 1989) is a crucial area of research. If the restructuring of agriculture and of social relations in rural areas is of the 'transforming' nature suggested by many rural sociologists (Buttel et al., 1990; Marsden et al., 1990) it is not sufficient to pursue 'adjustment' as a response to rural social change. Rural sociology has often tended to be reactive, but those involved in rural social research need to examine ways in which they can anticipate change, and this may give them a better chance of helping to shape it!

4. What are the implications of global economic trends?

Any discussion of rural social change must consider the links between the rural agricultural sector and the broader capitalist economy. This was argued by the classic theorists of
macrosociological rural change (Marx, Lenin, Kautsky etc.) and such an approach is even more necessary in terms of the restructuring of capitalism. It has been argued in a recent paper by Kenney et al. (1989) that the rural sector must be considered in the context of the post-Fordist era. The concept of post-Fordism has been exposed to considerable debate and attack (Bramble and Fieldes, 1990), but stripped of its utopian overtones it may be useful as an explanatory paradigm. It is argued that two possible futures exist: an extension of the current systems of industrial and agricultural mass production onto a global scale, with the associated social and environmental repercussions; or a shift towards a more flexible and diverse model of capitalism (the 'fracturing of demand') geared towards niche marketing based on information flow and identity management. Any political economy of agriculture must take account of such possible changes. What are the implications for agriculture and rural areas in a post-Fordist Australia or New Zealand? Initially it needs to be acknowledged that it is extremely difficult (even for economists) to predict the likely resolution of the current restructuring of capitalism (see Dunkley and Kulkarni, 1990). Thus it is important to combine broad theoretical understandings of rural change with knowledge of particular economic sectors (Buttel, 1989:18). Such a 'narrow' sectoral analysis must be located within a dynamic model which captures both vertical and horizontal relationships with other parts of the production process for rural commodities (tourism, food, fibre, forest etc. The commodity systems approach (Buttel, 1989:19) is one such model whereby we:

Understand agriculture commodity production as a system in which technical and manufactured inputs are incorporated into a labour process in which commodities are produced, processed and marketed in distinctive industrial structures

In other words we need to understand the entire process of commodity production, in terms of inputs/outputs, linkages, labour process, state regulation, marketing and distribution. Such an approach allows us to connect areas such as agribusiness, the circulation of capital and rural labour.

Despite its crucial importance in the lives of rural people, agribusiness has received little consideration by rural sociologists in Australia and New Zealand. While early works by Nankivell (1979) and Lawrence (1980) were suggestive they mainly noted overseas trends. Symons (1984), Lawrence (1987) and Juchau and Newman (1987) provide more detailed information, including a useful case study of Goodman Fielder Wattie's Australasian operations in the latter. A recent study of the operations of Elders IXL has also been released (Hewitt, 1988). It was a non-sociologist, Sarah Sargent, who provided the first comprehensive survey of the social aspects of agribusiness in Australia. Foodmakers (1985) she provides details of the commodity dealings, currency speculation, counter trade tactics, transfer pricing and tax evasion which are features of transnational agribusiness. Her analysis is a trenchant criticism of the food processing industry in the domestic and international (particularly Pacific) arenas. There is also a
chapter on 'the theory behind agribusiness', but this is basically a market-based assessment rather than an examination of the contradictions of commodity production or an attempt to apply extant theories.

Similar points can be made about an avowedly deregulationist report from Australia's Primary and Allied Industries Council (PAIC). It identifies the trend towards globalisation, suggesting that 'increasing internationalisation is essential, desirable and inevitable' (PAIC, 1989:ii). Also noted are trends in the consumer marketplace and shifts in the nature of demand, in particular the growing power of retailers. It sees polarisation of farmers into 'corporations' and 'hobby farmers' as inevitable and a concentration by agribusiness on specific commodities as the dominant process. Such specialisation arises out of the desire to control the market for a product, through branding and dominant market share. While the PAIC report and the analysis by Kenney et al. are politically opposed, they identify many similar trends.

Ownership, control or direct entry into farming by corporations has been an emotive issue in all farming societies. Hightower (1975, 1978) and Vogeler (1981) sounded early warnings of the corporatisation of family farming in the USA. Similar concerns have been taken up by Lawrence (1987 and forthcoming) and Burch et al. (1990). In the popular arena there are strong views expressed by many rural (and urban) residents about corporate developments such as feedlotting and commercial forestry, particularly when the companies involved are Japanese. However the extent of corporate landholding in Australia and New Zealand would appear to be fairly low and stable (Fairweather, 1989:ix; PAIC, 1989). This may not be surprising in the post-Fordist context. There are strong advantages for corporations (like retailers or fast food companies) in not becoming directly involved in agricultural production. Rather through the processes of subsumption (Goodman, Sorj and Wilkinson, 1987) they can extract profits from 'independent' family farmers while maintaining flexibility and control. This is particularly the case with contract farming (Burch et al., 1990).

It is also significant that while corporate penetration of the 'traditional' agricultural sectors (wheat, sheep and dairy) remains low, companies are moving rapidly into the more dynamic and innovative branches of rural production (e.g., deer farming and horticulture in New Zealand; feedlotting and aquaculture in Australia). As the focus on value-added and niche marketing grows, it may be that family farmers trapped in traditional sectors are disadvantaged. Again, this is a process that needs to be closely monitored by rural sociologists.

The issues of credit, finance and the circulation of capital are increasingly important in terms of the subsumption of agricultural production. Debt/equity problems are becoming severe for some farmers in Australia and New Zealand; finance is a key issue. As Green (cited in Buttel, 1989:22) suggests:

Finance capital involves important processes of
extracting surplus and exerting control over a wide range of investments relating to agriculture and the rural economy.

