

Copyright is owned by the Author of the thesis. Permission is given for a copy to be downloaded by an individual for the purpose of research and private study only. The thesis may not be reproduced elsewhere without the permission of the Author.

RURAL COMMUNITIES

Expressions of 'community' in context: narratives from
the Lower Mataura Valley in Southland

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment
of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Philosophy

in

Development Studies

at Massey University, Palmerston North,
New Zealand

Shirley Isobel Howden

2001

ABSTRACT

Focusing on the notion of 'community', this study utilises a qualitative research approach to analyse the changing nature of rural communities, as expressed by residents in the Lower Maitava Valley, in Southland, New Zealand. This study examines the changes in agriculture as a manifestation of recent economic and social restructuring in Western society, and explores the implications for a specific place-based community, by focusing on the ways in which local residents construct their ideas about this 'community'.

The literature review examines past theories and draws from broader social theories to account for the complexity of the term. Likewise, the wider contexts in which the Lower Maitava Valley is influenced by, and exists within, were considered through exploring the socio-economic and environmental conditions occurring at various spatial levels: from local to global.

Data collection utilized qualitative methods appropriate for a researcher with local knowledge: principally, in-depth interviews and informal conversations, as well as personal observations and secondary data while in the study area. Data analysis draws on a conceptual framework for reading 'community' by focusing on the meanings, practices, spaces and structures that were constructed, and the way that these constructions were interrelated processes which maintained, or challenged the situated meaning of 'community' in relation to the Lower Maitava Valley.

Findings show the importance of understanding the place-specific arrangements and interconnections to local, national and global forces of change in accounting for people's reactions to transition. These constructions highlighted that 'community' is as much a negotiated phenomenon in perpetual process, as it is a form of social life indicative of a particular 'community'. These findings would suggest that there is a need to keep an open mind to how specific place-based communities will be materially and culturally expressed in the future.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to acknowledge and thank all the people who participated in and helped with getting information for the study; thank you for the generosity of your time, your insights, and your hospitality. A particular thanks to Graham and Robin Winter and Mac and Violet Howden for letting me use your homes as a base during the field study. Special thanks to Sue, Leesa and Les - for all those words and ideas you offered, your support has made what seemed impossible, possible. And to Mum, thanks for being my rock solid support as always. Finally, to John Overton, my supervisor, I really appreciated your affirmations and helpful suggestions that made this thesis possible.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iii
TABLE OF CONTENTS	iv
TABLES, FIGURES AND PHOTOGRAPHS	vii
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	viii
INTRODUCTION	1
Personal Background	1
Background	3
Approach	5
Research Context	6
Research Focus	7
Thesis Chapters	7
 NEW ZEALAND RURAL COMMUNITIES: Past and Present	 9
New Zealand rural communities: the idealised past	9
Forces against the idealised community	12
Rural communities: past approaches	14
Defining 'rural'	14
Defining 'community'	17
New ideas for community as a theoretical construct	21
A conceptual framework for 'community'	25
Conclusion	29
 FORCES OF CHANGE IN RURAL NEW ZEALAND	 31
Demographic and social change	31
Trends in rural population	32
Rural demographic change	33
Traditional family farming in New Zealand	36
The concept of family farming	37
Sharemilking	40
The dual roles in farming	41
Forces of change	42

Summarising from the 1960s	42
Farmers and politics in transition	45
A change in government	46
Broader structural changes	47
Restructuring in farming communities	49
Farmers' responses	50
The post-restructuring environment	53
Conclusion	55
 THE SOUTHLAND CONTEXT	 56
The contemporary research context	56
Historical overview	66
Early beginnings of the Lower Maitara Valley	66
The heyday of the small rural settlement	67
The golden years for sheep farmers	69
Readjustments to social life in the Valley	71
Restructuring in the 1980s: Rural crisis	73
Times of transition	73
Post-restructuring environment in the 1990s: A new focus	76
Marketing Southland	77
The resurgence of dairying in Southland	79
Conclusion	83
 METHODS FOR AN 'INSIDER': Conversations over a cup of tea	 86
The researcher: an insider's perspective	87
Adapting methods for local situations	89
A PRA approach	91
An insider's research technique	92
The field research process	94
Discourse Analysis	96
The analysis process	98
 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION	 101
Meanings	101

Practices	113
Key sites and organisational structures	120
Dynamics of 'community'	126
Summary	138
CONCLUSION	140
Discussion	144
APPENDIX	148
Summary of interviews	148
Letter of introduction	149
BIBLIOGRAPHY	150

TABLES

1.	Some urban/rural dichotomies	15
2.	The variables used in Cloke's 'Index of rurality	16
3.	Regional migration, 1991-1996	35
4.	Dairy life course and ladder	41
5.	Overview of the Lower Mataura Valley	65
6.	Employment trends in rural Southland (full and part-time work) by gender	75
7.	Changes in farming activity in Southland	77
8.	Southland's Dairy Co-operative Ltd. expansion process	82
9.	Transcription Notation	96

FIGURES

1.	A conceptual summary of 'community'	25
2.	Interrelationship between farm adjustment strategies	52
3.	Population trends in Southland	63
4.	Net migration to and from Southland, 1991-1996	64
5.	Trends in the Lower Mataura Valley	85

PHOTOGRAPHS

1.	The Lower Mataura Valley	57
2.	The Southland Dairy Co-operative in Edendale	58
3.	A typical view of the Lower Mataura Valley	59
4.	Being a regular is defined by having your own named beer mug	61
5.	The Brydone War Memorial	122
6.	Retired farmers outside church catching up with neighbours and friends	124
7.	Brydone Primary School	135
8a.	Two constructions of the same place	136
8b.	Two constructions of the same place	136
9.	The affects of downsizing on Wyndham township	138

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

WDF	Women's Division Federated Farmers
A&P	Agricultural and Pastoral
EEC	European Economic Community
EU	European Union
GATT	General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
NZDB	New Zealand Dairy Board
NZDG	New Zealand Dairy Group
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
OECD	Organization of Economic Co-operation
PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Personal Background

'Communities'¹ are a complex phenomenon. This understanding comes not through reading literature, but through my experience of living and working in an urban slum community in Bangkok, over the past ten years. During this time, I discovered some of the frustrations involved in being a community development practitioner doing 'grassroots' development. I found that the living conditions in the slum were not the problem, but that coming to terms with the power dynamics at work within the community were. Even within a 'poor community', it was clear that some individuals or social groups took advantage of, and had access to the benefits of 'development', while there were 'others' that were marginalised by this same process. It was working with these uneven power relations within the slum community that made me realise that the idea of enabling the poor to contribute to their own development was not necessarily a straightforward process.

I found that even within 'poor communities', where living conditions were cramped, airless, and dark, and where the stench was initially suffocating, even there, hierarchical structures exist and social stigmas were attached to certain alleyways, families, or individuals. These circumstances lead to either social inclusion or exclusion. For those marginalised within 'poor communities', it became apparent that life in those places was harsh. And yet, despite these disparities, I found that second and third generation slum dwellers continued to identify with and gain their sense of belonging from living in these communities, and continued to participate in all the rights, responsibilities and obligations that go with being a 'local', an 'insider' in that particular subculture in Thailand.

In grappling with the joys and struggles of being a community development practitioner in a 'developing' country, my own reflections led to opportunities to

¹ Throughout this thesis, I use the words 'community' and 'communities' with quotation marks to differentiate their usage as constructed and contestable terms. They also appear without quotation marks where people used these words in their conversations during the field study.

further examine some of the processes that play a part in shaping people's lives both in Western and developing countries. This involved taking a course in Development Studies at Massey University. These studies sensitised me to the fact larger social and economic forces at work are universal, connecting all people and nations, yet different cultures and environments will experience differing outcomes, and to the fact different ideas/philosophies undergird different development strategies. These studies, nonetheless, reinforced for me the problematic nature of 'community', particularly in terms of current participatory development strategies that favour development coming from 'below', from the people themselves (for example, Chambers, 1994 & 1997; Brohman, 1996). While the idea of community participation sounds good in theory, what are the realities in practice?

As was noted earlier, I found there were uneven power relations even within 'poor communities'. So the question needs to be asked, who in fact is benefiting from participatory community development? Participatory strategies, whether they are rhetorical or well intentioned, nevertheless, have raised questions for me in terms of what is a community? What ideas are captured in the term? Who is defining community? How does it function and change? These questions are broad, yet I believe they can be asked of ordinary people living in either rural or urban communities, both in Western and developing countries alike.

This study then, is an attempt to unravel and analyse the changing nature of communities, with the focus of interest in rural New Zealand. This study was prompted by the fact that agriculture and rural communities are more differentiated than ever before. Having spent the last ten years in Asia, the contrast in the rural community I left, to the one I returned to, was even more apparent. Appreciating the dynamics and processes involved in grassroots development, I felt it would be a helpful reflective process for local residents, and for me, to consider the processes at work in rural New Zealand communities.

The Lower Maitai Valley was chosen as a place worthy of study for two reasons: firstly because discernable changes in agriculture and depopulation have been part of local recent history; and secondly because this place is part of my own rural roots: it is a place of familiarity. Yet, having lived in another culture for an extended period of

time has sensitised me to viewing a familiar place and way of life through new eyes. Thus, I came to this study from a unique position of being able to take advantage of the insights I can gain from being both an 'insider' (a born and bred local) and an 'outsider' (having lived in another culture for an extended period of time).

Background

The concept 'community' has long been a part of lay discourse, as well as professional and academic discourses, although what is necessarily being implied, has long been open to conjecture. Early studies of rural communities tended to focus on the "obvious, countable, material things" (cited in Phillips, 1998:124), and on other observable features of service provision. In other words, they restricted their area of focus to the apolitical and material dimensions of rurality. They also presumed that rural 'communities' were stable and homogenous objects of research that could be studied. Likewise, in recent studies of rurality, rural change and sustainability (Naples, 1994; Scott et al, 2000; Gilling, 1997; Joseph & Chalmers, 1998), the term 'community' has been woven into the text. However, the complexity of the term, and often the contexts and people who shape them are understated.

Recent studies in rurality have been influenced and energised by contemporary cultural, post-modern, and post-structural thought from the wider social sciences focusing more on the immaterial dimensions of rurality – on the range of different experiences and conceptions that people take rural to be. With the cultural turn and post-structural influences in rural studies, there has been a focus of analysis on social representation and lay discourses – the words and concepts understood and used by people in their everyday talk. There also has been a recognition of the range of different conceptions to rurality, and to the way that constructions of rurality are constituted from wider discourses in circulation (Halfacree, 1993:29; Jones, 1995). This focus has indeed highlighted the complex and multifaceted nature of rurality, and would suggest that constructions of 'community' will likewise be complex and multidimensional.

Likewise, there have been other recent works influenced by postmodernism and the emphasis on issues of social diversity, marginalisation, and the differences between and within rural societies (Cloke & Little, 1997; Young, 1990; Philo, 1992). These

writings have highlighted the need for sensitivity to the range of social groups, and unequal power relations (in terms of gender, class, ethnicity etc.) that can occur within rural social space. These challenges, therefore, would suggest that rural societies should be recognised for their diversity and differences, and for internal conflicts and unequal power relations that may exist within. Therefore, studies on rural communities need to be open to these circumstances, if there is to be adequate explanation for the heterogeneity that occurs within communities (Jones, 1995:48).

These new developments and challenges from broader social thought have provided further ideas and conceptual energies for a more comprehensive account of community, whereby 'community' can be treated more as a complex and negotiated phenomenon. It is with these conceptual energies, together with Day and Murdoch's (1993) challenge to social researchers to follow the accounts of those actively involved in these social processes, and to reinstate the term 'community' as the centre of studies on social space, that 'community' has become the central focus of this study.

Irrespective of the conceptually complex nature of 'community' as an analytical tool in research, any analysis of a community would be limited if the broader political, socio-economic and biophysical contexts, in which that community exists within, were not also considered. One of the features of rural life in Western economies in the 1990s is that agriculture and rural communities are marked by diversity and difference more than ever before. Indeed, the processes that stimulate these multidimensional changes in rural areas stem from broader socio-economic and political processes that are also at work. As a consequence, increasing differentiation is now a characteristic feature of rural space (Ilbery, 1998:1).

Evidence would suggest that New Zealand's experience mirrors other Western countries, where adjustments at both the household and community level were considered necessary, for competing in the global market economy (Le Heron & Pawson, 1996). Some of these processes have resulted in uneven development, some places and producers have forged ahead, and others have become more marginalised.

While there is a wealth of knowledge concerning studies on agricultural communities and the local effects of economic restructuring during the rural downturn, many of

these investigations have focused on strategies of readjustment and economic changes that have taken place within farming. There are few qualitative studies of social life in rural 'communities' (Cloke, 1989; Wilson, 1994; Scott et al, 2000) and even fewer that unveil the socially constructed nature of places, and the processes and people involved in shaping them (Leipins 2000). This study seeks to contribute to our understanding of the changing nature of rural communities, by focusing on the processes and people involved in shaping both the material and immaterial forms of community, from the perspective of people linked to a place-specific community in New Zealand.

Approach

The central concern of this thesis is the ways in which agricultural change, as a manifestation of broader socio-economic restructuring, is influencing the changing nature of rural communities as expressed and interpreted by people in a place-specific community. In other words, this study intends to investigate the nature of 'community' that they were subscribing to, at the time of the field study, by considering how people living in a place-specific community were responding to these broad changes.

This study then, is essentially asking the question of whether agricultural change, as manifestation of broader socio-economic restructuring, influences the changing nature of rural communities, and if so, how? And more specifically, is asking whether the nature of local discourses and their circulation, necessarily implies a reshaping of social life for people living in a case specific community.

The research looks at the way rural dwellers construct their ideas about 'community', and uses a qualitative research approach to enable people living in, or connected to that community, to tell their stories about the lived patterns of rural life and social struggles, as they understand them. It then draws on Ruth Liepins' (2000) conceptual framework, as a tool of analysis for reading 'community' as both a material and discursive phenomenon of social connection and diversity. This conceptual framework enables us to trace the meanings, practices and spaces of 'community' that were expressed in people's oral narratives, and that contribute to the shape and articulation of this community. It then considers the changing nature of the 'community' that people were subscribing to, by considering the ways each of these elements reinforced

or contradicted each other, thereby showing the notion of 'community' to be a fluid, rather than a static phenomenon.

The main tool used in this study of rural dweller's constructions of 'community' is their Conversations – their everyday talk. Using 'ordinary' people's everyday talk as the main source of information for the study was partly in response to Cloke's challenge to give "due emphasis" to 'ordinary' people's discourses for adding to our understanding of 'the messiness' of rural space (Cloke, 1997:371-2). Similarly, conversations are more likely to express the complexity of community life. It is through this tool then, that explanations for the diverse ways that people construct and reconstruct ideas about 'community' can be traced.

These conversations formed the corpus of texts for explanations about 'community'. They also made it possible to identify the discursive dimensions of the change shaping a particular rural community, uncover the range of ideas connected to the notion of 'community', and trace the connections between the discourses used, and wider discourses in circulation which will be all contributory factors to the way a particular community is expressed.

This study then, endeavours to bring together two streams of influence that both play a part in the shaping the way in which a community is materially and culturally expressed: the specific biophysical, socio-economic and political *contexts* that a community exists within, and the *people* involved and influential in its construction.

Research Context

As Joseph and Chalmers (1998) suggest, communities located in geographical places are the context in which people experience and respond to change. It is within this micro context then, that researchers need go to, if they want to hear the stories of the people in their geographical setting. On the other hand, rural communities do not exist in a vacuum: the cumulative socio-economic and political and environmental conditions occurring at various spatial levels are also influential forces. These dual contexts must be considered, so that the macro context, that often ignores the micro reality of people, and the micro context, that produces non-generalisable vignettes of

human experience, is blended to bring greater understanding of the complexities involved in articulating the notion of ‘community’.

Research Focus

The focus of this research has been to assess the relationship between agricultural changes as a manifestation of broader socio-economic change, and the shape of ‘community’ that people in a place-specific community were subscribing to.

To achieve this, the social, economic and relational features shaping the contextual ground of the Lower Maitara Valley, a place-based community in Southland, New Zealand had to be considered. Conjointly, the discourses of people living in, or connected to the Valley were assessed, and from these two analyses it was possible to trace the changing nature of the notion ‘community’ that people of the Lower Maitara Valley were subscribing to at the time of the field study.

While the Lower Maitara Valley is a place-specific community, ‘community’ can also viewed as a conceptual category and a site for viewing processes and negotiations over the sense of the term.

Thesis Chapters

Chapter Two focuses on the notion of ‘community’. It discusses the representations of the idealised past, then traces the evolution of the terms ‘rural’ and ‘community’ as theoretical constructs. It then considers recent approaches, followed by an explanation of the conceptual framework used for reading both the tangible and intangible aspects of community.

The Third Chapter provides insights into the forces of change by tracing the social, economic, political and demographic changes at work in agriculture and rural communities in New Zealand since 1945. This objective account of change provides a broad sweep of the external conditions contributing to the shape of the Lower Maitara Valley.

In Chapter Four I offer an overview of the regional context, highlighting the temporal and locational particularities of the Lower Mataura Valley as well as the social, economic and relational features contributing to the dynamics at work within this place, in order to establish a sense of linkage to the fieldwork responses for the reader.

Chapter Five outlines appropriate approaches in qualitative research for an 'insider', and the process involved in adapting methodologies suitable to the local situation. An explanation of the principles behind Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) as a research technique are given, followed by a description of the methods used for data collection and data analysis.

Chapter Six attempts to report the contemporary articulation of the notion of 'community' as constructed by people living in, or linked to the Lower Mataura Valley.

Finally, Chapter Seven provides a summary concerning agricultural change and the changing nature of 'community' that people in the Lower Mataura Valley were subscribing to, and implications for future studies on communities.

CHAPTER TWO

NEW ZEALAND RURAL COMMUNITIES: PAST AND PRESENT

This chapter forms a theoretical background to the concept of 'rural communities'. Its purpose is to link people, who are central to the construction of 'community' to chapter three, which provides the broader political and economic conditions affecting rural change, to chapter 6, which reflect a rural community's responses to its present context.

The first section begins with a depiction of the idealised rural community, and the way the contemporary politics of change are encroaching on this model. The aim is to provide an account of a number of assumptions, which have developed and persisted over time in regards to traditional rural communities.

The next section reviews earlier approaches to rural communities as a theoretical construct. It contends that the past use of this term has not been helpful in unmasking the heterogeneity and politics of life that shape everyday social practices within rural communities.

The final section recognises the challenges and opportunities provided by wider social theory to address the diverse and changing nature of contemporary rural communities. It then presents a conceptual framework for analysing 'communities'. This firstly recognises the need to account for the context and people involved in maintaining and contesting 'community', and secondly, it uses meanings, practices, and spaces and structures through which 'community' is articulated and negotiated as themes of analysis for the specific case study in rural Southland.

NEW ZEALAND RURAL COMMUNITIES: THE IDEALISED PAST

The idealised rural community evokes a variety of images of the 'good old days', romanticizing how things were or might have been, highlighting, for example, simplicity, that sense of connectedness, particularly by people whose traditions are perceived to be under threat by outside influences. Some of these ideas are flawed; nonetheless, they represent a distinctive image of rurality that is still spoken of by people in this study.

Historically, the 'ideal' of rural communities has been portrayed as 'tight-knit' communities that 'would hold together through thick and thin'. It was viewed as a source of identity and stability for its members because of the strong interdependencies based on kinship networks, shared meaning and mutual co-operation that were woven together to form the social fabric of the community (Day, 1998:95; Gilling, 1997). Therefore, relationships were presumed to be harmonious, and non-hierarchical within and between people in this 'ideal' (Harrington, 1997:30). Fairburn (1989), in his study of the early New Zealand society, tried to account for this sense of cohesiveness, and suggested it may have been due to populations being small and settlements being geographically isolated, giving folk no choice but to conform and socialise with other locals (1989:158).

Not only was social cohesion a hallmark of this model, but also it portrayed the idea of 'there are no snobs here', rather than disclose the reality of differentiation amongst the community, for instance, on grounds of gender, class or ethnicity. This model of egalitarianism believed everybody was socially equal, which created that sense of solidarity, rather than to differentiate between equality as an ideal, or as rhetoric (Cohen, 1985:33). Consedine (1989) believes this egalitarian myth had its roots in the social levelling that came from the practical difficulties when the settlers came to work the land. However, Oxley points out that "the egalitarian even needs to have a few snobs ...in sight; ...if he could not find them he would have to invent them" (cited in Pearson & Thorn, 1983:239). This study will show that despite considerable social inequalities that exist and the excluding that occurs within, these inequalities were not generally disruptive to community life - they were assumed to be part of the local

social fabric of the community. Disruptions come though, from the perceived threats to community solidarity from outside.

In addition to a sense of equality within this model, members often forged common bonds through regular face-to-face contact, whether at the local store, church, school or community functions, which implied that communities were linked to a particular place or location (Harvey, 1996:310). Within this place, 'everybody knew everybody else' was to be expected because of overlapping friendships and family networks, but it was also reinforced in the course of the mundane social activities like local gossip, jokes, shared knowledge of genealogies within the local community. In effect, maintaining these local interconnections, histories and local knowledge of past events, it deepened their sense of ties to others and affirmed that sense of collective local identity (Pickering, 1990). In Olssen's account of rural life in New Zealand, he alludes to this notion when he comments of how "country people shared the same aspirations, the same values, belonged to the same clubs, sent their children to the same schools, ...and belonged to the same church"(1992:256).

Although, for this collective identity to have any validity, required a degree of sameness in character, and in doing so, it assumed difference to other groups or cultures. Therefore, in circumstances of perceived threat to their identity, members would place other groups, ideologies and practices on the periphery of their own. The rhetorical devices of stereotyping and labelling were the common means of dealing with such threats (Pickering, 1990; Young, 1990). For example, terms such as 'townies', 'transients', or 'newcomers' were common distinctions made by the established group. In this sense, the distinctions expressed in the various labelling, provided insights into the perceived threats and worldviews held.

One can see here that sustaining this distinction depended on forms of demarcation: 'us' and 'them', 'insider' and 'outsider'. In other words, locals would demarcate their own distinctive identity in favourable terms relative to 'others' who they perceived were inferior to them, or at least different (Novitz, 1989:283). Consequently, 'non locals' never made the transition to being fully accepted as 'locals' within this model (Cant, 1989:15). Relph (1976) calls those belonging to such a collectivity as 'existential insiders'. Existential insiders take-for-granted they were a fully accepted

part of the 'community' as distinct from 'outsiders'. They were accepted because they had the hallmark of belonging, which inferred they were 'born and bred there' (1976:50). As one person commented, "it's a very comfortable feeling to know we belong here" (Interview 25).

On the other hand, Hatch (1992) found in his study of a small New Zealand farming community that 'insiders' have an internal ranking system of acceptability, centred around conforming to certain valued social criteria of respectability such as: 'being a good sort', 'being a conscientious and hardworking' and 'being loyal to the local community', which was also the case for this particular study. However, he noted that social respectability could be defined in different terms between places.

Finally, rural dwellers were parochial. They prided themselves in retaining traditional values, and roles, whether about the family, farm or community, or for ideas about themselves and their place in New Zealand. They knew what was right and wrong, everybody knew where they stood, there was a social order, it was a safe place, it was uncomplicated (Gilling, 1997:21-2). The family was accepted as a patriarchal institution under the leadership of the male: men and women had their defined roles, men in 'productive' work, women in 'reproductive' and domestic work; men were the breadwinners, women were dependent on men's earnings (Pearson & Thorn, 1983:239; Phillips, 1996:22; Little, 1997). Likewise, 'everyone' was expected to contribute to the local community and play a part in community affairs, whether it was to serve on local committees, participate in the working bees, assist with school events or help the neighbours out when needed as a means of helping to preserve the traditional community (Little, 1997:206). Although, as one person pointed out in the field study, that "people don't realize how hard a few people work to make the community hang together"(Interview 6).

Clearly, this construction of the 'ideal' community has been rooted in sets of assumptions, social expectations and values about community life defined in terms of those who dominated the positions of power within the community (Pickering, 1991:21). According to Day (1998), these social traditions ascribed to rural areas were and are usually viewed as inherently conservative and impervious to change.

Forces against the idealised community

The persistence of a way of life in rural communities co-exists in tension with contemporary social processes of change and its associated emerging culture occurring on a broader scale, from outside the idealised community. For instance, there is an increasing dominance of multinational companies, which are characterised by capital investment beyond a nations border. It could be argued that such companies view local communities as little more than production sites, rather than as a social collective (Pickering, 1990:46). Just one such example has been the expanding afforestation of farmland in Northland, where United States companies now dominate ownership. For the locals, they refer to this development process as contributing to a sense of 'loss of community' for them (Scott et al, 2000; Le Heron & Pawson, 1996). This example in Northland could be attributed to the movement towards a borderless global economy where the powers of trans-national corporations, who are either vertically or horizontally¹ linked into communications, are ever increasing, which directly contests the distinctive identity of the idealised rural community (Pickering, 1990).

Also, it could be argued that advances in communication technology and transportation allow people to maintain diverse relationships no longer based on residential proximity. As Joseph and Chalmers (1998) found in their study of rural change in Tirau, people had become increasingly mobile and bonds of deep-seated attachment to their community were overruled by the need to locate to fulfil the standard needs for work and education elsewhere. The idealised community, in this view, has lost its continuity, in terms of the social relationships that once depended on the common experience of living and working together.

Another process that could be viewed as threatening their social continuity has been the external cultural infiltration by in-migration. New comers, with new ideas and skills can generate resistance, as local people feel their local distinction is denied or the balance has been upset (Smith & Krannich, 2000). This process was voiced by one 'local' in this study who said "These new families (who have converted farms to dairy units) have also brought a new mindset which is to work hard, ... make a profit, to make something for themselves and not so much for social interaction" (Interview 4).

Taken together, these social changes could be said to homogenise and disregard the distinctive way of life and social values of traditional rural communities (Pickering, 1990; Day, 1998). Although, it could be countered by the fact that these social processes are to a large extent experienced in common with their urban counterparts.

This portrayal of the homogenising process that are taking place, give the impression that a culture can be manipulated from the outside. Although, this conclusion underplays the fact that culture is an evolving process that is influenced by many complex interactions within and between people (Day, 1998). But to those who hold onto their cultural heritage, perhaps it is unsurprising that the unfamiliar terrain of the emerging culture is perceived as the enemy and resistance is a natural response to the threat of change.

These issues bring to mind the reality of how community changes can involve both political dimensions and a contesting of cultural borders and differences, as aspects of contemporary social processes of change associated with rural communities (Liepins, 2000:28).

RURAL COMMUNITIES: PAST APPROACHES

Defining 'rural'

Conventionally, rural has been used and accepted in both academic and lay discourse as having conceptual validity and empirical reality. Typically, discourses tended to be centred on issues of land use and population density (Scott et al, 2000). Yet, rural or rurality have dogged definitional attempts for at least 70 years. In fact, the term has been dismissed as a chaotic concept, and has been contested in terms of identifying its defining criteria (Halfacree, 1993), and more recently, it has been referred to having "a multiplicity of meanings" (Pratt, 1996:69).

Officially, each nation has its own definition of rural and urban (Robinson, 1990). In New Zealand, the Department of Statistics defines rural as that part of the population living outside towns and cities of 1000 or more people. In this case, rural was used as a

¹ Vertical relationships are those institutional links that go beyond the borders of a locality in contrast to horizontal relations, which refer to those within (Murdoch & Day, 1993).

spatial concept, so does not distinguish groups in the rural sector. Nor, as Cant (1989) discovered do towns, such as Gore or Rangiora perceive themselves as 'urban' (if the population was between five thousand and ten thousand), because of the strong links to the surrounding rural areas. Although, this particular study area comes under the official category of 'rural'.

The difficulties in defining rural have not prevented a wide variety of definitions being employed. According to White, for example, rural areas were "...dominated by open countryside, extensive land use and low population densities" (1986:413). On the other hand, Robinson developed three categories for readings of 'rural': a socio-cultural, ecological or occupational sphere distinct from 'urban' (Robinson, 1990:13).

However, 'rural' as a socio-cultural definition presents a range of difficulties. The socio-cultural definition assumed clear differences in behaviour and attitude to urban, and assumed (low) population density affected these characteristics. Early studies of rural communities represented a distinction between the two extremes: urban was typically characterised as being dynamic, unstable and impersonal, while rural was portrayed as stable, integrated and face-to-face communities (Robinson, 1990). Table 1 covers the principle dichotomies portrayed in this rural/urban distinction. Although, Pahl (1966) recognised there was no simple dichotomy. In fact, many components of rural culture were likely to differ little from urban culture; for example, rural people face similar issues and concerns as urban residents.

Table 1. Some urban/rural dichotomies

Author	Urban category	Non-urban category
Becker	Secular	Sacred
Durkheim	Organic solidarity	Mechanical solidarity
Maine	Contract	Status
Redfield	Urban	Folk
Tonnies	<i>Gesellschaft</i>	<i>Gemeinschaft</i>
Weber	Rational	Traditional

Source: cited in (Halfacree, 1993:25)

To define 'rural' as ecological is also problematic. This approach views rural as an environmental setting. This approach assumes the existence of rurality, and instead, concentrates on empirical descriptions of the changing rural conditions. Take, for example, Cloke's index of rurality that is based on multiple socio-economic indicators as a means of specifying rural areas as shown in Table 2. Despite the care taken over the typologies, these categorizations obscure the structure of social relations, and the dynamic between 'rural' as a place where people live, work and interact, furthermore, it neglects to include qualitative data (Robinson, 1990; Halfacree, 1993). It appears that the everyday experiences and issues of rural dwellers and various occupational groups have been of little concern (Jones, 1995).

Table 2. The variables used in Cloke's 'Index of Rurality'

Variable	Characteristics
	In 'rural' areas
Population per acre	Low
% change in population 1951-61, 1961-71	Decrease
% total population: over 65 years	High
% total population: male 15-45 years	Low
% total population: female 15-45 years	Low
Occupancy rate: % population at 1.5 per room	Low
Households per dwelling	Low
% households with exclusive use of:	
(a) Hot water (b) Fixed bath (c) Inside W.C.	High
% in socio-economic groups: 13/14 farmers	High
% in socio-economic groups: 15 farm workers	High
% residents in employment working outside the rural district	Low
% population resident for < 5 years	Low
% population mover out in the last year	Low
% in- /out-migration	Low
Distance from nearest urban centre of 50,000	High
Distance from nearest urban centre of 100,000	High
Distance from nearest urban centre of 200,000	High

Source: cited in (Robinson, 1990:15)

'Rural' as an occupational category also has difficulties, as traditional land use is diversified, as farmers also engage in other off-farm activities, and rural areas close to cities have become commuter territory. Fulltime farmers (compared with 'Queen Street' farmers) are obviously more likely to be found in rural areas than anywhere else. However, this is not an effective determining variable as increasing numbers of farmers work elsewhere to support the farm. Besides, many occupations can take place in urban and rural settings. With communication technology now available for home use, such as computers, many professional occupations thought of as 'urban' can now take place elsewhere (Robinson, 1990:14).

There is no clear resolution, other than devolvement of rural to a variable in research rather than an object of study. This thesis affirms the view taken by Halfacree, who concludes his review by suggesting that, the "quest for any single, all-embracing definition of the rural is neither desirable or feasible"(1993:34).

Defining 'communities'

Definitions of 'communities' vary. They mean different things to different people. Williams (1983) established that 'community' has been in the English language since the 14th century, its meanings ranging from the common people, an organised society, the people of a locality, holding something in common, a sense of common identity. For Jones (1995), in her study on rural community development, she was "... implying a locality, a geographically defined place where people interact." But she continues by implying that 'community' means something more. "Community is a dynamic interplay of historic processes and complex relationships, acted out in environments"(1995:7). Alternatively, Hall considers another dimension to the concept 'community' and suggests that rural community was something, which existed more clearly in our minds and imaginations than it does out there on the ground. (cited in Cant, 1989:15). In short, whether the term 'community' is used in discourse, the idea does not result in a neat understanding, other than to suggest it involves people.

But 'community', as an ideology, remains alive and has the power to evoke imagery and suggestion both in everyday language and in measured speech of academics and politicians. Plant et al (1980) saw 'community' as an elusive concept. If it was elusive

it was never the less, imbued with meaning. They believed this latitude was likely to create ambiguity and play a valuable role, particularly within the realm of political discourse. Plant argued: "... there was something explicable and indeed predictable about this ambiguity. It will be pointed out that beneath [the concept] ... are important ideological undertones ... the term is used to give an air of consensus to social policy, a spurious consensus that evaporates once the inherently immature nature of the concept is realised" (Plant, 1974: 205).

Although, 'community' does have a long heritage as a focus of research in rural areas, as far back as the 1930's (Murdoch & Pratt, 1993), oscillating between being the central focus of analysis, to having a minimalist role. Harper (1989) has noted how rural geography, sociology and anthropology have long included community studies as a significant research area. Sometimes these were positivistic² accounts of settlements and their services or resources (Phillips, 1998), while more frequently academic literature focused on the social relations of communities using either structural-functional or ethnographic approaches (e.g. Dempsey, 1990; Scott et al., 2000). Each approach has treated the notion of 'community' with a particular focus in mind, but each is not without its limitations (Liepins, 2000:24).

According to Harper (1989), early community studies were influenced by the structural-functional approach, and more importantly, were instrumental in portraying rural communities as stable, homogenous, self-sustaining entities with observable characteristics and clear functions (1989:161). Their emphasis on kinship and customs were frequently presented without explanation and thereby naturalized as an object of study (Phillips, 1998:128). For example, Arensburg and Kimball's (1940) study of an Irish community concluded that country people had distinctive characteristics and kinship networks unlike those found in urban dwellers. Further studies of this kind by Williams (1956) and Rees (1950), recognized specific forms of social organization in rural communities and believed they were threatened by 'urban', or 'modern' processes of change (cited in Harper, 1989:162). In other words, patterns of development were

² Positivistic accounts seek to specify using theoretical claims how the world in general operates Phillips, 1998:126).

seen to be synonymous with urbanization (usually characterised by modernisation³), and by inference; 'modernity' and 'community' were viewed as diametrically apposed to the other (Wright, 1992:200). Essentially, studies adopting this structural-functional approach used the concept 'community' as a term representing a particular social system, one generally fixed in terms of its structure and function.

This demarcation between the social construction of 'rural' and 'urban' were expressed in terms of what Tonnies (1955) identified as '*gemeinschaft*' or 'community' and '*gesellschaft*' or 'society': the former related to "close human relationships developed through kinship... common habitat and ... co-operation and co-ordinated action for common good", while the latter referred to "impersonal ties and relationships based on formal exchange and contract" (Harper, 1989:162-3). *Gemeinschaft* has, overtime come to represent good and desirable qualities and *gesellschaft* as its antithesis.

However, these early studies have not been without criticisms. Phillips (1998) contends that studies based on this dichotomy tend to restrict their line of inquiry by limiting the scope of research to empirical description. According to Cloke and Little (1997), these early accounts were normally represented through the eyes of the white, and male middleclass researchers, who served to hide the great diversity in social relations within a community. And more generally, Murdoch and Day contended that these early studies "projected a powerful image of...[a] unified social whole, within which all differences tended to be subordinated to a ... shared way of life" (cited in Phillips, 1998:131). Therefore, whatever validity the concept might once have possessed was empirically obsolete, since contemporary patterns social fragmentation and mobility no longer reflected this 'unified social whole'. Young (1990) is equally critical of community studies on a number of accounts. Firstly, she notes that 'community' was treated as a stable, homogenous object of social research; secondly, she questions the implication that face-to-face relations were more 'pure' and 'authentic' than social relations mediated across time and distance, even though alienation was evident in such face-to-face communities; thirdly, she queries the idea that 'communities' were absent of self interest and competition (qualities that were alleged to be apparent in its polar

3 Modernisation was seen to have two aspects: economic modernisation revolved around ideas of progress from simple to complex technology and social aspects were conceived as changing from a simple, face-to-face relationships to a complex society with differentiated roles (Smelser, 1966:119-20).

opposite (society)), and finally, she contends that ‘communities’ were also capable of generating borders, dichotomies and exclusion (1990:301).

In contrast, the second approach to ‘community’ was linked with ethnographies of communities, which were not so much interested in their social structures, but how people expressed their way of life in their own terms. This approach was based on an interpretative model, which was literally writing about folks and their community. Essentially, the focus of study was not so much looking for generalities and norms, as in the structural-functionalist approach, but exploring how people experience and express their differences from others, and to see how these aggregate to express the reality of ‘community’ for them (Phillips, 1998:13; Harper, 1989:167). For example, in Cohen’s work in *Belonging: Identity and Social Organisation in British Rural Cultures* (1982), he considers a range of different communities and explores their differences: the sentiment and expression of distinctiveness within and among communities.

According to Phillips (1998), while ethnographies may appear to distance themselves from the culture encapsulated in the notions of *gemeinschaft*, some shared similar views on rural communities, for instance, the threat from modernisation. As Cohen explains, this “persistent ‘production’ of culture... becomes an essential bulwark against the cultural imperialism of the political and economic centres”(1982:6). Here, Cohen acknowledges this threat, but went further to explain the political rationale behind these changes, unlike early community studies, which often viewed the process as an inevitable outcome of development (Phillips, 1998:131). They also shared in common the idea that a fixed entity (‘community’) was presumed to exist, which could be found and described ethnographically (e.g. Scott et al, 2000; Salamon & Tornatore, 1994). Moreover, Phillips criticises Cohen’s use of the term ‘indigenous views’ (1982:2), and sees it not unlike ideas of authenticity, as in Tönnies’ account of *gemeinschaft*, which then raises problems of attributing authenticity to the concept ‘community’ (1998:131).

Concern over these problems directed community studies into a background position in rural research (Liepins, 2000). Instead, other perspectives with a different research focus, such as, the political economy approach which linked rural change to the sphere of agricultural production (Murdoch & Pratt, 1993:418), or a socio-political approach

that analyses peoples responses to change in a particular place (e.g. Naples, 1994), or alternatively, adopting a locality studies approach, that analyses local responses to the impacts of macro-level processes (e.g. Wilson, 1995), turned away from 'community' as an object of study.

But how we come to know a rural community's response to change, particularly when it encompasses diverse outcomes of restructuring and long-term changes? Murdoch and Pratt point out that it is the analytical frameworks that determine what is seen and not seen in research inquiries (1993:424).

NEW IDEAS FOR COMMUNITY AS A THEORETICAL CONSTRUCT

Because of the emphasis in this thesis on identifying how people's lives are expressed both in cultural and material ways in the context of processes of change, the opportunities provided by cultural theory and poststructural developments are of particular interest. These writings provide a window for looking beyond the grand theories of development and their universal explanations; to a means of identifying the multi-layers of meaning to the way rural life is expressed, while also investigating the lived experience (practices) of rural life.

Recent writings influenced by cultural theories have brought new insights into the theorisation of 'communities'. The work of Pickering, for example, acknowledges the difficulties of dealing with the conception of culture constituting a 'whole way of life' (1991:3). Investigation of the signifying practices (or ways of doing things), which produce sense and meaning to individuals are seen as a more accessible way of dealing with culture. In addition, it can be assumed that these signifying practices are not necessarily fixed, rather, they are rooted in the realities people experience over time, or as Morgan suggests, "we are observing an evolved form of social practice that has been influenced by ...people, events [and] situations" (cited in Day, 1998:94). This study has not tried to analyse a 'whole way of life' as an objective fact, rather it has been the peoples different perceptions of a 'whole way of life' based on practices and changing practices where aspects of 'community' can be recognised and seen as maintained or contested that have been researched

Other rural studies taking a cultural turn have focused on texts, multiple knowledges, and discourses to express rurality (Smith, 1993; Jones, 1995; Halfacree, 1993; Crouch, 1992). Smith (1993) suggests that through viewing landscapes and images as texts, they can for example, represent a 'signifier of a reverie', as this comment from the study demonstrates: "school was the heart of the district, when you took that away, you took out the heart, ... it's never been the same since"(Interview 6); or a place of political struggle (1993:81), or texts can also be exclusionary, because they cannot be easily shared with 'outsiders' (Harvey, 1996:305).

Likewise, Jones (1995) points out that diverse discourses have shaped our understanding of the rural. Her study focused on the knowledges that are produced by these different discourses, and highlights the complexity and contradiction over meanings that can occur. She documents how these knowledges originate from different "types" of discourse⁴ (e.g., academic, professional, popular or lay). She challenges the truths portrayed about 'the rural', which have been defined by a small group of 'experts' (white male European academics), and used to dominate and silence any other voices from the rural community. To illustrate this point, Jones argued that priorities differ between academic discourses which "try to be systematic, rational, and complete in their nature", while lay discourses tend to be "shifting pragmatic, contingent, partial forms, [and] are uniquely person, group and place based"(1995:40). Foucault recognised the connection between discourse, knowledge and power, and argues that such knowledges are neither neutral nor equivalent (Foucault, 1980:93). Investigations into different knowledges concerning agriculture, for example, show the privileging of scientific discourse of agriculture (Kloppenburger, 1991) over lay discourses.

Halfacree (1993), on the other hand, argues for a conceptualisation of rurality as a social representation in which people use synonyms, consisting of "words and concepts understood and used by people in everyday talk"(1993:29) for defining 'the rural'. Harvey has concerns over exclusively using only representations as a determinant of social life for it risks not "representing ... reality, including the differences and

⁴ Discourse is commonly defined in terms of language use and the ways in which we communicate with one another, which connects ideologies and distinctive practices, which are relevant and meaningful to

commonalities that exist within it" (cited in Phillips, 1998:47). Although, Halfacree (1993) does suggest there is much to gain from recognizing the linkage between discourses and exploring the political processes by which these discourses are created, including the sets of assumptions, expectations and values which may in turn unveil the differences that exist. As Murdoch and Pratt put it: "Some 'rural experiences'... work powerfully to subsume others"(1993:425), which suggests there is a need to pay attention to the group level variations. Pratt (1996) went further to highlight that understanding ideas expressed in discourse are key to gaining insights and understanding about social struggle and transformation.

Together, these writers provide examples of how ideas about 'community' may be viewed as sets of meanings. They have also shown how 'community' may be viewed as a site of contested meaning, or considered as a text, or how different knowledges present different priorities about 'community' (Liepins, 2000:27).