The circulation of capital (McMichael, 1987) needs to be examined as the importance of markets and consumption is reemphasised. However, the economic and financial factors involved in the restructuring of rural production need to be understood in the context of the restructuring of capitalism generally. Thus rural sociologists and agricultural economists should have a clear theoretical understanding of the processes. As Kenney et al. (1989) warn:

Virtually all of the social science literature on agriculture is based upon assumptions about capitalism that may no longer hold... as a consequence it has been difficult to resolve ongoing debates as well as to explain recent agricultural developments (1989:134)

The restructuring of capitalist economic relations will have significant effects on agricultural work, and on the labour of all those in rural areas. While there have been studies of rural work at the macro level (Powell (1985) on rural labour markets; Tipples (1987) on industrial relations) there has been little focus on the experiences of rural work. However recent research has shown promising new directions, including Ruben's (1990) analysis of itinerant fruit pickers, Tsokhas's (1990) work on shearing labour processes, Crosthwaite's (1988) study of the Gippsland dairy industry and Loveridge's (1989) analysis of New Zealand farm workers.

Work relationships are best understood through an analysis of the labour process - defined in its broadest sense. Such an approach entails a study of the nature of the work, the methods of control, the structure and constitution of the labour market, research and development, the uses and application of technology and the organisations and strategies based around the relations of production. The work of Friedland and associates in California (Friedland and Barton, 1976; Friedland et al., 1981) and that of Newby and associates in East Anglia (Newby, 1977; Newby et al., 1978) remains the best work using this broad approach, though from very different theoretical positions. A detailed but critical analysis of the labour process allows us to move beyond the arid debate concerning the role of 'hired' versus 'family' labour on farms or in rural enterprises. It is the nature, type and function of such labour and the social relations within which it is embedded, including those of kinship and ideology (Share, 1987), that are of analytic importance.

It has been argued that the successful farmers of the future will be those who adopt a managerial approach with strong financial skills (Fairweather, 1989:12; Pomeroy, 1987). The ascendancy of the 'farming as a business' ethos gels perfectly with the adoption of 'user pays' policies by government extension services in New Zealand and Australia. It remains to be seen how such policies and strategies affect the nature of rural labour: e.g., whether 'family' labour will be costed and paid on a realistic
basis and whether the frequently unpaid work of farm women will be valorised. The recent paper by Gibson et al. (1990) begins to answer some of these questions.

It can be seen that the restructuring of the capitalist economies since the early 1970s has had an important influence on agriculture. While various factors have helped to insulate some sectors of agriculture from change (Kenney, 1989:142) it is clear that the rural sectors of New Zealand and Australia, which are highly exposed to global trends, will be strongly affected by any post-Fordist economic system. Rural sociologists will need to refocus attention on the neglected (and difficult!) areas of agribusiness, finance and labour. The social implications of change in these areas are likely to be significant.

5. What have been the outcomes (and what are the likely outcomes) of the applications of new technologies in rural areas?

Technological applications have placed the farmers of New Zealand and Australia in a competitive position in the world of commodity production and exchange. But while technologies provide opportunities for productivity and efficiency improvements they may also lead to the increased subsumption of farmers in their relations with agribusiness input industries (including financial institutions). Once farmers borrow for the purchase of farm equipment there is an economic imperative to seek to harness economies of scale and (usually) to purchase more farm land. In this 'cannibalisation' of farmlands, the more capital intensive producers become increasingly dominant, which further marginalises the smaller producers (Kingma; 1985:2, Commins, 1990).

While the 'technological treadmill' model has come in for criticism for its theoretical inadequacies (Godden, 1987) it does point to the adoption of new technologies as perhaps the most obvious expansion strategy for rural producers (Lowe et al., 1990). However, despite the prominent place that adoption and diffusion studies have had in rural sociology, there is currently very little research being done into the social impact of agricultural technologies. An exception here is the work of Crosthwaite (1988) which analyses the role of technology in the Gippsland (Victoria) dairy industry from the point of view of political economy and the simple commodity production debate. Sociologists need to pose questions about the nature of subsumption accompanying adoption of new technologies, the policies of the state in fostering technical change, and the survival strategies of those who decide to reject new technologies (but who seek to remain commercial farmers). Once again, the work of Friedland (1981) provides a useful model, while the new work on indigenous knowledge (Kloppenburg, 1990) is also of relevance.

The future application of agricultural biotechnologies is almost guaranteed. Plants are expected to be genetically manipulated for resistance to diseases and pests, increased nutritive value and capacity to grow in dry and economically marginal areas.
Molecular biologists predict they will be able to organise the DNA of non-leguminous plants so they are capable of fixing nitrogen. Following experiments on 'super mice' and other creatures, farm animals are expected to be bred which will be resistant to disease, show increased weight gain, can withstand drought and heat, and are capable of utilising foodstuffs more efficiently. Veterinary chemical firms have already begun producing vaccines, growth hormones and diagnostic agents which allow productivity increases in existing herds and flocks (see Lawrence, 1987).

By themselves such advances appear to be outstanding achievements. And they are - in the biological sense. Sociologists must ask what wider forces have led to these experiments, why particular experiments are conducted (and others excluded) and what role the corporate sector is playing. What does it hope to gain from the experimentation and product sale (for example through the patenting of genetic material, supported by PVR legislation)? It is clear that the role of state scientific practice (e.g., within the CSIRO, universities and state departments of agriculture) has changed to allow corporate interaction, yet the full social effects of applying some of the new biotechnologies are not yet known.