According to Pickering (1991), investigations should concern themselves with everyday culture⁵ in particular situations. In other words, investigations should take place in particular local contexts, which define the identity of specific social groups, and where the identity of specific social groups have a sense of inclusion within a socially defined group. This suggests boundaries are involved. Drawing on poststructural ideas, which acknowledges the heterogeneity in social life, serves to highlight the need to challenge both the definitions and boundary lines for inclusion to define the identity of a social group (Phillips, 1998:43). On one hand, the delineation of boundary lines may mean different things; they could be territorial or social, for instance, they could be religious or ethnic, or some other boundary that encapsulates a shared identity. On the other hand, the definition for inclusion raises questions on how the 'we' (those included in the socially defined group) see the world may also determine how the 'other' will be positioned in that world, and thereby express something of the various 'truths' circulating in relation to the politics of location and

others and ourselves. Discourse is also a process, in that there are contested constructs and interpretations in circulations (Jones, 1995:36).

⁵ "Culture collects together those pattern of action and interaction that characterise groups of people, as well as those values, systems of belief and bodies of knowledge which guide and regulate their interaction" (Norvitz 1989:4).

position⁶. But to assume that those included in the 'other' are an homogeneous group downplays the diversity of identities that exists (Smith & Katz, 1993). Furthermore, to assume the identity of individuals in a specific group are all the same, neglects to consider how individuals may be attached to multiple groups or networks within and beyond a given place. These ideas suggest that 'community' could be approached as social collective accommodating both diverse and shared opinions and identities (Liepins, 2000:27).

Recent studies focusing on 'community' have linked 'community' with a site. They have commented on how it is a site where struggles over class tensions and cultural clashes have been contested (Smith & Krannich, 2000; Salamon & Tornatore, 1994). Following Agnew (1993), 'community' points to a site of social scale (which refers to a spatial level of local, national or global) and where social processes take place, whether that is celebrations or everyday interactions between individuals and groups, and that this site is sometimes used synonymously with the term place, as the context of social relations. In this sense, places are not bounded geographical units; rather they are 'meeting places' of networks of social relations that will contain difference and conflict (Massey, 1994:120). Harvey also points to the intertwining of the two terms 'community' and 'place', and adds, "places acquire... much of their distinctive character from the collective activities of people who dwell there" (1996:310).

Although drawing from Mol and Law (1994), 'community' could also involve a spatial dimension. They contend the rural can be conceptualised as space, comprising of different spaces like in the traditional approach to rural regions, where "space is exclusive. Neat divisions, no overlap... each space is located at one side of a boundary. It is thus that an 'inside' and 'outside' are created"(1994:647). Although, regions fail to consider how relationships are developed over distances. Instead, they believe the concept of networks better captures the spatial sphere of activity and social connection in which relationships occur. Massey refers to this configuration as a "complex web of relations of domination and subordination, of solidarity and co-operation" (1993:156). This suggests spaces can be visualized both as physical sites and settings for social

⁶ Here position can take on two meanings; one refers to the multiple roles that a person can speak from, for example, as a wife, teacher and member of Rural Women, the other refers to a person's particular

interaction in which people connect in 'community'. Together, space, place and identity are interwoven to shape the unique character of 'community' (Liepins, 2000:27).

In sum, this section has gathered ideas from recent social thought that have highlighted the multiple meanings and social processes of interaction that can give rise to different expressions of the way rural life could be lived out and/or contested. These developments create new opportunities for the re-conceptualisation of the way 'communities' can be constructed, which catches both the character and dynamics of a rural community.

A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR COMMUNITY

Acknowledging the opportunities from wider social theory, which uncover the potentially diverse nature of contemporary rural communities, this section now outlines a framework to address both the cultural and material dimensions to the way a territorial⁷ community can be conceptualised. This is based on the work of Ruth Liepins (2000:29-32).

The Context of 'Community'

The framework summarised graphically in Fig. 1 (refer to page 26), firstly views 'community' as a social construct about human interaction and communication, encompassing the cultural, material and political aspects of life. This construct is context specific, given that the combination of geographic, social, economic and political conditions will all play a part in shaping the way a community is expressed within a particular time and place. Turning to Fig. 1, the background weave is used to depict the particular timeframe and locally specific context. In this case, these specifics are addressed in chapter four.

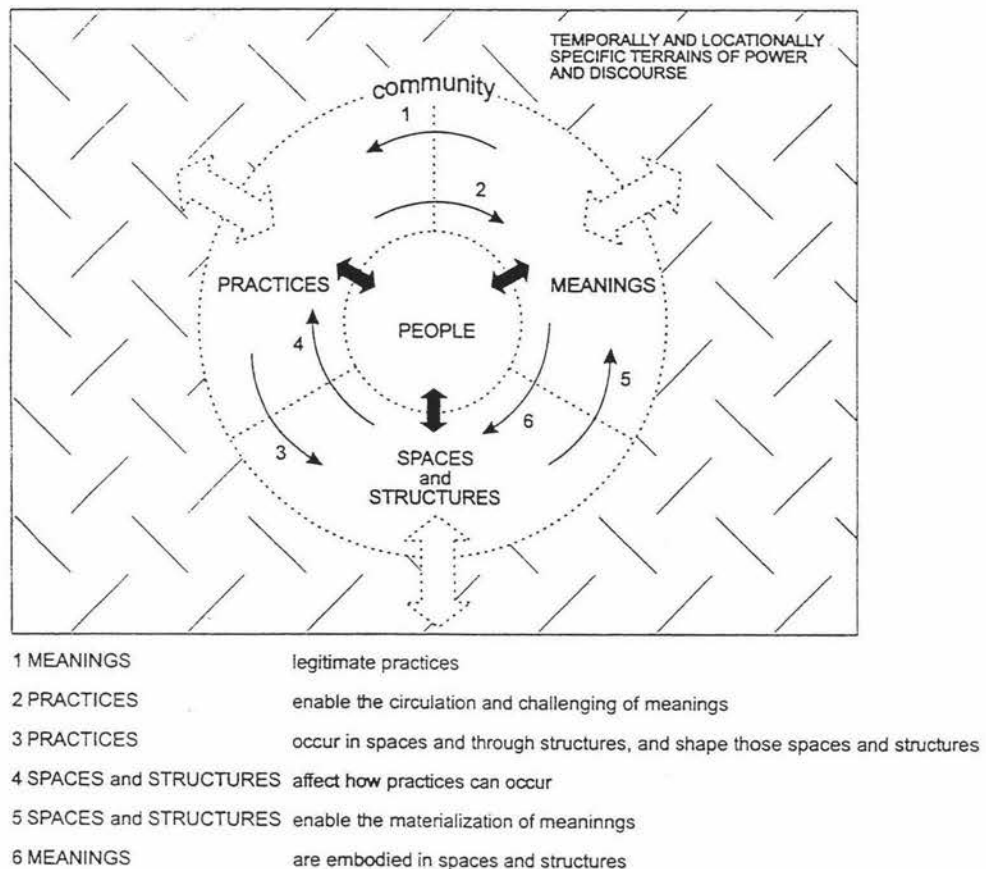
Obviously, there are various influences shaping the way a community is expressed. Of particular interest are the social formations of power, the discourses, and the way key

worldview, which can construct a certain image of the same place and present a different perspective from that of another persons standpoint (Harvey, 1996:283).

⁷ This conceptualisation of community is also applicable to communities of interest, for example, religious or ethnic communities that are formed over distance and multiple places (Liepins, 2000:28).

‘truths’ or ideas are constructed, expressed and circulated to colour one understanding of ‘community’. For example, the neo-liberal discourse adopted by the 1984 Labour Government has influenced the culture of farming where their ideologies about efficiency and personal responsibility have filtered into the priorities of farming shifting from being a lifestyle, to “farm business as paramount”(Blunden, et al., 1996:32).

Figure 1. A conceptual summary of ‘Community’



Source: Liepins (2000:327)

The People who make ‘Community’

People as a collective are central to the construction of ‘community’. It is also important to note, that although people may hold a central position inside the community, as represented in the figure, that it is also possible for people within the community, to be members of other networks beyond the community in question, or,

for the reverse to apply, for constructing and modifying understandings of 'community'. Take for example, the influences of policy makers whose decisions on resource distribution within a local community convey certain expectations of 'communities' through their policies.

Essentially, the population involved in the study should not just be treated as an insider/outsider dichotomy, rather, they should be treated as diverse individuals who have multiple roles; individuals, who are have allegiances and degrees of involvement with various groups, classes or social networks. These multiple roles mean that individuals have the potential to influence, challenge, or maintain ideas and practices of community at a given place and at a given time. While it is important to acknowledge potential diversity amongst people, commonalities shared within a particular study should not be obscured in the process.

The way people participate in or challenge the notion of 'community', are represented by the three bold arrows radiating out from the respective sectors. These three aspects of 'community', that is the meanings, practices, and spaces and structures, represent objects and processes⁸ from which readings of 'community' can be created. Different people will influence and be affected by these processes, just as interaction between these elements will mutually constitute and at times challenge each other. The six processes that are numbered inside the figure show this interaction.

Meanings about 'Community'

To discover the situated meanings of 'community', explorations should consider the various ways people construct meanings about their connectedness to 'community', and whether they are shared or contested meanings. This can be achieved by giving attention to the everyday conversations and key texts that communicate the widely held beliefs, shared interests and expressions of social connection within the study area.

⁸ The influence of Harvey's dialectic framework of social processes expresses this interrelationship and flow between meanings, practices and spaces. He recognizes that concurrently, 'moments' of social processes (e.g. moments of discourse, power relations, beliefs, social relations, social institutions and material practices) form 'permanences', or a particular shape in the 'social and material world around us' and that these processes are mutually constitutive involving the possibilities for translation, heterogeneity or contestation between different 'moments'. (Harvey, 1996:77-83).

Classic community studies sought to project a powerful image of a unified whole in their analysis, emphasising the commonality of discourse, practices and understandings (Phillips, 1998; Harvey, 1996:311). Rather, there needs to be sensitivity to the diverse voices which people take 'community' to be. Wright calls for an emphasis on people's different ideas about their social relations and their contrasting meanings of 'community' (1992:215). Recent studies within Australia and New Zealand rural communities demonstrated that ideas revolving around rural landscape, agriculture and diversity of social groups all contributed to shaping the identity of a given rural locality (Liepins, 2000:331).

In effect, 'community' as an expression of shared ideas, experiences and interests provides a conceptual object of study. This calls for a sensitive use of discourse analysis to uncover the multiple meanings and constructions conveyed in the term 'community'. Similarly, 'community' may be charted as a term pointing to broader 'truths' and power relations that are connected to the term. Note how the dominant neo-liberal discourse influenced New Zealand society including the farming communities (Cloke, 1996:318). Thus, discourse analysis aims to show the ways in which meanings of 'community' are constructed, maintained or contested by the people in this study.

Identifying Practices of 'Community'

The second set of processes that can shape the conceptualisation and reading of 'community' are based on a range of practices or activities that people participate in. While it maybe true that sets of meaning create a sense of awareness about the identity or features of a locality, these understandings would remain static, except for when they are enlivened by their connection to people, practices and institutions across a community. In effect, practices represent people's lived-out expression of, and understanding about 'community'. Practices provide a means of examining 'community' as a set of processes, which are performed and contested. They will also indicate how the practices contribute to maintaining or changing the social fabric of a community.

Such practices of community include the spectrum of both formal and informal ways in which people participate in various activities as a means of being together; these

include the social, economic and political dimensions of their lives. For example, connection can occur through the circulation of ideas or memories at meetings, shopping, at service groups, or at rituals and annual events. These are ways in which community practices are lived-out. Some of these practices will not necessarily be neutral, but will highlight the material and cultural ways in which meanings of 'community' are expressed. For example, Murdoch and Day's case study in rural Wales's demonstrates that the practice of political control meant the established local's controlled key institutional positions as a means of ensuring 'their' communities were reproduced in its traditional form (1993:107).

Tracing the spaces and structures of 'community'

The final element that can create a reading of 'community', considers the spaces and structures in which the cultural and economic practices of interaction occur. Here, the meaning, practices of social connection in a given community can take on a material and political form, which will be expressed in particular sites and organisational spaces. In effect, it is tracing the locations where 'community' occurs, or the locus of social connection occurs. In this respect, social spaces and structures become the visible representation of the social and cultural life of a community, which are open to being affected by, or resistant to change.

Such spaces may include the physical sites of churches, schools, or pubs; or social spaces created by key institutions like rugby clubs or rural Women's groups where people gather together and form aspects of 'community' that can be recognised. Some of these spaces and sites are part and parcel of everyday patterns of life, some are a community resource or expressions of cultural heritage, or used for occasional events, but together they form sites or spaces where people build forms of cultural identity, participate in political practices, and construct meanings of 'community' which can be maintained and contested.

Conclusion

This chapter began by reviewing the 'ideal' of rural communities, which has been based on a bundle of assumptions, expectations and values about rural life that overtime, have been used to affirm and validate ideas of what 'community' is, or would like it to be, without necessarily distinguishing the difference. Broader social

processes of change, on the other hand, necessarily entail forms of resistance and adaptation as rural populations are reshaped by a variety of internal and external influences.

Given these two apparently conflicting portrayals of rural communities, does the concept 'community' still hold relevance as a signifier of research scale and cultural meaning about rural life? Past definitions and approaches to rural communities would suggest a different approach is called for, one that recognises and accommodates for the discursive and socially diverse nature of contemporary rural society.

The challenges from poststructuralism and cultural studies provide further resources to better view and understand the dynamic nature of how 'community' can be conceptualised. Perhaps the most important findings from these challenges raises an awareness of the socially constructed nature of discourse, the internal diversity within and between people, and the interconnection of spaces, sites where people connect, which together can only enhance the conceptualisation of 'community'.

The chapter concludes with a conceptual framework for reading 'communities', which has been forwarded as a means by which the context and people involved in shaping notions of 'community' can be explored. In order to give substance to this conceptual framework of 'community', a case study located in Southland, New Zealand, is presented and analysed in chapter six.

CHAPTER THREE

FORCES OF CHANGE IN RURAL NEW ZEALAND

“The wider world is not external to the local community, it is at the heart of the community’s internal processes of differentiation”(Feierman, 1990:36). In other words, the socio-economic and political processes occurring at various spatial levels will all play a part in shaping the way a local community is materially and culturally expressed (Liepins, 2000:326). In this case, the focus of interest is on how a farming community in Southland responds to, and is coloured by these forces of change.

This chapter first discusses the long cycles of demographic and social changes, especially as they have affected farming communities and the realities experienced by rural people at the micro level since 1945. It then describes certain practices and ideas about the traditional ‘family farm’ in New Zealand, followed by explanations regarding the concept of ‘family farming’. Finally, it provides a grand view of the forces of change in New Zealand’s agriculture and farming communities since 1945, with emphasis given to the influential political and economic ideologies at work in this period.

The goal of this chapter is to show the macro forces of change at the national and global level and their impacts on rural New Zealand since the 1960s, in order to provide the broader contextual background to this community case study in Southland. It also provides a blend of theoretical and empirical approaches to understand the contexts and conditions of rural change, which may shape the discourses and practices of community expressed by people in this community case study that are outlined in chapter six.

DEMOGRAPHIC AND SOCIAL CHANGE

Farming communities are not static entities, rather they have had to deal with numerous change processes, including social and demographic change. This involves considering more of the historical context and long cycles of change, which contribute to the transformation of farming communities. This era moves from the disruptions of

World War II, followed by a period of growth and stability in the international economy, to a period of economic fluctuations and downturn.

Neither a comparatively short history, nor geographic isolation can cushion New Zealand from other global events. Nonetheless, New Zealand's unique features as a small, isolated, relatively wealthy country with an economy based on agricultural exports have played a major role in demographic change. Changes in rural demography must be linked to changes in the New Zealand economy and society, against a background of global patterns.

Trends in Rural Population

In 1936, 43 percent of New Zealand's labour force was employed in farming, and one person in every three lived in rural areas or in small towns less than one thousand. Steady population increase after World War II, then subsequent decrease during the sixties, can be explained by lifecycles of those born in the 'baby boom' era. New Zealand followed the pattern of most Western countries during this post war period of growth and stability expressed demographically in increased fertility rates (Statistics New Zealand, 1997:14). In rural areas many of these 'baby boomers' left school and found work in urban centres.

The 1960s were a crucial phase in the formation of the current rural sector. The New Zealand government followed a policy that emphasised raising farm output and profitability and was characterised by the continuous technical innovation to agricultural production, but at the expense of rural employment (Britton et al, 1992:91). In practice, farmers replaced hired labour with capital equipment or used contracting services instead. Processing industries were capital intensified, with a move to fewer more fully automated dairy factories and fewer staff needed. Similarly, public utilities were modernised and centralised. As well, increased mobility through car ownership increased access out of rural areas, while private industry and government services centralised in urban centres provided employment opportunities outside rural areas (Cant, 1989:6-8). In effect, fewer people were needed to produce food, resulting in rural depopulation.

Rural job losses had a cumulative effect. Fewer people meant poorer services which often lead to small settlements losing their country store, the engineers shop, medical GP's transferring to larger centres, and school closers. The poorer services made rural places less attractive for people to stay on (Joseph & Chalmers, 1998:25). Robinson describes this process of depopulation as setting into motion a 'vicious circle of decline' (Robinson, 1990:85). Joseph suggested that depopulation "promoted the progressive dislocation of the social, economic and political spheres of rural life" (1999:9), while Lawrence (1990) argued that policy makers prioritised technology over people, but farming community decline was rarely questioned as a problem.

In the 1970s, there appeared to be renewed growth in the rural sector. This process was also identified in other Western economies at the same time and interpreted as the impact of counter-urbanisation forces. There were various explanations for this. Some suggested the deconcentration theory and preference to live in smaller settlements since the standards of living, transportation and communication systems had improved, others see it as just a temporary phase (Lewis, 1998:136).

From 1976, there appeared to be several processes taking place. There were more people living in rural areas than there had been in 1971. Some urban people were still moving to the countryside, but when the recession hit New Zealand and employment in rural areas became scarce, many folk shifted to cities instead (Cant, 1989:8).

From the late 1980s, the New Zealand government implemented policies that emphasised local government being responsible for promoting economic development in their region. It was characterised by increased entrepreneurialism and competition between communities and regions to attract new capital investment into their area. Often this meant promoting a specific image for their place, in order to increase their profile nationally and internationally. This has led to differential impacts on prosperity and population trends to different places and regions (Britton et al, 1992:282-91). In 1996, 85 percent of New Zealanders lived in urban centre and Auckland had twice as many people as the next most populous region (Statistics New Zealand, 1997:44)

Rural Demographic Change

Rural depopulation has become a prominent reality for rural communities. As farmer numbers decreased and rural services had insufficient local clients to support them and state services reduced services to rural areas under the new 'user pay' regime, many small communities were dying, while urban populations were increasing. The effect of this was to empty some parts of the countryside. Although, there were regional variations, some regions were gaining others were losing, particularly geographically isolated areas such as Southland (Britton et al, 1992:282).

Demographic change can mean population movements of in-migration and out-migration. For New Zealand, population movements are largely from south to north and from the peripheries to the main centres. In some cases, populations in rural areas will age because out-migration is fostered among young people, as tertiary education and employment opportunities draw them to urban centres (Press & Newell, 1994).

There are regional variations in growth. What has been found is that those districts more remote and reliant on agriculture have the lowest populations. Conversely, districts adjacent to urban centres (e.g. Hamilton or Auckland), or attractive for tourism (e.g. Wanaka and Queenstown), or centres for retirement, experience high increases. Cant (1980) concludes that depopulation is no longer a problem for all rural areas, but is a serious problem for some.

In fact, regional migration movements are quite diverse. But it is the region's population size and the ratio of in and out movements, which affect the impact of migration on the resident population. In Southland's case, one in every four moves result in a person being lost to that area (Statistics New Zealand, 1997:59). Table 3 shows this variation in regional migration.

Within the context of changes associated with rural restructuring, rural migration is an important factor. Lewis (1998) suggests that the motives and preferences behind the decision-making process for people to move need to be considered. He found that both economic and non-economic reasons were the prime motives for people moving. Typically, responses included the nature of the local environment, such as the climate or lifestyle, or for employment, education or retirement. These types of responses suggest there is a need to look beyond the numerical increases or gains or losses to

build up a picture of the people involved, for example, their background and their motives behind the move.

Table 3. Regional migration 1991-1996

Regional Migration, 1991 - 1996			
Region	In-migration	Out migration	Net migration
Northland	17,925	18,045	-120
Auckland	64,908	59,964	4,944
Waikato	42,624	42,912	-288
Bay of Plenty	33,222	24,660	8,562
Gisborne	5,169	6,675	-1,506
Hawkes Bay	13,932	16,620	-2,688
Taranaki	8,703	12,600	-3,897
Manawatu - Wanganui	27,981	31,434	-3,453
Wellington	34,527	41,064	-6,537
Tasman	7,695	5,778	1,917
Nelson	8,109	7,500	609
Malborough	6,663	5,400	1,263
West Coast	4,809	5,418	-609
Canterbury	37,182	31,383	5,799
Otago	22,002	20,679	1,323
Southland	7,518	12,846	-5,328

Source: Statistics New Zealand (1997:60)

Stockdale et al (2000) comment on how studies on rural migration in the Western world have focused on themes of residential preference, economic restructuring and government policies. They suggest that while each part of rural restructuring is important, popular opinions focus on the roles of in-migrants, for example, on the way that professional classes locating in rural areas have largely been detrimental to the host community. They also note that studies undertaken in rural Britain all refer to the problems arising from population revival: rising house prices, Nimby-ism¹, the decline of service provision as commuters use those services near to their place of work, and the loss of a distinctive local identity. However, they suggest to lay blame on newcomers for the negative changes in rural economies is short sighted, since there are other processes, for example, the evolution of farming policies and practices that can stimulate rural migration rather than focusing on one isolated process (Stockdale et al, 2000:244).

¹ In this instance, NIMBY-ism (Not in my backyard) relates to locals collectively mobilising their energies to defend their particular way of life, or territory against the perceived threat of outsiders.

People interviewed for this thesis were concerned about the recent in-migration of people who had no history with Southland; others were concerned about the closures of small schools which represented to them critical gathering points for social exchange for the local community; or the problem of increased mobility to obtain a whole range of public, professional and retail services in larger urban centres while local services lost custom. For those who stay, lack of services make the local area less attractive to live in, with empty shops as a tangible reminder of their loss.

TRADITIONAL FAMILY FARMING IN NEW ZEALAND

Traditionally, agriculture and farming in New Zealand has been portrayed as truly a masculine world belonging to the Pakeha male (Liepins, 1996:5). This image has created and established popular understandings about farming as being based on the individual farmer and his family, where the man was the breadwinner, the head of the household and authority figure, and the woman was responsible for the housework, care of the children and the extra hand on deck when needed. In terms of production, typically he grazed sheep and beef on grass and clover crops, and farm management revolved around the seasonal calendar. At harvesting, his neighbours were expected to assist, or whenever the need arose which fostered strong interdependencies within local farming communities (Brooking, 1981:229; Le Heron & Pawson, 1996:90).

The family farm has been seen as both an economic unit and a social unit and the farm property was viewed principally as a family asset, which was passed on from one generation to the next (Gilling, 1997:11). Traditionally, the assumption has been that family farms were transferred from father to son to provide continuity on the land through the generations (Keating & Little, 1991). In this respect, current owners of a property were essentially viewed as guardians of the land for future generations.

The family farm could be described as a decision-making unit, influenced by state policies. Family farms have, therefore, depended on supportive policies and stable export markets (Gilling, 1997:11). According to Bendiktsson et al (1990:3) "... the rules the state sets influence international competitiveness of agriculture and the particular decisions that farm families take ... The state ... is seen as a ... force in

influencing the form of production that has emerged for agriculture ... and in particular, the importance of family farming". Hatch (1992) explains how successive governments have fostered agricultural production, insisting that it was in the country's best interest to do so. This may account for their influence and dominance as New Zealand's major export earner and perpetuated the idea that farmers were 'the backbone of the country' (Hawke, 1981:378).

Furthermore, in Western society, industrial production was dominated by the capitalist mode of production based on waged labour, where the labourer does not own the means of production. The family farm then, is something of an anomaly in an industrial capitalist society such as New Zealand because the household relies on the unpaid labour of family members to produce commodities for the market, which gives them a competitive edge over other capitalist enterprises (Moran et al, 1993:24).

Farm families form the basis of the structure of rural communities in New Zealand (Keating & Little, 1990). Likewise, non-farm rural dwellers are an integral part of the social fabric of rural communities. Their occupations are the support systems to the farmers, and in this sense, are equally vulnerable to the climate of uncertainty in farm incomes, because their livelihoods depend on disposable farm income. The reality of this interrelationship was confirmed in Olivia Wilson's (1995) study in rural Southland, where she found that when farmers prospered, so too did the local township. Therefore, farming shapes the way in which some populations live and creates an agrarian culture within that society.

The Concept of Family Farming

Family farming and corporate farming both operate in the current New Zealand agricultural context. Each has distinctive characteristics in terms of mode of operation. The organisational structure of the family farm is recognised has both an economic and social unit, whereby the elements of enterprise and household are inextricably linked. The family farm is an enterprise because it produces commodities to sell on external markets. As such, its existence and productivity as a business operation depends on family labour, who invest their capital and labour in the farm. Corporate farming is distinguished from family farms, in terms of land ownership and labour provision

being separate components of the operation, and labour provision is based on a contract arrangement with the corporation that owns the farm (Moran et al, 1993).

There are different explanations put forward in literature to account for the changing nature and organisational structure of rural production and family farms. Moran et al. (1993) review the different positions held by the three main schools of thought relating to the family farm. Firstly, the 'survival' school views family farms as a distinct form of production operating within the context of a capitalist system. Their focus of interest is centred on internal relations of the family farm; relationship between the family farm and local community; and between the family farm and the wider capitalist economy. With this in mind, they contend that family farms will persist in the face of competition because their resilience and adaptability is connected to their ability to utilise family labour as a cost cutting measure that can undercut the capitalist labour markets. These characteristics, they argue, will ensure their survival in modern agriculture set within a capitalist system.

Moran et al, (1993) extend this argument of resilience to include reciprocity between neighbours, such as lending and borrowing implements of labour exchanges, which they contend minimises external expenses, but also acts to strengthen community ties. Although times are changing, currently New Zealand farmers are hiring subcontractors at market prices instead of the reciprocal arrangement between neighbours. But on the other hand, it could be argued that they are taking advantage of a capitalist form of operating (sub-contracting), to minimise overhead costs on expensive machinery in order to survive.

In contrast, the 'subsumption' school focuses on the broader context in which farmers operate, who they see as capitalists. This school of thought contends that capitalist farming will take over family farms. They presuppose the demise of the small owner-operator unit. They argue that family farming is at a transitional stage and will continue to decline in number and share of the total agricultural production. They see agricultural production in the broader context as being vertically and horizontally repositioned, where the 'vertical' linkages in the food processing system are increasingly controlled by agribusiness and corporate food retailers, which in turn is leaving farmers in a weaker economic position than their agribusiness and corporate

counterparts. Then agricultural production viewed from a 'horizontal' position within rural spaces, they see family farms as facing increasing competition for rural space from other consumers, like life-styler's on 10 acre blocks, but also manufacturers and transnational corporations keen to access rural spaces where they see financial returns can be gained. Likewise, they see the point of connection with the capitalist economy is the family farm's point of vulnerability, and claim that farmers accessing capital finance for purchasing properties indicate their propensity to subsumption (Marsden et al, 1996:365).

Lawrence (1990), for example, predicts that the progressive development of capitalist agriculture in rural Australia and New Zealand will lead to the removal of family farmers, thereby undermining the basis of rural towns. Alternatively, economist Lewis Evans predicts a transition from traditional family farming to corporate ownership because he contends "large firms will allow each of their different enterprises to be run at a large enough level to contribute significantly to profits. Furthermore, large farms will generally be better able to hire the specialised skill required ... and this is likely to entail a reduction in the importance of owner-occupier family farm" (cited in Kelsey, 1995:96). These views, however, underestimate the diversity and adaptability of the family farm unit in a country where family farming remains dominant. This school fails to account for the way New Zealand farmers are capable of adapting their management system to increase productivity and remain competitive.

Finally, the 'synthetic' school takes a less abstract level. They contend that capitalist farming and family farmers can exist beside each other because of the logic of capitalism, rather than the nature of family labour or technical change. They would argue that the very nature and risk of farming (caused by seasonal weather fluctuations), and slow circulation of capital (because of seasonal constraints) make different systems of farming unattractive to full capitalist ventures (Moran et al, 1993: 22-24; Fairweather, 1992:3-5). In other words, they argue that all agricultural industries cannot be industrialised.

While these theories may provide some explanations for the contemporary change, they are by no means comprehensive. This study supports Moran's (1993) view that geography is also a significant theme for explanations for the changing nature and

organization of rural production. Moran indicates that locality and agricultural systems are often linked because agriculture has a tendency towards regional specialisation. The geography of certain localities could also account for uneven patterns of development (1993:19). Furthermore, there may be other themes that have not been fully considered within the main body of theory such as: the changing relationships within family farms, the moves towards pluriactivity in farm households to on and off-farm economic activities for example, or, the place of life course decisions on family farms.

Sharemilking

Sharemilking is also an example of family farming and a means to farm ownership. Blunden et al, (1997) likened sharemilking to a modern variant of sharecropping and argued that sharemilkers could be conceptualised as simple commodity producers², as an explanation for its efficiency, flexibility and survival. Sharemilking is described as a contract between the farm owner and sharemilker, who combine their resources (land, labour, capital and expertise) toward the production of milk. They found the relationship between owner and operator to be mutually beneficial and promoted efficient production and high output.

Furthermore, the share contract entered into by the landowner and sharemilker was the essential part of accessing land for the sharemilker, and represented a stepping-stone towards farm ownership. This dairy ladder is unique to dairy farming, unlike other farming systems. Figure 4 illustrates the dairy-farming ladder over the life course to show the progress towards farm ownership.

Although, not all those who occupy the ladder make progress or remain in dairying. For example, one farmer (Interview 23) said "I know one young fella, it's just a means to an end for him. When he has enough equity, he'll go beef farming, that's his ambition. And it's the best way and the quickest way for the return on his piece". In effect, this farmer is reproducing family farming through dairying, and but more importantly, is strategically using the capitalist forms of operating (sub-contracting) as a means to achieve the end of a family farm. These findings are significant in the

context of this thesis where sharemilking is a recent phenomenon to Southland and local people voiced their concern about 'transient' lifestyle now present in the community.

Figure 4. Dairy life course and ladder

Age	Enterprise and /or Household debt	Individuals or farm-family enterprises
Youth	Low	Wage worker, married couple
	Increases	Contract milker or lower-order sharemilker
	Increase sharply	50/50 sharemilker (purchase of herd)
	Continues to increase	Small-farm owner (provides almost all farm labour)
	Increases initially, then decreases	Large-farm owner (enables hiring of wage workers, sharemilkers, or manager, kin or nonkin)
	Decreases	Large-farm owner (nears retirement, sells herd, and hires sharemilkers or keeps herd and hire manger, kin or nonkin)
Retirement	Low or nonexistent	Sells farm (to kin or non kin)

Source: Blunden et al (1997:1770)

The Dual Roles in Farming

Alternatively, Charmaine McEerchen's (1992) study of the cultural construction of farming in England in the late 1980s, found two main representations in the way farmers saw themselves. One strand emphasized farming as a business, which implied progress, investment in technology and profits. The other strand emphasized farming as nurturing, which combines stewardship of the land and care of the animals as part of farm management and a way of life. She suggested that farmers represent a contradiction in terms and points to the conflict involved in farming, between conserving and exploiting nature.

² Simple commodity producer is a term used synonymously with family farming that is characterised by the unity of the household and the enterprise (in terms of owners of part of the means of production)

She observed this duality at work in the representations given to land and livestock. Land was central to the business of farming, but it also encapsulated the idea of nurturing and stewardship. On the other hand, livestock were a means of making a living, but also a demonstration of husbandry skills. During the 1980s, under Margaret Thatcher and the free market philosophies, there was a pendulum swing, when farmers were being criticised for prioritising economic goals as a means of achieving ‘success’ rather than valuing conservation, protection and nurturing.

In interviews for this thesis, these conflicting themes were also expressed, particularly amongst the older generation who felt that nurturing had taken a backstage to valuing ‘farming as a business’. This is certainly evident from one long-term resident’s (Interview 12) comments. “Farmers have become a different group; it’s business, before it used to be a lifestyle ... (Now) you have to perform to survive, years ago you could dribble along.”

FORCES OF CHANGE

Summarizing from the 1960s

The 1960s were financially a comfortable time for New Zealand’s farming communities, particularly for sheep farming communities. There had been the commodity boom arising from expectations based on the Korean War in 1953, which prompted returns from exports – especially for wool – to reach unprecedented heights, coupled with the widespread booms of the 50s, as Europe started to rebuild and populations grew, and demand for (crossbred) woollen carpets was strong.

By contrast, dairy farmers were experiencing falling terms of trade for their products. This was triggered by a combination of increased protection for Northern Hemisphere dairy farmers products into high-priced markets, restricted access to those markets for New Zealand products, as well as increased competition coming from butter substitutes, like margarine (Easton, 1997:78-80). Despite the downturn in dairying, agriculture was still recognised as central to the development of the national economy (Easton, 1987: 2-1).

By the end of the decade farming's favourable circumstances could be described to have reached a turning point. These changes can be linked to the economic and political conditions of that time. Firstly, government policies of the day were based on a state interventionist programme: a programme that championed protection from overseas competition, and subsidies and incentive schemes for export producers, and state control over links with the outside world, particularly the movement of capital. Farming communities (being export producers), were coloured by this culture of intervention, to the point of presuming on these supportive policies, which in effect, expressed the government's commitment to maintaining their privileged position as a sector interest group (Le Heron, 1991:1656).

But then, when the overseas wool markets collapsed forming a stockpile in 1967, and a butter mountain had accumulated in Europe, and when the international oil crisis coincided with Britain's entry into the EEC in 1973. It was these key processes that put New Zealand's economy in a precarious position. Not only was the economy now faced with blocked access to its major trading partner, it also had unwisely placed its faith and reliance on trading on such a narrow range of primary products, either in declining demand or in oversupply. In effect, these factors forced New Zealand's export sector to search for new markets, discover new products, and modify old ones to meet the changing demand, but all with the support of government incentive schemes (Pawson & Scott, 1992: 374; Easton, 1997:81-3).

But given the historic importance of agriculture to New Zealand's economy and its dependence on export receipts, and given the government policies of the day were based on a state interventionist programme, it was not surprising government's response to these issues were an array of policies to 'prop-up' the farming sector. For example, assistance in the way of farm capital investments were written off against tax and Supplementary Minimum Prices (SMP), which aimed to guarantee minimum floor prices, were introduced to encourage investment in livestock production (Hawke, 1987:1-9; Johnson, 1987:19-6). Not only were they designed to provide security of income for farmers', they were also an incentive for continued productivity in keeping with the national objectives spelt out by government that ... "continued expansion in primary production is ... essential ... to a higher rate of industrial expansion" (cited in

Le Heron, 1989:22). In effect, all that was needed to achieve the national objective was a menu of suitable incentives, since farmers could do the rest (Le Heron, 1989:29).

However, government was seen though as favouring one part of the economy over others and there were criticisms of the quick ill-thought-out band-aid remedies to problems needing more far reaching solutions when these subsidies obscured the generally depressed global market realities (Wallace & Lattimore, 1987:30-3). Yet, compared to most other Western countries, New Zealand farmers were less heavily subsidised (Benediktsson et al, 1990:3).

During this time, it should be noted that New Zealand's strategy for development within the capitalist world order was based on economic growth within the nation's borders. Le Heron (1989) notes a structure similar to other countries during this same expansionary period of world capitalism. These developments can be traced back to the First Labour Government's response to the miseries inflicted by the Great Depression in the 1930s and their rejection of the effectiveness of free market philosophies. They drew their lessons from Keynesian-style macroeconomics, which see government's role as central to moderating the peaks and troughs of the capitalist cycle through interventionist policies. These policies were seen as key to national economic growth and were directed at protection from overseas competition, regulation of the financial and labour markets, commitment to full employment, and an equal opportunity for its citizens (Hawke, 1987:1-2, Jesson, 1988). Since state policy closely regulated how capital circulated in or out of the country, it gave the perception of the nation's control over its own destiny (Wallace & Lattimore, 1987:30-3).

Over this same timeframe, however, many advanced capitalist countries had undergone major political and socio-economic changes in response to the global economic recession of that decade. Increasingly, firms looked beyond their national borders for offshore investment and production sites as a means of maintaining their political edge. While the New Zealand government policies, on the other hand, attempted to insulate the economy from these very same international trends. In other words, they continued to 'protect' the domestic economy, and 'subsidise' further diversification of the export market, reinforcing the government's belief in a regulatory environment. But this state policy mix of regulatory strategies effectively hid the market indicators of the declining

terms of trade, rising costs in import prices, and lack of international competitiveness in agricultural production (Pawson & Scott, 1992:374; Le Heron, 1991:1660).

The limitations of this strategy became evident in the early 1980s, when sharp falls in world commodity prices exposed the lack of international competitiveness of regulated agriculture at all levels. This meant for the farmer, prices received from overseas increased slower than local costs, and for the economy, the maintenance of high import ratio relative to GDP led to heavy overseas borrowing and foreign debt, thus creating mounting fiscal pressures and double instability for the welfare state (Pawson & Scott, 1992:374). The Treasury blamed the imbalance of payments problem on "serious structural difficulties, which impeded international competitiveness; and an unwillingness to adjust to external conditions (cited in Kelsey, 1999:9). In other word, Treasury's summary of the economic woes was seen as external in origin, while the solutions were considered to be internal.

Farmers and Politics in Transition

Given that New Zealand's economy has historically been based on agriculture, it is not surprising the linkage between farmer and state was strong in the 60s and 70s. Even though the rural sector had become a numerical minority in population, their collective voice remained strong in national politics (Bollard, 1992:4). In effect, farmers had secured a central place in the interventionist state economy, "believing by pressing their individual demands on Government they were expressing national, rather than sectional interest" (cited in Roche et al, 1992:1753).

Significantly, farmers' central place in national politics can be linked to the national party's founding conference in the 1930's. According to Chapman (1981), farmers had a great deal in common with National's policy goals, which prioritised sound finance and private enterprise. Also, party membership gave members the right to select their own MPs and joint power to determine party policy. Furthermore, he reminds us how National Party MPs were intensely loyal to the belief in New Zealand as a farming economy of which they were the true representatives. This indicates how party membership provided a powerful avenue for farmers' voices to be heard at national level.

In other words, political parties identified as primarily rural with rural supporting policies made sure that farmers were taken care of. The rural vote would only go the party likely to fulfil the farmers' priorities, since they were the ones who developed that land and were the country's major export earner, while parties with a broader view on the nation's economic needs did not win rural support (Jesson, 1988:33; Bollard, 1992:4).

Historically, the division in politics has been between the rural and urban sectors: the Labour Party dominant in central city and lower income suburbs, and the National Party dominant in rural and small town electorates, together with an important urban constituency in small and big businesses (Pearson & Thorn, 1983:142). The relationship between the National Party and farmers was therefore an important one in an era of the state's commitment to expand agricultural production for export (Kelsey, 1999:25). This farmer-state relationship was also an enduring one. From 1949-1980 the Labour Party held power for only six years, compared to the National Party's twenty-five years in power (Roche et al, 1992:1754).

However, the catalyst for change in that relationship came with the Labour Party coming to power in 1984. This change equated with less political leverage and economic power for farmers, but for the expanding urban populations, the urban electorates became the dominant voice. This transition effectively undermined the political stronghold of the 'true blue' rural voice (Roche et al, 1992).

A Change in Government

With the change in government in 1984 came a system of economic reforms. The Labour Party saw their role as picking up the pieces of a sagging economy (Harberger, 1992:ix), a task made easier by the fact that they were predominantly professional technocrats and had no close ties or loyalty to the farming community (Pawson & Scott, 1992:374). The change of government also meant an overhaul of policies, the most dramatic and far-reaching change being the lack of commitment to the interventionist policies, which had so far cushioned the agricultural sector.

Instead, Treasury provided a comprehensive brief to the incoming Labour government to the cause and appropriate recourse to 'restore competitiveness' and create a more

'flexible and efficient economy', only this time, shaped by neo-liberal ideals (Britton et al, 1992:4). These ideals were based on largely untried principles of economic reform based on neo-liberalism and supply-side economic policies that favoured a more market driven economy, and aimed to reduce the role of government in the macro-economy. These untried principles, nonetheless, evolved into a raft of new policies and new economic order, commonly known as 'Rogernomics'. This was essentially based on faith that deregulation of foreign trade, finance and business aimed at 'opening up' the economy would bring about growth, stability, low interest rates and low inflation (Pawson & Scott, 1992:374).

By the end of the decade, two complementary programmes of restructuring were implemented. The first involved macro-economic reforms such as: lifting exchange controls, deregulating the financial markets, removing price controls over interest rates, and floating the dollar; so that the impacts of international and domestic economic cycles, producer incomes and the allocation of investment capital would be largely determined by market signals, rather than by government intervention. The second involved a radical reform of the state sector. In practice, this meant that those state assets that could produce for the market sector were corporatised, or privatised, such as electricity, forestry, railways, post and telecommunications. While core departments, like health, education and social welfare were reorganised and trimmed, and asked to deliver public services in an efficient business-like manner. Likewise, at the regional level, local governments were subject to the same rationalisation processes, meaning they would be on their own, dependent on their own initiatives and resources. Furthermore, 'local communities' were expected to take on more responsibility to compensate for the gap left by the state (Welch, 1992:240; Cloke, 1996:308; Rice, 1992:488-91). Indeed, these reforms completely contested the encultured form and practice of previous policy makers of the state.

At the micro level, these government-restructuring processes effectively forced private producers to become more productive and responsive to the dynamics of the global market place. In other words, farmers were forced to confront global market competition head on (Welch, 1992:240).

Broader Structural Changes

Although, the process of deregulation and re-regulation of the New Zealand economy meant a profoundly different reconnection into the evolving structural changes occurring on a much broader spatial scale, a process often linked to the term globalisation (Le Heron & Pawson, 1996:22).