For example, while the substance bovine somatotropin (BST) promises a 40 percent increase in the volume of milk produced per cow, some of the likely effects of its application are a further decline in the number of milk producers, reorganisation of the milk industry, future dependence of farmers on the agribusiness firm producing the hormone, and the likely 'dumping' of an oversupplied commodity on Asian markets (Lawrence, 1989b). Such concerns have led to the banning of BST within the European Community (EC). Biotechnology must be seen to be one of the most profound future developments in Australian and New Zealand agriculture, yet little is understood about its potential social impacts.

It is necessary to stress that technologies should not, prima facie, be judged harmful or undesirable. One can imagine what a boon some of the new biotechnologies could be to farmers: how inputs might be made cheaper (or be eliminated), how dependence on chemicals could be reduced and how biotechnology might generate new avenues for economic growth. Biotechnology may provide means of combating the endemic and serious salinity problem, and tomatoes might become tasty again (Age, 15 November 1989:11)!

Off the farm, a number of other areas of technological change have important implications for rural populations. In Australia 'big ticket' schemes like the multi-function polis (MFP) and the very fast train (VFT) may have serious social and environmental impacts on rural communities. It appears that the concerns of rural people have been largely overlooked by the proponents of these schemes (Bush, 1990) while many country town councillors and business leaders have voiced support in hope of economic development and possibly from less sanguine motives. Both the MFP and VFT are part of the push towards an information and services economy. Other aspects of the so-called 'communications
revolution' will also have implications for rural areas, for example in the area of telecommunications and media.

The restructuring of telecommunications in Australia has the potential to significantly affect rural areas. The federal government's plans to re-regulate the industry represent a shift away from the principle of cross-subsidy which has kept costs for rural phone users down, and has prevented the development of 'information poor corridors' as has occurred in the USA (O'Regan, 1989:139). The prospect of time-charging for local calls also has implications for rural and isolated users. Clearly, research will need to be undertaken to measure the effects such changes will have on rural people. People in rural areas are in the forefront of opposition to the deregulation of Telecom, though their political representatives have been slow to respond (unlike their reactions on other major issues: the rationalisation of rail services and the siting of toxic waste incinerators).

Ann Moyal (1989) has made a unique study of the social use of the telephone by women in Australia, including those in rural and remote areas. Debates around Telecom policy generally reflect the interests of business, unions and Governments. Domestic telephone users are rarely considered, and little is known of people's everyday use of the telephone. As Moyal (1989:55) shows:

There is a difference and distinctiveness in patterns of country telephone calling that stem from geography, lifestyle, available technology and costs.

The telephone is of 'enormous importance' in rural life, particularly in support of work activities in farming and tourism, in the social life of mining towns, and for remote Aboriginal communities. Indeed the federal government was pressed into funding special telecommunications support (including subsidised STD calls, fax and videotex services) for rural women in Victoria's Mallee during the intense rural crisis of 1987 to 1988. The telephone is particularly important for volunteer work, which is vital to the welfare of rural people. Such work is developing into networking, which is highly phone-dependent. Rapid changes in technology, including the satellite based DRCS (Digital Radio Concentrator System), fax and videotex provide the possibility for empowering rural people and enhancing their lives. But important issues remain: including those of power and access, especially along ethnic, gender and class lines, as Moyal's material on the 'telephone poor' demonstrates. National communications policies are oriented towards urban businessmen, whose interests may not be those of rural people. Given the importance of telecommunication technologies in economic and social development, rural sociologists must focus effort on exploring the effects of privatisation and re-regulation in this area.

Similar points could be made about the media industries, which have been subject to rapid structural change in New Zealand and Australia. O'Regan (1989) argues that recent media changes in Australia represent a shift towards a 'high communications policy' which denies local input and results in a turning away
from the local community and the embracing of a more national and international mind set'. This adoption of a 'Sydney-centred view of the world' is borne out by Green's (1989) survey of viewer preferences in rural areas of Western Australia. O'Regan further suggests that media changes have had an important impact on social and political processes and identity. Such processes are becoming decontextualised in spatial terms: 'everywhere is the same place', and local and regional issues are being subsumed into national ones. Regional advertising is assisting in the creation of national and regional retail chains, and of media-based political campaigns divorced from spatial loyalties. While these arguments have yet to be supported by closer analysis of rural feelings of identity, they do suggest that research is important in such areas.

'Technology' is usually conceived of within sociology as an urban issue, alien to the 'natural' concerns of the rural. However, as rural sociologists and agricultural economists are well aware, technological change is a crucial issue in rural areas. Agriculture is a technology intensive and rapidly-changing area, and farmers are amongst the most rapid adopters of communications and other technologies (Je Gras, 1988). But national science and technology policies are almost universally conceived in terms of urban interests. The effects of such policies on rural people must be our concern. Failure to understand such change will make our activities largely irrelevant!

6. How should we address the growing problems related to resource use, resource depletion and environmental destruction?

One of the likely consequences of following a 'high tech.' agricultural trajectory is continued pressure on the ecosystem. Expansion of agriculture into marginal areas (one of the measures of 'success' of the public research organisations) has led to soil erosion, salination, the disappearance of wetlands and the pollution of water resources. Natural predators have disappeared and there are increased toxic residues in soils and in foods produced on farms (Lawrence, 1987; Heathcote and Mabbutt, 1988). Monocultural production has required heavy use of synthetic fertilisers and pesticides and the use of larger and more sophisticated mechanical equipment. This has resulted in soil structural problems including compaction. The feedlotting of beef cattle is likely to increase the environmental problems of Australia's fragile inland river systems (Lawrence, forthcoming).