Globalisation, and what is implied in the term may need further explanation. Webber (1999) suggests that it refers to a variety of different processes: the integration of financial and currency markets across the globe; the integration of production, trade and capital generation operating across national borders in global corporations; the emergence of institutions of global governance that nation-states are subject to, like World Trade Organisation (WTO).

On the other hand, he suggests that globalisation is not a process that is *imposed* on the state from outside. "Rather, the global economy is a structure that is being created by the process called globalisation. The structure *invites* compliance from states, ... and other organizations; ... in turn, the actions that comprise that compliance enhance the process of globalisation (Webber, 1999:1168). In this way, the global economy is a structure being produced by the actions of states and other organizations. Thus, it could be argued that the form of globalisation that New Zealand practiced, was partly expressed when the Labour government adopted neo-liberal policies aimed at 'opening up' the economy, like the dismantling of trade barriers. In other words, the policies changes of 1984 created the right conditions that facilitated the process of globalisation to be enhanced.

Jane Kelsey (1999) sees the practice of globalisation as a highly contested process of intense competition between people, companies, tribes and governments; alliances are formed and accommodation and drastic revisions are made where outcomes are far from certain (1999:2). Day (1998), on the hand, sees certain elements of globalisation threatening to undermine the significant distinctions of community and culture. He claims that trans-national corporations operate irrespective of national borders and they appear to pay little attention to differences in way of life between places (1998:90). In other words, globalisation has an homogenising affect. Indeed, he argues that active participants in globalisation would consider rural the antithesis of modern and would

see the need to replace an established rural way of life with a system that was more business 'savvy', and specialised.

One of the outcomes of the globalisation processes in rural New Zealand has been the emergence of corporate agriculture, especially in forestry, but also in dairying (Le Heron & Pawson, 1996). For instance, in the late 1980s Applefields (28 percent overseas owned) and Tasman Agriculture took advantage of historically low land prices for buying 'summer safe' properties (with reliable summer rainfall), or properties with access to irrigation in certain parts of the South Island. They saw these properties as investments opportunities in dairying, principally to build asset value (Blunden et al, 1997:1768). Yet at the time of the fieldwork, both companies had recently sold their Southland properties when land values had reached a record high.

Whatever the debates on globalisation, the major consequences of these processes have been their uneven outcomes, some states and regions (both urban and rural) have rocketed ahead, others have stagnated or are in decline (Joseph, 1999:2). One key to understanding the influences of globalisation is to note the changing practices of government, regional councils, corporations and even individuals.

Restructuring in Farming Communities

For farming communities the change in government in 1984 meant an overhaul of policy for agriculture. These included among other things: the introduction of a user-pays systems; an increase on interest rates to market rates from the Rural Bank, and the infrastructure of rural assistance and price guarantee system were withdrawn (Johnsen, 1999:27). Treasury made it clear that farming communities were not going to receive special attention "indeed our concern is that all sectors of the economy should, in the interests of efficient resource allocation, be subject to the same criteria" (cited in Liepins & Bradshaw, 1999). The message was that farmers needed to help themselves, just like other industries.

With direct assistance to agriculture removed, and with the new emphasis on market prices and costs, the local-global linkages were even more apparent. These, Harberger believed at least "exposed many producers to the genuine world-market competition for the first time ... (and meant) improved productivity in agriculture (1992:x).

Nonetheless, it also meant that New Zealand producers were forced to compete with subsidised overseas producers in the same market place (Wilson, 1995:417). Government was not disputing the quality of New Zealand agricultural products. Rather, they were expecting farmers to act as market-led producers functioning in the global market place if they wanted to survive (Liepins & Bradshaw, 1999:564).

Of particular note is that while the financial sector, which is the non-tradeable sector boomed under these more market friendly conditions because of the new opportunities for off-shore investment for New Zealand companies. Farming communities, on the other hand, the tradeable sector almost went bust, indicating the competing discourse associated with this new business-efficient culture (Britton et al, 1992:27).

The bust was partly as a consequence of internal economic conditions, like the removal of government subsidies previously paid to producers, coinciding with high interest rates (that affected the levels of debt repayment), high inflation (reducing returns to farmers), and falling land values (affecting the extent of farm debt), and partly because of external conditions like the low world commodity prices for primary produce that was not influenced by New Zealand policy makers (Britton et al, 1992:96-101; Wilson, 1995:419). Together, these conditions meant the rural economy, which was historically advantaged, was confronted with a new sense of vulnerability.

Farmers' Responses

Despite the crisis in farming following 1984 and the emergence of corporate agriculture, family farming has survived. This may be due to both the versatility and resilience of the family farm unit. An additional explanation could be a commitment to farming by those who have been brought up on the family farm, and who anticipated no alternative but to continue the family tradition. It may be useful to remember that the family farm represents both a social and economic unit and that decision on how to adjust production or household resources were influenced by this duality (Moran et al, 1993).

On the production side, the most immediate and dramatic consequence of structural adjustment for the individual farmer was a dramatically reduced income, but also increased debt and economic uncertainty. Some families were forced to sell, others

who were more affluent, or had less debt brought out their struggling neighbours, and still others took a proactive response to de-regulation and converted their production systems to other agricultural commodities as an entrepreneurial strategy. Some farmers reduced stock numbers; some diversified to spread their income risk: and some reduced permanent workers and inputs for farm maintenance and development, instead making greater use of contractors or casual labour (Fairweather, 1992; Wilson, 1995).

Olivia Wilson's study in Eastern Southland showed that reduced spending not only affected the family unit, it also impacted on the local business community. She found businesses were still dependent on the farming sector, but the relationship between the farming community and businesses had altered, from one based on loyalty to one on competitiveness (1995:430).

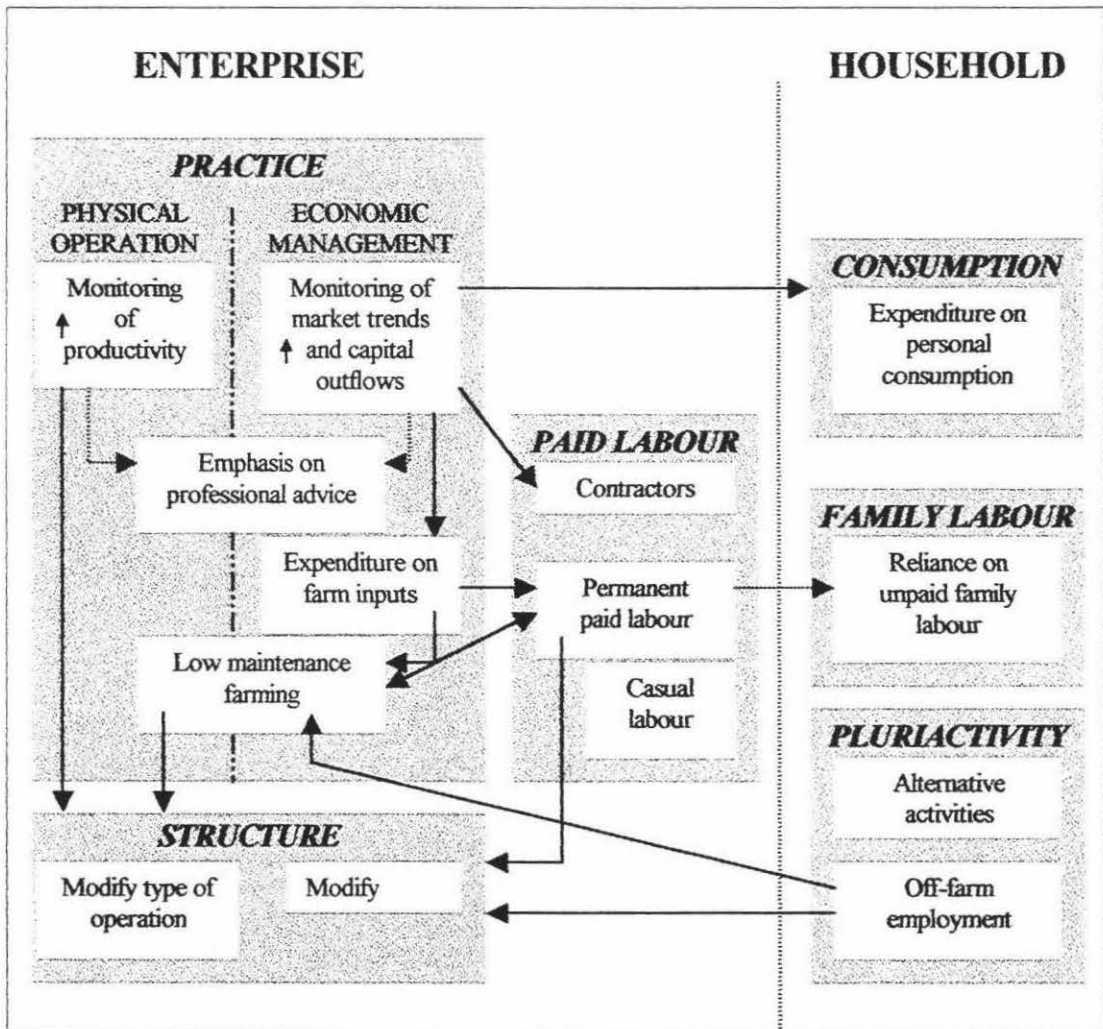
On the household side, a common strategy for survival has been to seek additional income via pluriactivity, a practice that has been an aspect of European farm life (Ilbery & Bower, 1998:75). Hetland uses the following definition of pluriactivity: "... the diversification of activities carried out by one household on and off the [farm] holding in order to secure the household's economy and welfare" (cited in Moran et al, 1993:30). Taylor and McCrostie-Little (1995) found that farm families were increasingly multiple income earning and women tended to be the secondary income earners. Yet the role of women in the work force has also been an important post war trend, therefore, this increased involvement by women can be seen as both a lifestyle choice and as a means of survival for the family. However, women working outside the norms of traditional family farming life have lessened women's assumed contribution to community activities, which were all part of the taken-for-granted way of life for rural women.

Moran et al's (1993) study showed that pluriactivity was very low among dairy-farm families relative to sheep and beef farming. However, pluriactivity can also depend on the life course of individuals and the family life cycle, which can create different demands on their income and different needs depending on the stage they have reached. For example, young children require more time, while teenagers require more financial outlays. Nonetheless, with the emergence of employment as a common

theme, farms have reduced their demand for labour from the wider community but farm families have increased their demand for accessing jobs in the same community.

Figure 2 focuses on the interrelationship between farm adjustments strategies. It distinguishes between the two aspects of the family farm: production (enterprise) and household. It shows how modifications of one aspect of the enterprise or household can be related to the readjustments in the other.

Figure 2. Interrelationship between farm adjustment strategies



Source: Johnsen, (1999:31)

A number of studies have charted these farm-level effects of, and response to agricultural deregulation (see for example Fairweather, 1989 & 1992; Cloke, 1996; Wilson, 1995). They revealed a vast array of multifaceted responses, and as Cloke

(1996) points out, were subject to different interpretations depending on the interest group and depending on the source of the information, whether that was official government statistics or local level responses. Federated Farmers suggested farmers were 'doing well', that only one percent of farms faced forced sales (1996:3). Fairweather (1992) on the other hand, suggested a greater degree of upheaval, because of the dramatic nature of the change and exposure to global market competition. Bryant (1989) suggests that a greater focus on local decisions and actions are required in any analyses of rural change, since people adopt highly individualistic responses to external events.

On the other hand, Cloke (1989), in his comparative study of two South Island rural communities (Hororata in Canterbury and Ahaura on the West Coast) to the rural downturn, he attributed their differential impacts and responses to their differing locations and resource bases. Ahaura, an isolated and marginal farming area was hit hard, with farmers, local service suppliers and contractors struggling with the pressure. In contrast, Hororata, with its close proximity to Christchurch and good farmland, fared better out of the two. In Hororata, farmland values remained healthy, with demand coming from Christchurch-based hobby farmers and agribusiness companies which together created new opportunities for the area. This suggests that locality is key to the direction of change, but equally hobby farmers and agribusiness could introduce new voices and possibilities for development and conflict in farming communities (Scott et al, 2000).

The Post-Restructuring Environment

In the 1990s, there was evidence to suggest that the restructuring processes requiring farmers to act like a market-led producer was successful. Indeed, farming communities were becoming much more responsive to the volatility of the global market. For instance, when China drastically cutback its wool purchases in the late 1980s closing the door on the industry's single largest wool export market, and then with the competitive pricing and qualitative improvements coming from synthetic carpets, meant wool growers were facing poor returns for their quality product, and a lose in their market share in carpets industry – significant because 60 percent of New Zealand's wool clip goes into carpets (Houghton et al, 1996:9). It was these developments, together with the New Zealand Wool Board's suspension of its price

support scheme in 1991, that all had a reinforcing effect on the other. The most obvious affect was the way these developments all contributed to the low confidence levels in the sheep industry and a shift away from sheep farming throughout the country: from 70.3 million in 1982, to the present 45.7 million in 1999 (Southland Times, 2.6.2000:12).

By contrast, this same national and international environment provided the right conditions for the New Zealand's dairy industry to expand. By 1988, the international stockpiles of dairy products had shrunk, and the terms of trade for dairying started to improve. More recently, the reduction in EU and US tariffs and quotas on agricultural trade, negotiated at the Uruguay Round of GATT, in 1993, not only validated the government's programme of economic reform, and its underlying ideology, it boosted the confidence of the dairy industry for the assumed economic benefits it would bring, and may have contributed to the upsurge in dairying throughout New Zealand (Houghton et al, 1996:15; Le Heron & Pawson, 1996:53).

The New Zealand Dairy Board³ (NZDB) has been an important player in facilitating the changing fortunes for dairying in New Zealand, so also has been their proactive marketing strategy (Roche et al, 1992:1756). Their strategy was characteristic of an institution that had successfully adapted to the competitive global market culture: it used branded products, its marketing network was global in spread, it extended its business ventures offshore; and in New Zealand, it sought greater economies of scale through company mergers, and it diversified beyond the traditional lines to high in added value products (Le Heron & Pawson, 1996:31-2). The success of this strategy not only led to more opportunities than products, it indicated that the NZDB's transition to being more 'market-driven' was successful. This type of culture has influenced the way dairying has developed in the 1990s; this was spelt-out in the dairy industry's current thrust – "to achieve an annual 4 percent gain in efficient production, ... [otherwise] New Zealand's competitive advantage will soon be eroded" (Southland Times, 4.7.2000:13).

³ The New Zealand Dairy Board is a single-seller marketing agency for all of New Zealand's dairy export products

However, to attribute all changes observed in farming communities to economic reform processes and global market trends would be shortsighted. However, the call to 'restore competitiveness' back into the economy has had far reaching effects on farming 'communities', and has created a culture, which prioritises 'farming as a business over 'farming as a lifestyle'.

Conclusion

As we have seen, farming communities do not exist in a vacuum but are influenced by economic, political and social conditions at work at the global, national and local level. The statistics on demographic change are related to economic changes in the rural sector. Through the effects of variables such as the size of property, the fertility of the land, and the degree of agricultural diversification, could mean farmers in particular areas or regions may find themselves in either a weaker or stronger position. For those in the service sector dependent on farmers' incomes are likewise affected by these same economic changes, and the quality of rural life alters as demographic and related changes take place.

The recent developments in the rural sector show that the culture of farming communities has changed, from one based on solid assumptions about the role of family farming, the community and government, to one based on ideas that emphasize efficiency, competition and individualism with more uncertainty involved since the period of economic reform in the 1980s. But because of the diverse outcomes of restructuring and long term changes that all play a part in shaping the way farming communities are structured and culturally expressed, there needs to be a greater understanding of the "situated meaning of restructuring" and its impact on particular farming communities (Liepins, 2000:326; Kearns & Joseph, 1997:18).

The next chapter provides further commentary on aspects of the situated meaning of restructuring for a farming community in the Southland region where the field study took place. This chapter will show the way these broader discursive processes take-on a certain shape within this particular location.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE SOUTHLAND CONTEXT

The focus of this research is the interrelationship between changes in agriculture, as a manifestation of the recent economic and social restructuring in Western society over the last three decades, and its impact on the socially constructed nature of rural communities as expressed within a specific community in Southland. Central to this focus is the question of whether agricultural change influences the changing nature of rural communities, and if so, how? This research, also seeks to find out whether the nature of local discourse and its circulation necessarily implies a reshaping of social life for this rural community.

As was suggested in chapter three, any community cannot be viewed in isolation, but the cumulative social, economic, political and environmental conditions occurring at these various spatial levels will all contribute to the way a specific community is structured and culturally expressed. The focus of this research is to reflect the situated meaning of these forces of change within the Lower Mataura Valley in Southland, as expressed and interpreted by the people themselves.

The purpose of this chapter is to provide an introduction to the regional context within which this present field research was undertaken. It also highlights particular social, economic and relational features that may contribute to the social formation and articulation of this farming community. The Lower Mataura Valley was selected because of various changes that have been part of their recent history, particularly in agriculture with the rapid growth in dairying, as well as a significant loss of population and closures to their rural amenities.

THE CONTEMPORARY RESEARCH CONTEXT

Southland is a peripheral region located at the 'tail-end' of New Zealand. It is frequently referred to as the 'deep south', indicating Southland's southern-ness relative to other regions and its place in the world. It also portrays the idea of an area geographically removed from the markets and central 'cogs' of political power. Being

a peripheral region, and combined with its southern-ness and likelihood of cooler temperatures, often leads Southlanders to be sensitive about their weather, their degree of real and perceived isolation from the rest of New Zealand, and any implication that Southland is the next stop to the South Pole. But what this collective defensiveness does do, is, give Southlanders the added reputation of being a parochial bunch.



Plate 1. The Lower Maitava Valley (July 2000)

Also, their distinct way of talking, singles them out from other New Zealanders, and represents the only clear regional dialect in New Zealand. Not only do Southlanders, roll their 'r's' when they talk, their use of certain words obviously have their roots from their Scottish heritage; such as 'crib', 'meat ashet' or 'spurtle'. This distinctive marking Southlanders apart from the rest of New Zealand, only adds to the uniqueness of this place.

Southland can also lay claim to having the highest proportion of Presbyterians, and the smallest proportion of people with no religious affiliation in New Zealand (Statistics NZ, 1999:17). While it is true that church congregations may have thinned out in recent times, there remains a solid core of the population who still rigorously uphold the faith, and have kept with the denomination of their Scottish forebears.

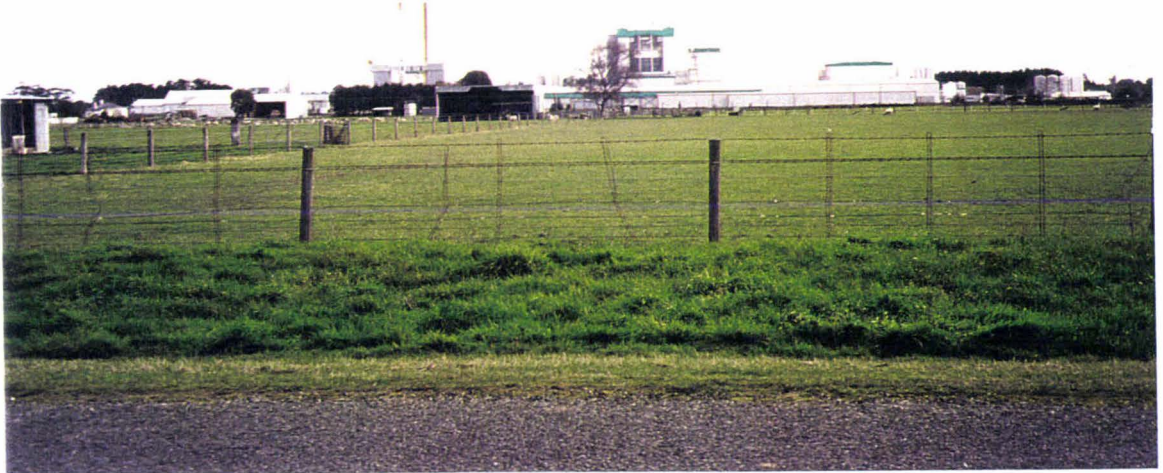


Plate 2: The Southland Dairy Co-operative in Edendale

The Lower Maitara Valley, the area chosen for this study is situated in the eastern part of Southland (see Plate 1). The landscape is characterised by rolling hills forming a natural eastern boundary, and a shallow terrace marks the beginnings of the Southland Plains to the west. To the north, the Valley narrows towards Maitara, and to the south, it spreads out into low-lying flats, which merge into the Southern district. Other important features of significance include: the Maitara River, the main trunk line and State Highway 1 that both cut through the Valley, providing convenient access routes to either Invercargill or other northern centres; and the more recently, the extensive development of the Southland Dairy Co-operative in Edendale, now a major industrial site located in the heart of this farming community (see Plate 2).

It is not difficult to understand why farming holds such prominence in this Valley, given the extensive landscape of well established flat farmland, similar to the scene in Plate 3. Typically, the paddocks are fully stocked (with dairy cows as well as sheep) in well fenced paddocks, set out in an orderly grid-like fashion, and often lined with extensive shelterbelts planted as protection against the prevailing sou' west winds.



Plate 3: A typical view of the Lower Maitava Valley.

However, this passive pastoral scene described above, masks the radical transformation in land-use which has occurred since the 1990s. This transformation is not one of diversification in land-use, into the likes of deer or forestry, which typifies the agricultural changes in the broader Southland region. Rather, this transformation is marked by a distinct move towards a specialisation into dairying throughout the Valley, at a level of intensity never known before (Houghton et al, 1996:2).