Environmental destruction is not inevitable in that there is, at least theoretically, a choice available in production methods and strategies. The problems which have been identified by agricultural scientists need to be considered in detail by sociologists. CSIRO studies have shown that half a million hectares of Australia's prime wheat land has less than 50 years of productive life remaining and that eastern rangelands will be incapable of supporting farming activities one hundred years from now. Western Zone soils of NSW are expected to be depleted of nutrients and be destroyed structurally within 30 years (Lawrence, 1987). Sociologists can draw attention to the social
implications of environmental degradation and remedies chosen for it, and to the socio-political conditions which have allowed such destruction to continue. They can make policy-makers aware of local knowledge and issues and the perspectives of those people most directly affected, and can monitor distribution effects of government policies and programs.

The conditions under which environmental degradation has occurred relate to the basis of family farming, in terms of modes of learning farm practices and perceptions of change in the farm environment. Research has investigated farmers' perceptions of land degradation, notably soil salting (Barr and Cary, 1984; Vanclay and Cary, 1988; Dunn and Gray, 1990). It shows that a large proportion of farmers are aware of the potential threat from salinity though may not recognise its symptoms. We do not know enough about the processes through which farmers perceive and respond to land degradation - or fail to do so. Contradictions between short-term imperatives and long-term stewardship, and the wider effects of individual farming practices, raise questions which many farmers are finding hard and/or are reluctant to respond to, while solutions may challenge individualistic beliefs and farm practices. Further research is needed to investigate attitudinal change in land management.

Policy makers within central government seek global solutions to such problems, but want action at the local level. 'Think globally and act locally' has become part of the environmental rhetoric. Local action, however, may respond to local rather than global definitions of problems. Perceptions of issues can vary within localities, and may not concur with the views of central agencies, even when based on 'objective' evidence. As Francis and Gray (1990) point out, issues which local people respond to as environmental degradation may really stem from other types of social and ecological change. More research is required before we understand how local issues are formulated and the types of change which stimulate them.

The rural physical environment has also become a social issue as conflict has arisen over mining and logging development and associated degradation. In Australia we are currently hearing many arguments for and against logging: protests from those who seek to preserve wilderness areas and counter-protests from those who seek to defend local forest industry. Social researchers have been relatively quiet on these issues, though it is clear that such social movement based politics are becoming increasingly important.

Degradation of farmland has received more social research attention, perhaps because governments have been relatively keen to fund such work, but it has been narrowly focused. Equity considerations have not been explored despite potentially serious implications. The effects of degradation will vary from place to place, as some areas will lose productive capacity earlier and more seriously than others and the costs of programmes to stem erosion, salinity and tree loss may be inequitably distributed. Those rural areas most dependent on agriculture may have few alternative sources of income to provide for conservation when
degradation and economic problems arise. Some areas will continue to have relatively large populations of working age, and hence maintain their tax base longer than others, provided that economic activity is sustained. Some will simply encounter more environmental damage while others may fail to recognise coming problems or choose not to act at all.

The spatial equity issue is related to an emphasis on localism which has seen a focus on local input in service delivery and rhetoric about the financial and almost spiritual qualities of self-help. There has been considerable academic as well as policy debate about localist thinking. Research should inform policy makers of the risks of devolving services in circumstances where local resources prove inadequate or where they fail to achieve equity in distribution (for which local governments and other local organisations are often unwisely assumed to have a special formula).

Local involvement is in some ways essential. Local government has an important role in land conservation through its planning functions and local organisations and networks have an important role in disseminating information and creating awareness of environmental problems and solutions. But localism also has a negative side. Local participation in planning may not always help achieve a fair spatial or temporal distribution of the costs and benefits of development. Localism is an inherently political process and, like governments, local groups are organisations which have to confront issues of equity, resource allocation and other political issues, as well as public judgement on management criteria.

Land care groups have been seen as an important and 'new' local response to the land degradation crisis. But important questions remain unanswered, for example, who is joining and benefiting from such groups? Are they able to represent and effectively act for local interests while leading to an alteration in agricultural practices? On a broader plane it is necessary to consider the issue of 'sustainable development' within capitalism. Is Gorz (1983) correct to assert that both centrally controlled socialism and capitalism, as growth-oriented systems, produce environmentally unsound outcomes and that the only sustainable future is a choice between decentralised socialism and ecofascism?

7. What are the problems, concerns and expressed or unexpressed needs of rural dwellers, particularly those disadvantaged by structural social inequality?

The social problems of rural areas remain poorly understood by governments. A survey undertaken by members of the Centre for Rural Welfare Research at CSU-Riverina (see CRWR, 1988) has shown rural disadvantage on a broad range of social indicators. The incidences of alcohol and tobacco consumption, chronic illness, psychiatric disorder, stillbirths and neonatal deaths were higher in rural than in urban areas. Rural hospitals were found to be lacking in basic diagnostic services and in equipment for treating common respiratory and heart diseases, drownings and
electrocutions. Education levels in rural areas fall well behind those of people in the cities. Only seven percent of male and ten percent of female country school leavers go on to tertiary education, which compares unfavourably with figures of 27 percent for both males and females in metropolitan areas. Research on migrant settlement by members of the Centre for Rural Welfare Research (Gray et al., forthcoming) has highlighted the potential disadvantage for rural dwellers and suggested a need for comparative research both among rural areas and between country and city.

In terms of access to services the Federal Government's own analysts have shown that people living in towns of less than 10,000 experienced 'considerable disadvantage', while those in towns of less than 5,000 frequently had no access to services (see also Kelleheah, 1990; Humphreys, 1990). Services are becoming increasingly less accessible as governments seek to rationalise their operations. Service delivery is hampered by factors such as population isolation and spread, the high relative cost of provision, ignorance of government services and rural suspicion of city-trained welfare personnel (Lawrence and Williams, 1990).

Rural communities are different from urban communities in terms of economic, social and political structures and processes. Social problems (such as poverty, unemployment, domestic violence and drug taking) differ in type and magnitude. Yet research into the specific nature of rural problems is not being adequately funded. As a consequence urban-based findings are applied to rural communities and social welfare 'models' derived from city experience are applied in the country - often exacerbating the very problems for which solutions were being sought. The problems of rural welfare practitioners - isolation, burn out, and the difficulties associated with the inevitable fusion of personal life and professional practice - have not been studied in any detail. Nor have the adequacy of welfare 'solutions' been evaluated in communities which tend to have a high proportion of aged people, large families, unemployed, and comprise populations with less education, training and skills than those in urban areas.

Research findings on rural welfare issues are beginning to be published (Byrnes, 1987; Cullen et al., 1990) and may lead to better welfare practice in rural Australia. But whether significant improvement in services can come about without major funding initiatives from federal government is a moot point. For example, Holmes (1988:212) has argued that due to the smallness of the Australian economy and the high cost of providing a full range of services to the rural population, including the most isolated groups, any sustained effort to upgrade the majority of services to urban standards and at urban prices to users "...may ultimately impose very heavy strains on the national economy".

Thus equality is unlikely in a time of fiscal 'restraint'. But this approach overlooks the costs associated with continued urban expansion, such as increased infrastructual costs in cities,
environmental pollution and spiralling costs in purchasing and maintaining buildings and providing services. These are also heavy strains on the national economy which are increasingly concerning governments and planners. Attempts to redistribute population growth to rural areas are likely, but must be preceded by a fuller understanding of the social needs of rural areas. There is already evidence that people moving into rural areas to escape high housing costs are experiencing a wide range of problems and may help constitute a new form of rural poverty.

8. What are the population trends in rural Australia and New Zealand and how do these trends relate to wider changes in the economy?

It is not possible to plan viable service delivery or to develop policies designed to affect particular population movements unless there is a clear knowledge of current trends. But there are conflicting views about population change in rural areas, much of it related to definitions. If 'rural' includes coastal then the 'rural' population may be seen to be expanding. In the 1976-81 intercensal period Australian demographers confirmed a reversal of the trend towards movement of the population from the country to the city. In fact small towns (of less than 10,000) and the population in dispersed areas were growing at rates in excess of the national average (see Hugo and Smailes, 1983). When five 'settlement zones' were used as categories and data were reaggregated it was established that Australia's sunbelt region (the coastal zone of South Eastern Queensland and Northern NSW) was experiencing rapid growth while the other four zones showed negligible growth from migration (Goddard, 1983). Similar tendencies have been identified in New Zealand, where population growth has been concentrated in coastal areas (Fairweather, 1987).

The so called 'population turnaround' of the 1970s was really a preference for small town and rural living in sunnier climes where beach access was either desirable or fundamental to lifestyle. The Planning Research Centre (1989) at the University of Sydney has confirmed that the most recent intercensal statistics reveal a return to the longer-term trend to rural population decline in Australia. It is the smaller inland rural settlements, especially those with population levels below 6,000 people which are most affected. The majority have experienced net migration losses over the last twenty years as the centralisation trends which began in the late 1950s have continued.

It is argued that these trends will continue, accentuated by changes in economic sectors such as retailing and construction. Yet such centres have traditionally represented the 'backbone' of the non-farm communities in rural Australia. What is likely to result from their demise? Is it socially desirable to attempt to alter the trajectory of these towns? What are these towns doing to encourage the settlement of new people? Why have migrants been so reluctant to venture outside the larger metropolitan centres in selecting a suitable location for settlement? Any policy response to country town decline must
recognise such issues.

9. What is the nature and extent of regional inequality: why does it occur, how is it perpetuated, and what are the community-based responses to it?

This set of questions is different from the one concerning rural social disadvantage experienced by particular groups. The issue at stake here is to identify the structural forces leading to uneven development and to examine political, economic and social responses to this. How, in other words, does one region become depressed while another gains in prosperity? Recent research (Australian Housing Research Council, 1989; Planning Research Centre, 1989) shows that in inland regions the agricultural population contracts in line with existing trends and that, in smaller rural service centres, a common pattern emerges. Businesses close in response to reduced trade, people lose jobs and the young find it difficult to secure work locally. Others move to gain education and training. As the town population falls so further businesses shut. The reduction in services and facilities is a signal to the more mobile professionals, including those with young families, that the local economy is in decline. Their response is to transfer from the town and their loss is reflected in reduced vitality of local voluntary organisations (Lawrence, 1987). With little political strength remaining in the town the state can begin to withdraw its services. A courthouse might close, then a railway station. The local welfare officer is transferred and teachers are moved to one of the larger regional centres. Lack of suitable local education leads district families to secure places in boarding schools for their children. The town is eventually bypassed even for local shopping (the Planning Research Centre's study found up to 16 percent of respondents had shifted their shopping to larger regional centres in the preceding year) and recreation. The town has, as it were, lost its raison d'être. Not even the low cost of housing can attract outsiders (there are, in any case, no jobs for them). Many of those remaining are 'trapped' - unable to find work, yet unable to sell their homes. They are candidates for rural poverty. At the same time, the settlement may well have declined below the 'critical mass' required to attract or maintain welfare agencies and services (Lawrence and Williams, 1990:46).

The most important theoretical work on spatial inequalities in Australia is that of Stilwell (1974, 1980, 1989) which argues that metropolitan primacy was inevitable given the particular mix of free market and state-supported development which has characterised much of white Australia's history. Urban centres have been able to 'assemble' labour in a manner which allows for the creation of suitable levels of surplus value and the large cities provide a strong base for the financial institutions involved in the circulation of capital. Capital restructuring is primarily about the discovery of new methods of labour control, the application of new technologies, extension of markets and the reduction of labour (and other input) costs. The re-shaping of production in a world of transnational capitalism will be in terms of an overall strategy for profit maximisation,
premised largely on increased surplus extraction. In Australia unionism has ensured that wage levels for particular job categories remain much the same in rural regions as in the cities. Lonsdale (1971) has identified this lack of differential pricing of labour as a major impediment to capital's movement into non-metropolitan Australia. If the Australian government were to deregulate the labour market, cheaper labour in rural regions (together with the presence of a more reliable and harder working population) might provide the necessary incentive for regional investment decisions by national and transnational capital. Of course, with lower wage rates, rural Australia may get 'development' without any subsequent improvement in living standards.