Although, the Valley can be viewed as more than an agricultural production site, it also contains several population centres. There are the townships of Wyndham and Edendale and several other smaller farming districts; including Brydone, Menzies Ferry, Seaward Downs and Maitava Island. Most of these districts once had their own primary school, Presbyterian Church, dairy factory, general store, and hall and war memorial. Today, these services are mostly centralised in the two local townships, leaving only the war memorials and derelict buildings as indicators of their existence to the uninformed.

Likewise, the townships of Wyndham and Edendale were once the commercial hubs that supplied the surrounding farming area with all the necessary services associated with the rural sector, in the way of banks, post office, mercantile firms, and hardware store, until the early 70s. Then the consolidation of services away from smaller towns started to accelerate, and hastened more recently by another spate of service closures, in the late 1980s. Now the closest service centres are either Gore or Invercargill. What remains, are a few businesses and empty buildings symbolic of a community that has undergone a transformation.

While the sense social connection stems from the fact that the vast majority are being born and bred Southlanders, and know the area well. Social connections in the Valley also draw residents into different social networks; whether they have evolved from being connected to the local schools, churches, local pubs, Lower Maitava Valley sports competitions, different service groups; or from being sheep farmers or dairy farmers; or just being neighbours down the same road, or being identified as regular at the local pub (see Plate 4); or having extended family living locally. It is these interconnections, or potential 'in-house' rivalries, between groups within the area that creates the social dynamic of the Valley, which would not necessarily be discovered through official documentation.

While it is true that farming may be the dominant activity that has shaped the social life of the Valley, this reality can overshadow the existence of other occupations that also make-up the local working population; for example, tradespeople, contractors, shopkeepers, teachers, factory workers or retired people. Likewise, it can overshadow the existence of different political perspectives and socio-economic groups; and even the diversity of interests found amongst farmers themselves.

Although, the connection between farming and others making a living in this place does generate a range of shared experiences within much of the local population: it also has strands of interdependencies, but the flow is mainly in one direction – from farming to the wider community. In fact, some of these connections are purely economic in form and depend on whether farmers utilise these local services in the Valley or not (like the shops, petrol station, contractors, transport companies etc.). On the other hand, some connections are based on commonly shared interests; like

attending Lions, or the sports events, or meeting down at the local pub for example. Yet, the prominence of farming and their discretionary spending power does influence the lives of others making a living in the Valley.

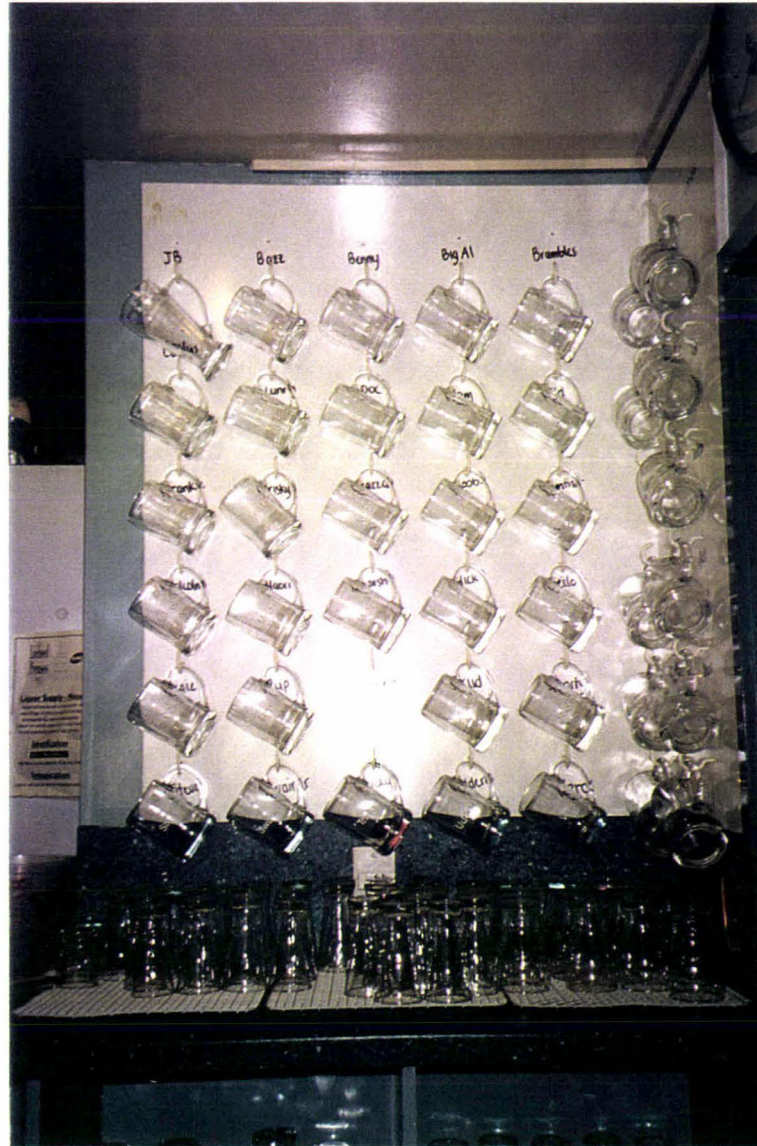


Plate 4. Being a regular is defined by having your own named beer mug.

Furthermore, the townships of Wyndham and Edendale are popular choices for the retired, especially local retired farmers content to stay where family connections and their social networks are firmly established. In fact, the over 60s age group represent a substantial 24 percent of the townships population (Edendale Concept Paper, 1997). Given their position as accumulators of local knowledge, older residents could also be viewed as guardians or carriers of certain traditions or constructed truths about how

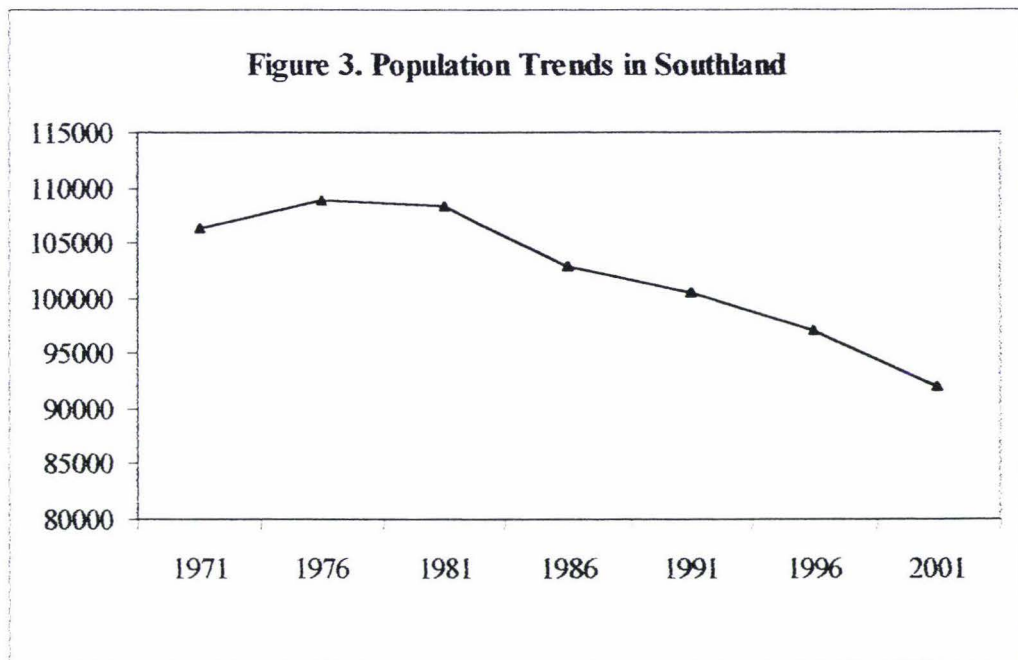
things were or should be done, in order to maintain that sense of cultural continuity within the Valley.

While the townships maybe popular choices for the retired, these centres offer little in the way of incentives for younger, or more highly qualified people to want to stay. This is mainly because outside of farming, the trucking firms and 'the factory', the range of employment opportunities is narrow. Both groups, therefore, are faced with limited career opportunities and no tertiary education facilities available within this local vicinity. Invercargill, however, does have a Technical Institute, but the closest universities are either in Otago or Canterbury. Consequently, many young people tend to move north as a matter of course for the educational and employment opportunities, but seldom return home (Statistics NZ, 1999:14). This out-migration of young people has been a fairly consistent trend over the past 15 years, and has resulted in a general decline in people under 30 years of age, and could be a contributing factor to Southland's aging population.

Furthermore, few people choose to migrate to Southland, or to the Lower Maitai Valley specifically. This could be due to its geographical isolation and peripheral status, or its bad weather reports or its gumboot-type image, or that people are following the general trends of migration (of rural-urban and South-North drift) (Statistics New Zealand, 1997:64). Alternatively, it could be that ideas of Southland are associated with agriculture, and the fact that agriculture has been of declining importance to the national economy since the period of economic restructuring in the mid 1980s. These factors, together with the ongoing trend of low fertility have resulted in a distinctive thinning out of the local population base as is clearly shown in Figure 3 below. Furthermore, this trend in depopulation is projected to continue in the same manner for the next 20 years (Statistics NZ, 1997).

However, the trend in out-migration has shaped the local community in other ways. One such feature that has been identified is the low levels of tertiary education in the remaining population resulting in a limited professional skill base available locally (New Zealand Statistics, 1999:17-8; Houghton et al, 1996:43). Equally, this combination of circumstances may have enabled the remaining population to develop quite set ideas about what is right and wrong and establish patterns to social life, which

have gone on unhindered for years, without the influences from ‘new blood’ and new ideas associated with people who come from beyond the region.



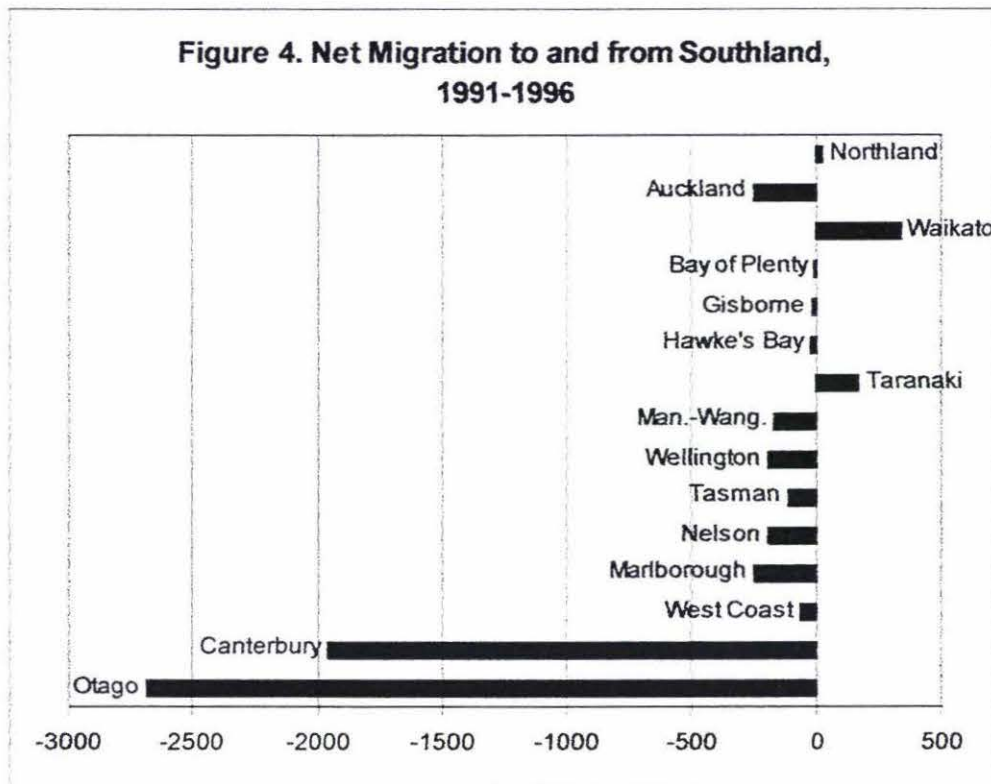
Source: Houghton et al, 1996:37;

http://www.stats.gov.nz/domino/exteranl/web/prod_serv.nsf/htmldocs/Population

This familiar pattern to social life has been recently disrupted by ‘new blood’ coming into the region. According to census statistics, Southland has attracted significant numbers of people from three specific regions, the Waikato, Taranaki and Northland: all strong dairying areas in the North Island (refer to Figure 4 for more detail). This new trend could imply the purpose behind the move is very specific in nature, and likely to be associated with the dairying industry. Nonetheless, the influx of new people with no linkage to the established social networks has the potential to affect the entrenched patterns of community life within a specific locality, like the Valley.

While the changing demographic profile of the Valley has the potential to change the social dynamics within the area, its location in relation to other urban centres has the potential to do likewise. The Lower Maitara Valley is a thirty-minute drive to Invercargill and a thirty-minute drive away from Gore. The sheer convenience of good roading and the new propensity for people to be more mobile means that people with cars, working in either of these urban centres, are within a commutable distance for daily travel. But equally, the reverse applies to urban dwellers working in the Valley

(Houghton & Wilson, 1995:25). However, for those without transport, living in Valley is not necessarily a convenient place for accessing the services such as banks for instance.



Source: Statistics New Zealand, 1999:15.

Likewise, the local services have increasingly been placed in a more precarious position financially, since the advent of centralised service provision. Nonetheless, the remaining shops provide far more than goods and services to the local population; they provide a focal point for meeting with other locals. Therefore, local shop closures might equate with a loss of critical gathering points for the locals, thus, leaving the schools with considerable significance as a tangible focus for a sense of collective community identity in the midst of a service depleted community.

Table 5.

Overview of the Lower Mataura Valley**General condition**

Macro economic environment	Government policies of agricultural deregulation And re-regulation, and restructuring of public services Increased global market competition Reduced full-time labour requirements, greater utilization of contractors and technologically improved productivity Farm amalgamations to larger less populated units Goods and services have centralised to larger centres
Political	Contraction in the role of central government Increased role of local government fostering economic Development

Specific features of the Lower Mataura Valley

Types of Farming	Predominantly dairy, and sheep
Population	< 1300
People	Farming families Service employees Retired Factory employees
Locational aspects	State Highway 1 and the main trunk line ½ hr. from both Gore and Invercargill The Mataura River
Service Centre	District High School Form 1-7 3 Primary Schools 7 Churches 3 Pubs 4 Transport companies 12 Agricultural Contractors 5 Petrol Stations 2 Grocery Stores 1 Farm Supplies
Industry	Southland Dairy Co-operative Ltd.
Key Concerns	Depopulation Dairy expansion and conversion In-migration of North Island dairy farmers

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

The early beginnings of Southland's colonial history is a suitable starting point for the Lower Maitava Valley context. It is in these early beginnings we come to discover more of the influences that have shaped the social fabric of this farming community, as it exists today. Not only does this period mark the origins of Southland's Scottish ancestral roots, but also the beginnings of farming in Southland.

Early Beginnings of the Lower Maitava Valley

Southland's early landholders came in the mid 1850s and were predominantly 'doughty' Scottish Presbyterians from farming stock who came with ideas of a better life¹(Wilson, 1961:175). Their physical and historical circumstances may have contributed to these early settlers being described in terms like being down to earth, practical and hard working, frugal, independent, and conservative in their approach to life's choices. These qualities were often linked to the strong presence of the Presbyterian Church and the harshness of life in both places, and it is these characteristics that have gone on to shape our understandings about Southlanders (Hatch, 1992: 168).

The Valley was founded in the 1860s, and initially operated as a sheep station under the management of the New Zealand and Australian Land Company. Their Edendale estate consisted of three large properties, of which the Maitava Valley (or now commonly known as the Lower Maitava Valley) was one. Early writings described this particular property as mainly agricultural land, carrying predominately sheep, as well as some cattle, with pockets of swamp and native bush land. (Wilson, 1961:1-9).

However, recollections of some early settlers paint a telling picture of the Valley. "It is the worst kind of country for the [*New Zealand and Australian Land Company*] to hold and cultivate! ...It was... about the most unsuitable and unprofitable land in New Zealand...Even though chosen by Scotchmen, ... who were accustomed to a specially wet climate at home, it is has always been a marvel to me how practical men should have selected such cold soil, when 150 miles north there were millions of acres of sweet productive land" (Wilson, 1961:10).

¹ There was also a small number of Irish settlers, and others who came via Australia (Wilson, 1961:175).

[*Some new arrivals to the areas who were*]“somewhat depressed by the bleakness of their surroundings and desolation of their prospect, [*were consoled with these comments*], It’ll ay be a grand place in a hundred years”(Wilson, 1961:188). Even early run holders who bordered the Valley considered this ‘tussocky’, ‘swampy’ valley, as ‘inferior’ to the hills and low lying ridges they farmed (Wilson, 1961:1). Interestingly, these portrayals associated the Valley with the potentials of farming.

The year 1881 was a crucial turning point for this property. The Land Company wanted to sell their ‘inferior’ properties, of which the Edendale estate was considered one, despite the fact that large sums of money had been spent on developing this ‘sour land’. Nonetheless, the Company knew if they wanted potential buyers, then further development was necessary (Wilson, 1961:10). This resulted in the idea of setting up a cheese factory on their estate and converting some of their land to dairying, as a means of demonstrating the potentials of dairying to prospective buyers. This strategy culminated in the Edendale dairy factory opening in 1882, the Edendale estate being sold off as 150-250 acre blocks to cash strapped early settlers, and more importantly, the beginnings of dairy farming in the Valley (Wilson, 1961:11-15).

While the Land Company might have viewed the Edendale dairy factory venture as their saviour, for property investment, it proved costly, and this venture could have been damned had it not been for other developments. In 1882, refrigerated shipping had just been developed in New Zealand, and this innovation represented a key link for New Zealand having trading relationships with other markets beyond its national borders (Gardner, 1992:79-83). Britain became that major trading link, and assured market for New Zealand’s wool, meat and dairy products for next 80 odd years. These developments that made perishable primary produce a valued export commodity and a key source of foreign earnings for New Zealand’s economy in the ensuing years; and it paved the way for intensive pastoral farming to become a viable economic activity throughout the country; and finally, it linked overseas market trends directly with the prosperity of farming locally (Brooking, 1981:233).

The Heyday of the Small Rural Settlement

Indeed, the guaranteed trading relationship with Britain signalled that closer settlements based on the independent, if not mortgage-bound family farm was now

possible. And it was around these family farms that a bundle of basic service amenities clustered which supplied and transported the produce for the family farms. It was this settlement arrangement and new social structure that was to dominate the rural landscape and reflect the social arrangement present in the Valley, until the 1960s (Le Heron, 1989:20).

The Lower Mataura Valley grew out of this rural prosperity based on family farming. In fact, by the 20th century four small rural districts and two townships surrounded by farms that ran both cows and sheep, characterized the socio-economic arrangement of the Valley. Each small settlement included the dairy co-operative, a cluster of houses, the general store, hall, primary school, church, and war memorial. The settlements were dotted approximately every 4 miles apart from the next, or within a radius of the most distant supplier (Hunter & McKenzie, 1989:48). By the late 1920s, there was on average about forty odd farmers supplying each of the six factories in the Valley, indicating how prevalent dairying was at the time (Southland Dairy Co. Ltd, 1998: 29). Thus, the dairy co-operatives became an integral part of these small settlements, in which the economic sphere of rural life overlapped with the social sphere of the local district, in other words, the school, church or sports clubs and such like activities.

Indeed, these districts were almost geographically and socially insulated from outside influences. This was mainly perpetuated by the fact that locals tended to marry other locals from the area; and information, gossip or shared concerns were conveniently circulated within the small radius of the district on a daily or weekly basis, either while washing cans down at the factory, or when getting the groceries at the general store, or when attending church and local district functions, or chatting on the party line, or working together on local working bees, not to mention the limitations of poor roading systems, which kept long distance travel to a minimum. Nonetheless, there were times of mixing with 'others' at inter-district functions, like the local dances or sports competitions, or at events like the sheep sales or the A & P show held at Wyndham. But once again, 'the others' were a 'known breed', much like themselves.

Not only were these districts insulated from outside influences, relationships between neighbours in the same road, or in the immediate district were well defined. Men were expected to help each other out at busy times, like during haymaking, or other times of

need. This involved more than hard work and a cup of tea and scones down the back paddock, it was a time to put the world to right and reaffirm each other's opinions. Likewise, women took for granted that in sickness, times of stress and pregnancy, they were there – with baking, casseroles, extra care, and 'neighbourliness'; activities which reinforced women's helping role, and enabled the social reproduction of her position within the community.

Although, what these close social ties within the district did not allow for, was a wide range of ideas to develop. But it did provide a platform for prominent figures in the district to influence what the priorities and expectations of others within this confined area should be, whether this related to the expectations of attending church, subscribing to the National party, or patronising local district functions, or helping out on local working bees, or, whether it related to the expectations of what men and women should, or, should not do. For example, the assumed role of women was caring for her family, assisting on the farm, and voluntary work in the community. Although, this is not to say that all women shared this same view, but it was the dominant understanding in circulation. Furthermore, few dared defy the expectations placed on them by these local standards. Nonetheless, a certain perceived stability and familiarity of the 'rules' were built around the immediate farming district of how social life functioned and would be reproduced.