Research needs to be undertaken to examine the spatial shifts in the labour process and the nature of job growth in rural areas. In Britain, Massey (1984) has challenged the notion that transnational branch plants represent economic development and has warned that regional development initiatives may serve to reinforce rather than reduce sexual inequalities in the sphere of paid employment. The presence of these firms appears to represent growth and prosperity but because of 'relations of subordination' (where local managerial and other decision-making is extremely limited) they represent at best a truncated form of development. According to Bradley (1984) 'ruralisation' is a process orchestrated by metropolitan capital to take advantage of a generally disciplined and hard-working labour force as a means of securing the highest possible levels of profit. Rapid ruralisation also seems to bring with it 'trailerhome development' which may create more problems than it solves.

What are local regional bodies requiring in the way of development? What has been the local experience (using say tourism as a model)? What forward and backward linkages are being created? Is development 'real' or superficial? Stilwell (1989) notes the weakening commitment by the state in the last decade to regional economic policy. He believes economic rationalists within bodies involved in policy formation, such as the Industries Commission, regard regional policies as primarily 'welfare' support and a luxury in a world of fiscal containment. Stilwell argues it may be tactically better, in this particular ideological climate, to argue for the elevation of 'local' initiative programmes than for the return to some broadly-based regional policy. The suggestion is that 'localism' allows for the heightened politicisation of specific issues affecting regional communities. However we would argue this assumes homogeneity within rural communities while benefits from localism may be unevenly distributed. While 'local politics' has the capacity to mobilise populations around particular issues (Wild, 1983) regional policy has failed to produce results. It may also be argued that in Australia state rivalry has limited the ability of federal political parties to coordinate economic development.

10. How do the policies of the state affect agriculture and rural communities?

Historically Australia and New Zealand have seen high levels of
state intervention in rural and agricultural development. From the mid-nineteenth to the mid-twentieth century this took the form of land development and redistribution, infrastructural development and research and extension activities (Frost, 1982, Fairweather, 1985b, Powell, 1988) in addition to the direct subsidy of agricultural production through bounties, tariffs and price maintenance schemes. Holmes has tabulated (Figure 1) the sequence of state schemes aimed at promoting rural development in Australia. The high level of state intervention has paralleled similarly profound government involvement in other advanced economies (Commins, 1990).

Figure 1
Chronology of Major Governmental Programs to Promote Rural Development and Centralisation (Holmes, 1988)
Lawrence (1987) presented a further classification of state intervention in agriculture since the Second World War Table 1). Any such classification raises a number of questions about the relationship between rural policy (particularly for agriculture) and the state. For any such analysis it is necessary to both describe and evaluate the various interventions and to pinpoint the groups advantaged and disadvantaged by their application. Such a task might help to reveal the class forces operating at the state level and so identify how various fractions of capital have managed to alter the agenda of agricultural policy, at various times, in an effort to secure particular advantage.

How has the role of the state changed in the present period of agricultural restructuring? In the last decade both Federal Coalition and Labour Governments in Australia have promoted policies aimed at foisting productivity improvements upon family farmers. Similar trends, of an even more drastic nature, have been apparent in New Zealand (Cloke, 1989). Restructuring (loss of farms, increases in farm size, articulation of farmers with monopoly capital) has been based upon the requirements that farmers be progressively exposed to so-called free market forces. The Australian farm lobby, in particular the National Farmers' Federation [NFF], has accepted this and, somewhat surprisingly, has endorsed with some enthusiasm the reduction in state support for farmers. What has been behind this changing relationship between the state and the farm lobby? Has the farm lobby changed in direction and attitude to the state, and if so, why? While we know of one Masters thesis (in administration at The University of Canberra) dealing with the politics of the NFF, this area is generally under-researched.
Table 1
State Intervention in Post-war Australian Agriculture and Rural Society