The Golden Years for Sheep Farmers

As with farming elsewhere in New Zealand, there were fundamental changes to the conditions facing farmers and rural life in the Valley during the post war period. This was a time when the international market trends marked the golden years for sheep farming. During these years, farming flourished, the wool prices soared, the dollars flowed, and Wyndham and Edendale townships were thriving from the spin off's from this farming development phase (Wilson, 1961:101). This positive image and current prosperity meant that many farmers assumed their place of importance in the national economy.

With these favourable economic conditions for woolgrowers, it was not surprising therefore, that by the mid-1960s; many farmers had completely sold off their cows, and built up their sheep numbers instead. And understandably so, given that crossbred

wools were fetching record prices, and Southland had the right environmental conditions to have a comparative advantage over other regions for growing this wool type, and for gaining higher wool yields (a 7.8 percent higher wool yield per head) than other crossbred woolgrowers in New Zealand (Houghton et al, 1996:5).

The transition from cows to sheep meant more than a change in production, it represented a change in the social structure of the Valley: from one that revolved around the daily routines of dairy farming, to one that allowed for a social life beyond the farm gate. On one hand, the structure of dairy farming meant being tied to the regular milking hours of early morning and late afternoon, or, effectively, a split shift at each end of the day, every day, irrespective of the weather, over the spring, summer and autumn months. In other words, dairy farmers were often associated with keeping unsociable hours and having a limited time for a social life outside that routine: a work routine not dissimilar to that found in industry (Blunden et al, 1997:1765). In fact, 'cow cockies' were thought of as 'being tied to the cows', compared to the freedoms associated with sheep farming.

Instead, their seasonal rhythms associated allowed for an 'easier' - less labour intensive lifestyle with flexibility in their daily routines. This flexibility meant that sheep farmers had the time of day for a yarn, could participate in local community events, and even go on summer holidays, although, they also have their identifiable seasonal peaks and very demanding times. Nonetheless, the social arrangement of sheep farming enabled them to experience greater freedoms than was possible for their dairy-farming counterparts. Thus, when wool prices were fetching record returns, the impressions were that - 'sheep farmers were riding on the sheep's back', and 'cow cockies' were the poor relations, not only economically, but socially as well. But if, on the other hand, dairy farmers sold their herds and converted to sheep, then they would be considered as taking a step up the social ladder.

Nevertheless, in spite of sheep farmers being perceived as having a privileged position, the local dairy co-operatives still represented a key organization, in terms of the role they played in reshaping the commonly shared practices within the Valley. For example, in their efforts to improve efficiencies both on the farm and in the factory, in 1966, they introduced the system of bulk tanker collection. This new system also

removed what had become the daily ritual for gathering together at the local factory and putting the world to right with other so-called like-minded dairy farmers. In effect, this move cut out an important site of social connection in each of the small districts (Southland Dairy Co-operative, 1998:2; Hunter & McKenzie, 1989:48).

Nonetheless, by the mid 1960s, the small co-operatives faced problems as supplier numbers fell, and as manufacturing and overhead costs started to mount. These circumstances led to the demise of the small co-operatives, in favour of a centralised, upgraded operation with fewer workers in Edendale for processing all of Southland's milk supply (refer to Figure 5 for more details at the end of the chapter) (Southland Dairy Co-operative, 1998:2; Hunter & McKenzie, 1989:59). However, the closure of local institutions that carried the name of each district could be viewed as eroding their sense of identity. Or, it could be viewed as the end of an era for dairying and its place of importance within the Valley. Alternatively, it could be understood as essential for the industries long-term survival.

Readjustments to Social Life in the Valley

By the 1970s, the taken-for-granted social patterns and certainties for living in the Valley were changing again. These changes were linked to the broader economic and political conditions of that time. Of particular note was the way in which these conditions prompted a diverse range of responses from farmers throughout New Zealand after receiving such poor returns for what they believed were valued products for the New Zealand economy. However, unlike some regions, most farmers in the Valley maintained their strong sheep farming tradition, and increased production instead. Some brought-out their neighbours as a means of increasing productivity, rather than diversify into new areas of production like deer or forestry for example; or subdivide into horticulture blocks (as in some regions), or lifestyle blocks as was often the case with farms located near urban centres (Cairns, 1992:35; Moran, 1997:7; Houghton et al, 1996:29). In a sense, these changes only intensified the narrow range of interest that revolved around and depended on the priorities of sheep farmers. Yet, these structural changes had major implications for the small districts of Menzies Ferry, Maitara Island, Seaward Downs and Brydone.

It was the combination of bigger farms and fewer farm families and reliance on improved technology that marked the beginnings of depopulation, and more significantly, the end of a familiar pattern to social life in the Valley. Indeed, it was the loss of population, and more importantly, the loss of familiar long-term residents assumed to be a part of the local establishment that altered the social dynamics of the area.

With fewer families in each district, and the prospects of fewer children in the pipeline, the school rolls dropped, and in 1970, two district primary schools were closed (refer to Figure 5 for more detail). For those particular districts, the school's closure meant a crucial site for gathering together collectively as a district was also extinguished, and school children were then forced to move well outside the perceived boundary of the local district to attend the nearest school. There was also the flow on effect created by losing a threshold population; in fact, three of district's general stores went out of business (Hunter & McKenzie, 1989: 31). In other words, these closures cut out important sites where locals informally gathered, and by which these small districts could be visually recognised.

Furthermore, rural job losses and the visual reminder of empty buildings, also put an end to the assumption that two or three years education was sufficient, before either moving back onto the farm or taking up an apprenticeship in a trade, or assuming that job security or prospects of local employment were assured for life. Instead, young people and school leavers either pursued higher educational qualifications, or sought-out employment in Invercargill, or other northern centres (Houghton et al, 1996:3).

Indeed, depopulation also initiated a pattern of social fragmentation within the small districts. This was reflected by the number of interest groups and sports clubs that struggled to survive, or disbanded over this time, including, Federated Farmers, Association of Presbyterian Women (APW), Guides and Brownies, indoor and outdoor bowls, and tennis (Hunter & McKenzie, 1989:75). Not only did it initiate a focus beyond the geographical boundaries of each district for accessing goods and services and employment opportunities, it threatened opportunities for maintaining a sense of social connection within the immediate district. (For further details on various closures, refer to Figure 5) Undoubtedly, all these processes represented a loss of the familiar,

whether that meant friends, family, or social institutions, or ways of doing things for people in the Valley.

RESTRUCTURING in the 1980s: RURAL CRISIS

With the change of government in 1984, came changes to the political and economic conditions affecting the whole of New Zealand. But in farming communities, like the Valley, the most dramatic and far-reaching change was, the lack of commitment by this new Labour led government to interventionist strategies that they had come to depend on. Moreover, this change in government signalled the transferral of economic risk from the state to the farmer and the beginnings of a new relationship connected to the global market instead (Britton et al, 1992:94).

Times of Transition

For Southland in general, these new economic and political conditions created a new sense of vulnerability to this agriculturally dependent region. This sense of vulnerability was particularly poignant since many farmers in Southland had specialised in sheep and wool production, since the 1960s, to the point of almost economic dependence. Sheep farmers' incomes which had previously been artificially inflated were almost halved overnight, and generally remained static for the rest of the decade, in contrast to dairy farmers incomes, which correspondingly fell, but eventually recovered during the late 1980s (Cairns, 1992:35; Easton, 1997:169).

Although, not all farmers experienced the same sense of vulnerability to the sudden drop in income, but it did have the effect of suddenly differentiating farm families according to their debt levels (Britton et al, 1992:105). Research findings on farm family responses to agricultural deregulation in Southland found that most of the long established farm families in the area had the resources to withstand the financial squeeze, and on the whole, were minimally affected. Many farmers in this study spoke of Southland farmers being less vulnerable² than some, but also suggested they had "always farmed conservatively", or in other words, they were not considered risk takers, therefore, they could cope with the economic conditions they now had to farm under (Wilson, 1994:12).

Nonetheless, this climate of economic and political uncertainty prompted a general response by farmers to close their chequebooks as one means of cutting back on farm expenditure. Yet, any response requiring cut backs in farm inputs; such as fertiliser and replacing farm machinery, or reducing labour costs, or working harder to raise production levels to compensate for the low returns, or having to seek off-farm employment to supplement the family income, were all processes that potentially put additional stress on the traditional family farm operation and their connection to the local services centres of Wyndham and Edendale (Britton et al, 1992:96; Wilson, 1995:420).

For example, key understandings about men and women's traditional role on the family farm, and women's voluntary works in the community were being challenged under these new economic conditions. Indeed, women were becoming more involved than ever in contributing to the viability of the farming business, whether that translated into more work around the farm, rather than employ outside farm labour, or whether it meant taking-up paid work over and above their domestic work (Wilson, 1994:7-8; Underwood & Ripley, 2000:11). The point is, this extra workload meant workingwomen were no longer free or available to drop tools and participate in the local service organizations, as they had in the past, mainly because they were working for somebody else, rather than being self-employed.

Although, Table 6 (below) shows the employment levels for Southland rural women had already significantly increased prior to the impacts of restructuring, which in a sense, recognises the multiple and shifting identities of rural women beyond just the dominant image, of being the helper (Houghton et al, 1996:42). But ultimately, the idea of women in paid employment, whether as a means of survival or lifestyle preference, meant the underlying assumptions about women's work in the community and home were being challenged the new trends of acceptability for women being in paid, off-farm employment. At the time of fieldwork for this thesis, some people mentioned that organizations like Women's Division had experienced a fall off in membership, mainly because women were too busy, and it may mean closure for one of the branches.

² Some farmers, in other regions of the country had the added stress of dealing with drought conditions as

Table 6.

Employment Trends in Rural Southland (Full and Part-time Workforce) by Gender

Year	1976	1981	1986	1991
Male	10938	10818	10239	8739
Female	3399	4593	5358	5358
Total	14337	15411	15597	14097

Employment in the Agricultural Sector

Year	1976	1981	1986	1991
Male	6006	5979	5865	5058
Female	1188	2007	2517	2397
Total	7194	7986	8382	7641

Source: Houghton et al, 1996:44

Also, the moves towards centralisation of services combined with farmers dramatic drop in income inevitably put a financial squeeze on local businesses. For Wyndham and Edendale, this linkage was more visually apparent, in the late 1980s, when the United Trading Company, a longstanding hardware store, and gathering place for people in the Valley folded; a number of stock and station firms normally patronised by local farmers either merged, closed, or relocated to Gore or Invercargill as either a survival strategy or as an attempt to increase their efficiency and competitiveness; Edendale's Joinery Factory also closed its operation; and the Edendale and Wyndham post offices closed, although, their closure was more symbolic of the state's disinvestment in rural communities.

Whether these closures were triggered by the broader economic restructuring processes and shifting organisational practices or reduced spending by local residents, the end result has left a vista of vacant buildings in the main streets of these townships. These closures, nonetheless, effectively expressed a broader spatial trend of interest away from rural towns and peripheral regions, in terms of accessing services, to favouring their concentration in larger centres. These processes have opened the way for further

dislocation between the economic and social spheres of connection for people in the Valley (Britton et al, 1992:147).

Despite the fact the postal facilities were replaced by local agencies in two local shops, it was the loss of the core businesses and no corresponding replacement that effectively diminished the need for locals doing their shopping in the Valley. Instead, Gore and Invercargill provided a full range of professional and retail services all within an accessible distance. However, this reconfiguration of services away from Wyndham and Edendale effectively diluted the opportunities for locals having a yarn with other locals. On the other hand, it increased people's mobility and awareness of the non-local competitive options. But ultimately, this shift shopping behaviour altered an integral part of cultural life and social connection in the Valley (Wilson, 1995:427).

Yet the closures, takeovers and mergers, and associated job losses also had the effect of marginalizing those unable to find local employment. Between 1986 and 1991, census reports point to a significant 10 percent decrease in the number of full-time positions available in rural Southland, which might further suggest that people living in the same locality were now competing for the same scarce employment opportunities (Houghton et al, 1996:45). Alternatively, it could mean that jobseekers were expected to move away from rural areas to urban centres or to other regions, if they wanted to maximise their employment opportunities (Underwood & Ripley, 2000:10).

According to census figures, the latter option seems to link in with the 8.6 percent decrease in population experienced in rural Southland, when over this same time period, New Zealand's rural population actually increased by 1.4 percent. Of particular interest, is that population loss was age-specific: a significant 75 percent of the 20-29 year age group left the region. This indicates the population decline not only impacted on absolute numbers in rural areas, but also in terms of the age structure. It meant there was now a reduced pool of young people available to contribute to the different local organizations, like rugby or netball, or to the different social networks present in the Valley (Houghton et al, 1996:43).

POST-RESTRUCTURING ENVIRONMENT in the 1990s: A NEW FOCUS

In the 1990s came the resurgence of dairying in the Valley. This shift of interest away from sheep farming towards dairying instead, was related to other interrelated developments occurring on a much broader spatial scale as were highlighted in chapter three. For Southland, the low confidence levels in the sheep industry were reflected in the distinct drop in sheep numbers. However, this decrease was much less dramatic than the national trend, probably because of its productivity advantage. Nevertheless, as Table 7 clearly shows, there has been a distinct move away from sheep production in this region (Houghton et al, 1996:8-9).

Table 7. Changes in Farming Activity in Southland

Type of Stock	1981	1986	1991	1996	1999
Dairy Cattle	24421	32593	43956	137552	232966
Sheep	8826414	9314758	8453558	7457393	6738097

Source: Houghton et al, 1996:31;

<http://www.maf.govt.nz/statistics/primaryindustries/regions/tables/southland.htm>

Then by contrast, this same national and international environment provided the right conditions for the dairy industry to expand throughout New Zealand, and in particular Southland. At the national level, there were two processes that provided an enabling environment for dairying to expand: the long awaited fall in interest rates in 1989, and the reorganisation of the local government (Bryant, 1989:338; Le Heron & Pawson, 1996:260). For investors wanting to take advantage of the falling interest rates, and had intentions of buying land for dairy conversion, location became a critical factor in the equation.

Traditionally, New Zealand's dairy production has been associated with, and concentrated in Taranaki and the Waikato. Here, farms were small, (approximately 80 hectares, compared to the Southland Plains farms that average 180 hectares), and land prices were relatively high, or have been driven-up by the demand for rural lifestyle blocks and smaller horticultural sections. But ultimately, there was limited room for further expansion (Moran, 1997:6-9; Cairns, 1992:14). The fall in interest rates,

however, did provide opportunities for dairy expansions in locations where land values were lower, or that had specialised in sheep farming, like Southland.

Marketing Southland

Part of the government reform package, introduced in 1989, meant local governments now operated under different political and economic conditions. With the reforms, came expectations that local governments and other local groups or individuals would play a more entrepreneurial role in promoting local economic development within their region (Le Heron & Pawson, 1996:290-1). For the Southland region, these reforms signalled the beginnings of a comprehensive marketing programme aimed at attracting outside investment, and reversing the predominant pattern of population flow out of the region.

Part of the marketing programme revolved around branding Southland, in other words, constructing a particular image that focused on Southland as a “special productive paradise” (Southland Times, 28.7.2000:10). Certain features were highlighted, particularly in regards to the region’s natural resources, availability of land, and the assumed economic spin-offs these resources could bring to the province (Venture Southland, 2000). Various public-private partnerships were formed: each with a different focus, but all with a common purpose, centred on identifying new opportunities for economic development within the region. (Burborough & Trost, 2000:1-6).

Of particular interest are the entrepreneurial strategies of the groups Southland Dairy Co-operative, and Farming in Southland⁴. Both groups had invested interests in marketing dairying in Southland, and both played a significant role in constructing a particular image of Southland, based on the assumed benefits and opportunities and comparative advantages of investing in land in the south would bring outside investors.

In 1991, the Southland Dairy Co-operative’s directors spoke about achieving ‘increased milk volumes and turnover’ at their Edendale site, as a means ‘to progress’

⁴ Farming in Southland is a group representing Southland agribusiness- accountants, lawyers, rural real estate agents, bankers that are marketing Southland’s agricultural opportunities, with a special focus on dairying (Southland Times, 11.7.00).

They also viewed the National Agricultural Field Days at Mystery Creek, near Hamilton, as an ideal location for their campaign, believing this event would provide them access to a broader spectrum of potential investors to sell their particular image of Southland - a prime dairying area with affordable top quality land, reliable climate for maximising production, and with fewer health problems for stock because of its cooler climate (South Island Dairy Co-operative, 1998:6). They also viewed farming in terms of a business venture where investors could expand their business (Southland Times, 15.2.2001:5).

At the same time, Farming in Southland added their support to the programme with organised tours to the region; along with promotional material on what they viewed were Southland's marketable features (Southland Times, 15.2.2001:5). In other words, they attached meanings to certain features they considered would be viewed as having a monetary value to the dairy farming sector, or in which Southland was presumed to have a competitive advantage over other regions. Included were features like its 'reliable climate', its good soils, its scale for growth, its higher stocking rate per hectare and the availability of land suitable for conversion at low prices (Farming in Southland: Promotional Pamphlet).

The Resurgence of Dairying In Southland

Indeed, the combination of these marketing strategies and the broader economic conditions were major influences in reshaping the way Southland, and more specifically, the Lower Maitava Valley is currently structured. The initial signs of change came when two corporate companies, Tasman Agriculture Limited and Apple Fields Limited⁵ entered dairying in the late 1980s, and took advantage of buying up a number of sheep farms suitable for conversion on the Southland Plains, while land prices were historically low (Wilson, 1995:428; Blunden et al, 1997:1768).

Their presence, not only introduced a new social group of absentee landowners with no historical social connection into the region, the idea of corporate dairy farmers, challenged previous understandings about dairy farming and landownership as it had

⁵ In the late 1990s, Apple Fields sold all their Southland properties, and Tasman Agriculture currently has all their Southland properties on the market (Tasman Agriculture Limited, 2000:15).

been traditionally practiced. The very structural arrangement of dairy farming (through the sharemilking system) opened-up opportunities for non-farm investors and absentee owners to participate in the benefits of dairying's marketing success. Indeed, landownership was used as the means of maximising their returns on their investment, rather than necessarily as a means of providing a sense of continuity of landownership from one generation to the next, as was commonly practice in the past (Blunden et al, 1997:1768).

Following the buy-up from Tasman Agriculture and Apple Fields, there has been a wave of new buyers, equally attracted to ideas of affordable farmland, in a less drought prone area, where there was plenty of land suitable for conversion and room to expand, not to mention, the availability of supplementary feed from neighbouring sheep farms (Southland Times, 15.2.2001:5). In fact, those who bought farmland with these opportunities in mind grew in number, to the point that by 1995, they represented half of the total number of the Southland Dairy Co-operative's suppliers (Houghton & Wilson, 1995:ii). This trend of buying up sheep farms for dairy conversion also marked the dramatic shift back to dairying throughout Southland,⁶ and in the Valley, but there was a difference, it was at a scale of intensity that had never been witnessed before.

These newly converted farms have a number of significant features: they were much larger in scale, with an average herd size of 280 on 163 hectares, compared to say an average Taranaki dairy farm of 184 cows on 78 hectares at the same time (the early 1990's), or for that matter, an average Southland herd of about 160 cows on 80 hectares (Houghton & Wilson, 1995:11; Willis, 1997:5). This increase could also have reflected the differentiation in land prices, which advantaged Northern farmers who were in a position to swap their original property for twice the area in the south, without necessarily incurring debt (South Island Dairy Co-operative, 1998:6).

⁶ Since the early 1990s, a number of sheep farms have also been converted into forestry plantations in Western, Northern and Southern Southland, by small-scale family investors, and increasingly by foreign investors. But closer to the Lower Maitai Valley context, the internationally owned Rayonier New Zealand Ltd built a \$180 million medium density fibreboard processing plant, on prime pastoral farmland at the base of Brydone hill (Southland Times, 9.6.2000:9).

However, since the early 1990s, the general trend in dairy farms in Southland has been one of expansion, both in size and scale⁷. The average farm now carries about 365 cows on 140 hectares (Southland Times, 6.7.2000:15). By contrast, the general trend for sheep farming in Southland has been one of contraction (refer to Table 7): a trend, also mirrored at the national level (Southland Times, 2.6.2000:12).

This distinct shift back to dairying also had the potential to change some widely held beliefs about farming in places like the Valley: it opened-up the possibility of challenging the previous understandings about sheep farmer's privileged position, since their position was no longer rewarded in monetary terms, as it was in the past, and this might suggest that positionality may not necessarily be fixed. Furthermore, it altered the prevailing social structure of the Valley: instead of the flexible rhythms of sheep farming, it revolved around the more rigid, time-bound structure associated with dairy farming.

Another important structural change associated with this shift back to dairying has been the diverse types of ownership arrangements now involved, over and above the traditional arrangement (of the working owner) that was shared in common with sheep farmers. There were corporate owners, equity partnerships (between sharemilkers and owners and outside investors), family trusts, and finally, the landowners, who employed farm managers and farm workers instead (Southland Times, 16.8.2000:9). Landownership, while being a focus of potential unity, could also be a source of constructing difference. Issues of landownership of sizeable investment such as land itself, dwellings, improvements and stock, could expose differences between these various types of ownership arrangements, or lack thereof.