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rural Policy Goals</th>
<th>Specific Objectives</th>
<th>Policy Instruments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Agriculture</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1. To expand</td>
<td>(a) To raise prices</td>
<td>Import restrictions</td>
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<tr>
<td>agricultural output</td>
<td>obtained by farmers</td>
<td>Output subsidies</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(b) To lower costs</td>
<td>Home consumption</td>
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<td></td>
<td>of farmers</td>
<td>price schemes</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(c) To stimulate</td>
<td>Fertilizer subsidies/bounties</td>
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<td>production</td>
<td>Concessional credit</td>
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<td>Irrigation/Farmwater supply subsidies</td>
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<td>Research/Extension</td>
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<td>Irrigation Schemes</td>
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<td>Beef roads</td>
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<td>Tax allowances for agricultural development</td>
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<td>Release of Crown land</td>
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<td>2. To expand sales</td>
<td>(a) To prevent 'damaging'</td>
<td>Monopoly boards/statutory corporations</td>
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<td>of agricultural</td>
<td>competition between</td>
<td>Public consumption/school milk</td>
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<td>products</td>
<td>producers/improve</td>
<td>Regulations on imports</td>
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<td>agricultural</td>
<td>Bilateral/multilateral trade agreements/GATT submissions</td>
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<td>marketing</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(b) To increase sales</td>
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<td>on home market</td>
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<td>(c) To increase sales</td>
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<td>abroad</td>
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<td>3. To increase</td>
<td>(a) To promote use</td>
<td>Research/extension</td>
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<td>efficiency/</td>
<td>of most productive</td>
<td>Rural education</td>
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<td>productivity of</td>
<td>technology/most</td>
<td>Accelerated</td>
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<td>farmers</td>
<td>efficient resource</td>
<td>depreciation</td>
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<td>combinations</td>
<td>allowances for</td>
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<td>machinery</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(b) To control</td>
<td>Disease control</td>
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<td>disease</td>
<td>programmes</td>
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<td>(c) To change the</td>
<td>Quarantine</td>
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<td>structure of</td>
<td>Rural reconstruction</td>
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<td>agriculture:</td>
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<td>remove inefficient</td>
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<td>improve viability</td>
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<td>4. To stabilize</td>
<td>(a) To reduce</td>
<td>Bilateral/multilateral trade agreements</td>
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<tr>
<td>farm incomes</td>
<td>fluctuations in</td>
<td>Stabilization funds</td>
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<td>year-to-year income</td>
<td>Buffer stock</td>
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<td>Buffer fund</td>
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<td>Home consumption</td>
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<td>price schemes</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Quotas on input/output levels</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
5. To compensate producers for
- Specific problems of agriculture
  (a) To compensate for poor seasonal conditions
  (b) To compensate for unexpectedly poor markets
- Effects of other government policies
  (a) To compensate for exchange rate variations/tariffs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income averaging</th>
<th>Drought/flood relief</th>
<th>Flat rate subsidies</th>
<th>Deficiency payments</th>
<th>Emergency assistance</th>
<th>Compensation for overseas devaluations</th>
<th>Bounties/subsidies</th>
<th>Home consumption price schemes</th>
<th>Import restrictions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Rural Society

6. To achieve a more balanced spread of population/deter potential aggressors
  (a) To develop resources/decentralize population
  (b) To regionalize government administration
  (c) To encourage industrial development in rural areas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Irrigation schemes</th>
<th>Farmer settlement schemes</th>
<th>Military establishments</th>
<th>Establishment of federal government offices/services</th>
<th>Decentralization assistance for industry</th>
</tr>
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</table>

7. To achieve economic and social equity between rural and urban regions
  (a) To assist low-income farmers
  (b) To improve rural facilities/services
  (c) To provide relief to the rural unemployed

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rural reconstruction schemes</th>
<th>Councils for social development</th>
<th>Disadvantaged schools/other special programmes</th>
<th>Education/health/welfare programmes</th>
<th>Non metropolitan unemployment relief schemes</th>
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It is clear that in conjunction with the NFF and some other primary industry bodies, the Australian state has sought to aid capital accumulation in agriculture by ensuring the evolution of larger farm units and the 'elimination' (through processes of farm amalgamation or state-supported rural reconstruction) of smaller, less viable, family farms. The state has also begun to alter its commitment to agricultural research and has sought private funds to bolster state research initiatives. Questions raised here concern the ownership of intellectual property derived from collaborative research, the 'corporatisation' of farming, the role of the state in fostering technological development and the outcomes of the applications of user pays principles to agricultural research (Commins, 1990). Important issues arise around the state's changing views on issues of social justice, equity and access. In the EC and to an extent in the USA state intervention in agriculture has avowedly 'social' ends, including the maintenance of rural population levels and land stewardship. Commins (1990: 71) argues that EC policy may be moving towards a dichotomous farm structure, where fully capitalised farmers produce 'quality food', while 'staged farming' is carried out for other 'social' reasons. While the ire directed by Australian and New Zealand farmers towards EC and US subsidies tends to overlook these non-economic rationales, it may be that a similar agricultural structure will develop here,
coupled with increased state intervention (not necessarily economic). The current attempt by the state to withdraw from regulation and direction of the agricultural sector may be short-lived. It may eventually be forced to reduce the regional disparities arising from the agricultural restructuring process and move towards the development of policies more applicable to rural situations.

11. What do we know about the relationships between everyday life, ideology and politics in rural areas?

Recent developments in sociology have involved a renewed focus on the study of 'everyday life', or the routinised and taken-for-granted texture of everyday experience (Smith, 1988). Much of this impetus has come from feminist sociology, and has involved attempts to erase the division between public (male) and private (female) worlds, a dichotomy which has been central to the development of sociological discourse (Dwyer, 1990). To a large extent this division has also operated within rural sociology, with a firm separation of the masculine domain of the farm and public life, and the feminine arena of kitchen, home paddock and the Red Cross. However the integration (or interplay) of the two 'spheres' has been made apparent by recent studies of rural women, and by new community studies. At the same time the questions of space, ideology and identity have been raised in particularly interesting ways (Mormont, 1990, see section 1).

Australia has seen something of a mini-boom in the genre of community studies, with the appearance of accounts from a number of long-running projects (Cowlishaw, 1988; Gray, forthcoming; Dempsey, 1990 and forthcoming; Poiner, 1990). While this area of sociological research has been much criticised (with good justification) in the past, especially for its neglect of class and gender issues (Bryson and Wearing, 1985; Lawrence, 1986), the 'new' community studies appear to provide a much 'fuller' interpretation of rural life, in particular the interpenetration of public and private worlds.

These studies show that everyday life is experienced through a web of discourse or ideology, a factor that is crucial to sociological understanding (Smith, 1988: 49-104). While this work does not deny the impact of structural constraints (the 'realities' for Dempsey) it emphasises the importance of the social construction of community and everyday life through interaction and the deployment of ideology. These analyses do not take 'countrymindedness' for granted, but rather show how a distinctive set of values and discourses are generated from a complex interplay of factors. Of importance are ecological factors (isolation, a small and stable population), the nature of work, the social construction of gender, the influence of the metropolitan state and the constellation of kin, morality and notions of respectability.

However community studies are almost by definition based on 'rural' settlements (country towns), and a systematic comparison with similar research in urban settings (e.g., Richards, 1990)
would prove illuminating in terms of identifying dominant or unique features of rural life. For as Dempsey (1990) emphasises, the ideology of a Gemeinschaft community can serve to mask real structures of domination, exclusion and marginalisation, features often associated with the 'alienating' urban experience. It is gratifying to note the emergence of a reinvigorated community studies, and while still failing to engage with the findings of critical rural sociology, it has much to offer in terms of detailed knowledge of everyday life in rural areas, or at least in country towns.

Many of the 'hidden' aspects of rural life have emerged in the writings on rural women. Such studies have revealed the deep structures of gender inequality in areas such as domestic violence (Coorey, 1990), work (Gibson et al., 1990) and leisure (James, 1989b; Dempsey, 1989). The experiences of migrant and Aboriginal women who suffer additional marginalisation have also begun to be expressed (e.g., Andreoni, 1989; Thorpe et al., 1989). Many of the issues canvassed in this literature are central to rural experience, and not just for women. For example, voluntary work, while largely the domain of women in rural areas, is central to the survival and quality of life of many rural communities. Research has also celebrated more 'positive' aspects of women's lives, for example Moyal's (1989) previously mentioned research into telephone use and Bell and Hawke's (1987) work on women's material culture.

While our knowledge of the everyday life of rural town dwellers is expanding, little is known of the day-to-day lives of farmers. Rural sociologists have tended to pursue highly instrumental lines of research, focusing on 'useful' topics such as adoption of technology. At the same time investigations into social life have tended to focus on attitudes and values, reflecting the strongly functionalist basis of the discipline. Share (1987) has argued that the everyday lives of farmers are structured by the complex interplay of work, kinship and morality, but there is little empirical evidence for such a claim. It is of course very difficult to study the texture of everyday life on farms, but such research would seem to be important for a full understanding of farm people, not least in terms of their attitudes and responses to issues like land degradation (Weston, 1989; Bryant, 1989).

One of the axioms of rurality is that country people are more conservative in moral and political terms than their urban counterparts. Dominant paradigms in rural sociology have tended to reify this claim (Mortmont, 1990). The search for an identifiable set of values variously labelled as agrarianism or 'countrymindedness' has been seen as an important task. Craig and Phillips (1983) in a comparison of Australian and US farmers found that both exhibited an agrarian ideology which identified farmers as the key to national economic prosperity and farming the most honest and desirable way of life. There was a moral superiority in tilling the soil. Verrall, Ward and Hay (1985) describe 'countrymindedness' as an emphasis on the importance of the family in social life, the virtues of reward for effort, and the centrality of Christianity, loyalty to Britain and sexual
moralism, and link this set of ideas to political conservatism. However in these studies there is little attempt to operationalise concepts, nor to relate ideologies to other areas of social life, or to broader social and ideological structures outside of rural areas. Kapferer (1990) does make an attempt to draw such links, but at a rather tentative and speculative level and Gray (forthcoming) uses such concepts to analyse local political processes.

Within a more positivist paradigm, Susan Kelly (1989), examining data from the Australian Institute of Family Studies, found some support for the idea that geographically distant rural communities develop a separate culture and mode of personal interaction. One manifestation is the application of pressure on new residents to adopt traditional sex-role behaviour. But the most important factor, Kelly suggests, is the educational and occupational attainment differences between rural and non-rural populations:

A sub group of urban dwellers with the same education, occupation, family socioeconomic status, and church attending behaviour would be almost indistinguishable from a rural group, on conservatism and sex-role attitudes. It is not so much where the community is in relation to large cities, but to the characteristics and backgrounds of the people in that community that affects attitudes and values.

Kelly suggests that towns in excess of about 5,000 have sufficient cultural diversity and educational and employment options to permit tolerance towards what she refers to a 'sub cultures' (groups with conflicting goals, values and modes of behaviour). This is a suggestive study which should be put into comparative perspective.

In political terms it is important to establish the reasons for the support received by particular political parties from particular rural populations. Why do many farmers vote for the Nationals (both Australian and New Zealand varieties)? Under what conditions do they not vote for the Nationals? Why is the Labor Party seen to be a party of 'deviants' in rural areas (see Verrall, Ward and Hay, 1985)? Why does the working class in rural areas tend to vote for the National or Liberal Party? Are there differences in voting patterns between men and women in rural Australia? What is the future of the Green movement in "the bush"?

15.3 Conclusion

Many of the questions we have raised are to do with identity and difference and their relationship to space. Many of the concerns of rural sociologists, in terms of land use, welfare provision or political behaviour have much to do with the way in which the 'rural' is conceptualised in the context of modern capitalist society, in other words what it means to be rural. Struggles to define and confer value on space are political ones but the futures of rural areas and their populations are contingent on
them. As Mormont (1990: 41) suggests, they are:

A set of processes through which agents construct a vision of the rural suited to their circumstances, define themselves in relation to prevailing social cleavages, and thereby find identity, and through identity, make common cause.

It is for rural sociologists to identify their own 'vision of the rural' and assess whether they 'make common cause' with the objects of their study. The discipline has challenged the conservative functionalist orthodoxy which typified so many of the Land Grant establishments in the US and has replaced it with a thorough-going political economy of agriculture, sensitive to the impact of global structures on local production systems and which seeks to identify and explain rural decline, economic deprivation, state intervention in agriculture and the ecological contradictions of advanced technologies. Hopefully an enthusiasm for this reinvigorated rural sociology will lead to a better understanding of rural experience, and a more informed knowledge of this strange thing that attracts our common fascination: rural society!

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