These changes, since the 1990s, also opened up the way for sharemilkers⁸ being a significant social group now connected to dairying in Southland. In fact, in 1995, they represented a third of Southland's Dairy Co-operative suppliers (Houghton & Wilson, 1995:13). They also could be viewed as a distinct social group that was characterised

⁷ This increase has also been aided by technological developments in the milking operation (Blunden et al, 1997:1766).

⁸ Sharemilkers usually implies a couple where both partners are a part of the dairying operation (Blunden et al, 1997: 1768).

by being highly motivated (to maximise production in order to maximise returns) for the goal of farm ownership. Alternatively, they could be viewed as being highly mobile because of the short-term contract arrangement associated with sharemilking (usually two years). Furthermore, sharemilkers tended to be younger (under forty), with younger families, and therefore, in a position to be boosting the numbers at the remaining local primary schools of Wyndham, Edendale and Brydone (Houghton & Wilson, 1995:39). These distinctives may be important for understanding the different practices that connected a particular social group to a particular place, like the Valley.

In addition, Southland's Dairy Co-operative at Edendale has undergone major developments since the early 1990s (refer to Table 8).

Table 8. Southland's Dairy Co-operative Ltd. expansion process

Year	No. of Suppliers	Developments
1989	156	
1990	180	
1991	187	Promoting dairying in Southland at Mystery Creek, Hamilton
1992	194	
1993	226	
1994	286	Change to 24 hour production
1995	358	\$70 million dry whole milk powder plant opened.
1996	414	New casein plant opened
1997	438	
1998	448	Southland Dairy Co-op. and Alpine Dairy Products in Timaru merged to become the South Island Dairy Co-operative Limited under the NZDG
1999	460	
2000	500	\$36 million expansion including a 2 nd casein plant and a whey protein concentrate plant.

Source: derived from the South Island Dairy Co-operative Ltd, May 1998.

They have seen a dramatic rise in supplier numbers; they have undergone major structural alterations, in terms of production capacity, processing efficiencies, and product diversification to accommodate the extra volumes of milk. Furthermore, since 1998, the Southland Dairy Co-operative was taken over by the New Zealand Dairy

Group (NZDG),⁹ and producing under the brand name Anchor Products (South Island Dairy Co-operative Ltd., 1998:6-11). These changes have transformed the once relatively small-localized Edendale factory, of the 1960s, into a major industrial site where the locus of control in management and decision-making processes was now centralised in Hamilton.

Furthermore, the expansion process also involved a reorganisation of employment patterns in the factory. Since 1991, the work force has steadily expanded from 115 to 270 employees in 2000. But interestingly, factory workers were no longer sourced from just the immediate area. By 1995, about a quarter of the workforce travelled daily from Invercargill (Houghton & Wilson, 1995:28-30). In 1994, the factory changed to a 24-hour operation, to cope with the increased milk volumes, which meant the company assumed on a flexible labour force, as a means of increasing their efficiency in order to remain internationally competitive (South Island Dairy Co-operative, 1998:7). These changing work routines may also impact on local organizations that have previously assumed on regular working hours and the availability of men¹⁰ for the likes of the local fire brigades and rugby clubs.

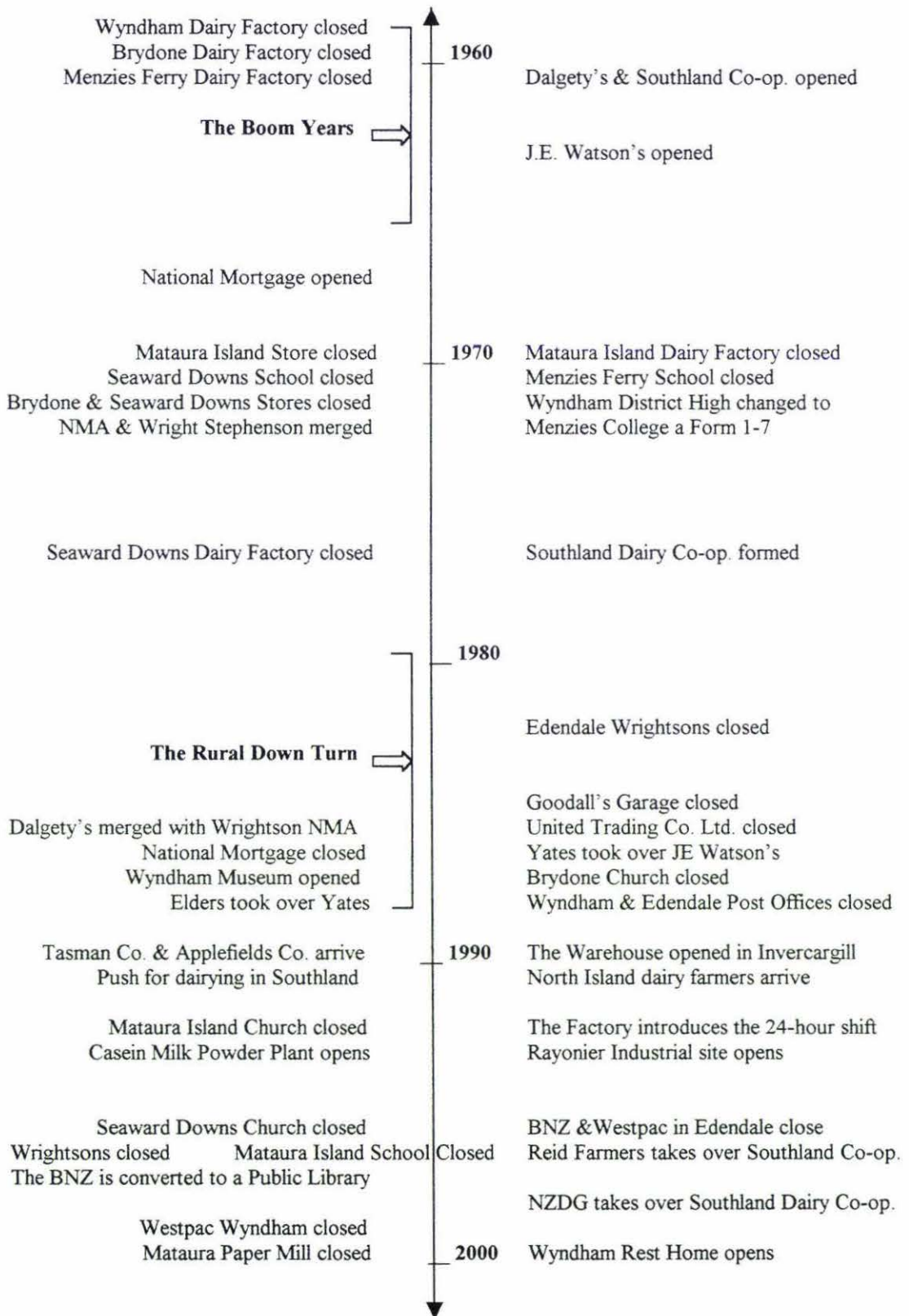
More generally, the dairy resurgence has led to a wave of new residents migrating to Southland. According to a recent survey, the majority were from the North Island; some were from other South Island regions or from overseas, but of note, most had backgrounds in dairying, and were more likely to be younger families (Houghton & Wilson, 1995:15, 41-2). This influx of new residents has occurred in tandem with the on-going exit of young people seeking further educational and employment opportunities elsewhere, the exit of long-term sheep farming families, the replacement of family farms for forestry plantations in certain parts of Southland, and 155 job losses at Matura Paper Mill, in 2000. This movement of people in and out of Southland has, in effect, introduced new identities, new voices and the possibility of new social networks being connected to places like the Valley.

Conclusion

⁹ The New Zealand Dairy Group has been the largest dairy company in New Zealand; their centre of operation has historically been associated with the Waikato in the North Island.

¹⁰ More than two thirds of the factory's employees were male (Houghton & Wilson, 1995:28).

This overview has provided a window of understanding for the reader to appreciate the locational particularities, the various social groups and their connection to the Lower Maitava Valley, and the webs of social, political and economic influences that have contributed to the changing shape of this particular rural community located in Eastern Southland, as it exists today. What this profile has not included is how the people in the Valley have responded to, and attribute and interpret these changes. The next chapter provides an opportunity to hear their stories, their insights and understandings about this rural community instead.

Figure 5. TRENDS IN THE LOWER MATAURA VALLEY

CHAPTER FIVE

METHODS FOR AN 'INSIDER': CONVERSATIONS OVER A CUP OF TEA

The new post structural conceptualisation of 'community', as we have already seen, presents a new approach to the theorisation of community. This approach, and its more cultural and discursive emphasis suggests that conventional forms of analysis, such as survey methods that presupposed what is known, are inadequate for dealing with the complex nature of communities, and also fail to capture the diverse ways local people construct, or reconstruct ideas about 'community' in their everyday conversations (Liepins, 2000). In effect, it is reasserting the legitimacy of people's local knowledge as relevant and significant to the study of contemporary rural communities (Jones, 1995:40).

Consequently, for the purposes of this field-study, a less structured and more qualitative series of methods were used. Rather than adopting a single method for gaining information, research consisted of a mixture of informal discussions, in-depth interviews, occasional observations and secondary data to answer the research question.

This emphasis in this study was to understand how local people interpret and respond to broad trends occurring in New Zealand's rural sector, and how these trends affect the social arrangements within a place-specific community, in this case, the Lower Maitāwhiri Valley.

Fieldwork studies that report the subjective experiences of people in their micro-contexts have been often attacked for being idiosyncratic and specific (Burgess, 1984:143). Such studies have been regarded as sociology of the particular, and cannot be usefully generalised to wider society. Alternatively, a macro-level analysis, which provides a grand view of possible issues, outcomes and ideologies in circulation, have ignored the 'grassroots' experiences of ordinary people and the legitimacy of local knowledge (Fairclough, 1992:85). Thus combining the two approaches could help

close the gap by acknowledging that the lived experiences expressed in territorial communities will in part, be shaped by the broader social, political and economic conditions in which they exist within (Liepins, 2000:326).

Perhaps of equal importance is the realisation that field research involves adapting methods appropriate to the local situation, and acknowledging the position of a researcher is strongly linked to the methods considered appropriate in the circumstances (Storey, 1997:4; Phillips, 1998:44). These issues of identifying my role in the research process and adapting methodology are addressed in the following sections.

The Researcher: An Insider's Perspective

Coming to terms with my¹ position as being a researcher with an insider's perspective, was prompted by Phillips' (1998:44) challenge for researchers to recognise they cannot be completely detached observers; instead, they need to reflect on how they connect with those they are researching, and how those connections influence what knowledge the researcher gains in the research process. These ideas are reinforced by Chambers (1997), who called for researchers to have a critical self-awareness and to account for the biases they bring to the study. With these challenges in mind, it seemed only right to come clean on my position as a researcher, and to highlight the integral part it played in the research process, particularly with regard to the methods that seemed a suitable match for this inquiry. In fact, Ellen (1984:83) notes that the style of work by an insider is likely to differ from that of an outsider, even when using the same methods.

From the outset of this study, I was aware that my own cultural heritage as a 'born and bred Southlander' and cow-cocky's daughter, whose family has farmed in the district for three generations, would bring its own unique flavour to this study. It meant the study area was a place of familiarity, with many 'close relations', and being known by the locals. Put simply, I was no stranger to the area; I did not go under the guise of attempting to act *as an insider*, on the contrary, I *was an insider* with local knowledge (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1998:105).

Yet, I realise this position is not without its opportunities and constraints. Generally, speaking, gaining access to a community can be a major obstacle for fieldworkers (Campbell, 1992:90). I found this to be quite the opposite, people were more than willing to participate, they were generous with their time and pleased someone was taking an interest in 'their' area on an issue that had touched their lives. This level of receptivity to the study, I suspect, came more from who I was to them, rather than who I represented, as an 'academic researcher'. On the other hand, having a level of familiarity could have meant the significant issues were overlooked (Ellen, 1984:82). It also could be argued that my insider status discounts the possibility of being an independent, detached, objective researcher (Phillips, 1998:44). Instead, an alternative route, which I have chosen to travel, is to be more transparent and highlight my role as an integral part of the research process and acknowledge that the results reviewed will in part reflect this personal component in the finished document.

While it is true I could lay claim to having 'the right credentials', it is the locals who define the terms of 'membership', in this case, being 'born and bred' local (Campbell, 1992:91). More often than not, just stating my surname was as good as a 'right of entry' to an insiders worldview. Like Taylor and Bogdan (1998:49), I discovered this strategy early on in the piece, as a way of building relationships with people not known to me personally. As my field notes confirm: "I could see that his manner relaxed, when his wife mentioned that she knew my brother. It seemed like, when he knew where I 'fitted in', he didn't have to be as careful about what he said." Essentially, I was entrusted with their unedited views because of my credentials, which made the research process seem like a 'natural' enquiry rather than a contrived investigation (Burgess 1984:23).

Related to this, it became obvious that as a local I was naturally 'assigned' to certain social networks, and not to others. For better or worse, I was assigned to that of a churchgoer, single middle-aged woman with a rural background. Hammersley and Atkinson (1983:92) explained how these so-called 'ascribed' characteristics might shape relationships with different people or networks in the study area. I found this as well. It felt like I was wearing different hats with different people and groups

¹ Taylor and Bogdan recommend the researcher should identify themselves in their research findings,

depending on the situation and my 'assigned' role. This was particularly the case when crossing over established social boundaries, which were all but set in concrete. For instance, 'hanging out' at the local pub would be viewed as out of 'character', because it is the place where 'local blokes' socialise over a pint. But I found that having lived away from the area for a considerable time gave me more room to be flexible, and do things ordinary members cannot.

Not only do my rural roots affect this study, but my background experience has also influenced my 'style' of working (Ellen, 1984:87). Having lived and worked in a Thai slum community for ten years where I was immersed in another culture and communicated in another language, it sensitised me to other worldviews, and an awareness of being in the minority, or, of being 'the other'. But more importantly, it made me realise that building trust and developing relationships by 'hanging out' with the people in the slum community was critical to the process of grassroots community development work that I was involved in. This style of working has become my mode of operation. Consequently, because of my background experience, I entered the study area with a natural inclination towards ethnographic research.

Adapting Methods For Local Situations

During the early stages of the research process, I had expressed an interest in using ethnographic and Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) methods. This choice was because it complemented my background experience, and lent itself to this particular topic of capturing how people construct their ideas of 'community', and it seemed the most natural way of going about research (Taylor & Bogdan, 1998:53). This choice was also influenced by my natural aversion to survey methods, such as questionnaires that can pre-determine the people, questions and responses to be considered for inferences about a wider group of the population (Broughton & Hampshire, 1997:73). But as well, they require minimal interaction between the researcher and people included in the study. This sense of rigidity, and minimal interaction with people seemed inappropriate for this type of study.

Ethnography has been commonly associated with participant observation and the work of social anthropologists (Ellen, 1984:14). Hammersley and Atkinson (1983:1) refer to it primarily as a set of methods to do a qualitative study, where the researcher participates “in people’s daily lives for an extended period of time, watching what happens, listen to what is said, asking questions – in fact, collecting whatever data are available”. On the other hand, PRA is more a family of approaches and methods that enables local people to conduct their own appraisal and analysis, and where the researcher starts the process then “hands over the stick” (Chambers, 1994: 1253-5). As a combination, these approaches expressed the essence of qualitative research, which values local people’s knowledge and sees fieldwork as a flexible process rather than a rigid science (Chambers, 1997:110).

According to Babbie (1998:291), qualitative research is more about having a general plan and direction so one can explore the issues that may not been anticipated. In other words, having a preconceived idea of what methods to use is important. But Wax (1971:10) is more direct, and warns against rigidly sticking to a method, technique or doctrine, and likens it to being confined to a cage. From Storey’s (1997:4) fieldwork experience, he found that adapting methods to suit the local situation was one of the keys for accessing a rich source of information. Together, these ideas were confirmed, when I was faced with the realities of entering the field to find that I needed to rethink through the methods that would best facilitate accessing information.

Initially, I drove around the study area with the idea of getting a feel of the place and noting the visible changes that had occurred overtime. My impressions were, ‘where are the people, where are the cars?’ It was apparent that rural Southland was completely different to my experience of congested alleyways in slum communities and the style of communal living found in the rural villages of Thailand. There, people’s daily activities were in the open, and conversations happened naturally over daily chores. Also, it was possible to go-on-foot around the entire ‘community’ rather than go by car. These realities changed the whole dynamic of being able to effectively ‘hang out’ with, and learn from observing people’s daily interactions. Obviously participant observation was not going to be the best method for efficiently gathering information within the six-week timeframe. Instead, I needed to be more intentional about the whole research process, for accessing people and various social networks.

The length of time prior to fieldwork also had its own limitations. I found there was insufficient time for establishing contact and arranging convenient² times for the different social groups to initiate, own and share in the research process (Chambers, 1994: 1253). Given that the PRA approach stresses studies initiated with and by the people themselves, and an emphasis on group analysis over individual analysis, and these opportunities were not possible. These were coupled with a concern that this study was initiated by me and for my benefit, which was to complete this thesis rather than for their benefit (Chambers, 1994: 1263). I felt that together, these issues and concerns called for adapting the PRA methods to fit-in-with the local situation and the time constraints.

While the constraints of insufficient time prior to fieldwork prompted the need for changing strategies, these were offset by the opportunities the winter season provided. As a researcher, the winter season represented an ideal time for doing research in rural communities when farmers have the time of day 'for a yarn'. Subsequently, it was the principles of the PRA approach in terms of me, the 'outsider' (researcher) sitting down and listening and learning from the local people, and its less structured methods that allowed for relaxed conversations that were embraced for this study (Chambers, 1997:103).

The PRA Approach

The PRA approach has a number of attributes that sets it approach apart from being just a method for conducting research. This approach is concerned about the behaviours and attitudes of outside researchers, and is equally concerned about avoiding the biases commonly associated with conventional survey approaches (Chambers, 1997:111-114). Chambers (1994: 1254) outlines the basic principles of the method:

- **A reversal of learning.** The emphases is on spending time close to people in their lived situation, and learn from their stores of knowledge.

² Some groups were not meeting over the winter months; other groups had pre-arranged programmes or speakers booked well in advance that limited the access to group situations.

- **Learning flexibility in the field.** Each research situation will be unique, and the approach reflects this need for flexibility of methods, opportunism, improvisation, iteration and crosschecking, and adapting is part of this exploratory learning process.
- **Offsetting biases** by taking the relaxed and unhurried approach, listening to rather than lecturing, and seeking out the less dominant and learn of their priorities, and be unimposing. Biases can include the people, places and time of day we choose, or do not choose.
- **Optimising tradeoffs** of information between quality, relevance, accuracy and timeliness, knowing what is useful and what is not, and measuring only when necessary.
- **Triangulating.** Use a range of research techniques to substantiate the findings for a clearer understanding of the context and people involved. This involves assessing and comparing findings through several methods, or sources of data.
- **Seeking diversity.** Look for variation, not averages, or ‘maximising the diversity and richness of information’.

The principles of the PRA approach are, therefore, relevant for studies that intend to focus on learning from local people about their perspectives. What this entails is a reversal of learning from the etic to the emic: from valuing the outsiders’ knowledge to valuing local knowledge. It is what Chambers refers to, as ‘they know’, in other words, their knowledge counts. In this respect, because the insights of local people cannot be known in advance, it is important the researcher goes with an open mind and discovers from them (Chambers, 1994: 1262; 1997:107).

An Insider’s Research Technique

What I found was research methods were dependent on local circumstances, my connections with the people and the practical constraints (Taylor & Bogdan, 1998:90). Therefore, I followed Chambers (1997:116) advice of “use your own best judgement at all times”. This encouraged me to consider a natural method of inquiry, which fitted the local circumstances: the method of *conversations over a cup of tea*. Although, they were not simply conversations they were “conversations with a purpose” (Burgess, 1984:102).

For me, this style of interviewing was interactive, productive and relational; it reflected my personality (Ellen, 1984:69). It played to their strengths, in that rural people like

having a yarn and wintertime allowed for this, but also people were keen to talk and express their views with somebody who had an empathetic ear. Therefore, I prioritised people's conversations as my major source of qualitative data.

Conversations were a reflective process, in that people may never have articulated their thoughts to the questions being asked before. In this way, direct interaction provoked their thoughts to be expressed in their own words. Jones (1995:38) refers to this as a form of 'internal discourse', in contrast to observation techniques that 'listen into and/or observe and rely on 'external discourse' or second-hand knowledge. Therefore, I was able to hear their interpretation of meanings, events, activities and places of importance to them that could not be observed directly, as well as comments that compared the 'good old days' with the present. It is true their versions may be distorted, idealised or generalised, but they offer an understanding and insights into ideas in circulation that contribute to the construction of social life in the study area at the time (Taylor & Bogdan, 1998:109). This style of interviewing was far from passive, it required the "need to be able to listen, think and talk almost at the same time" (Babbie, 1998:291).

This approach suited my connection with the people. These connections meant that those I interviewed were considered more than just 'informants' or 'respondents' or mere sources for data; I knew them personally, and so I refer to them as people (Taylor & Bogdan, 1998:111). Therefore, interviews were modelled on conversations between equals around the kitchen table over a cup of tea; anything more formal would have appeared rude in the circumstances.

Furthermore, having connections meant staying in the area was a given. Although my decision was based more on pragmatic reasons, because it gave room for the serendipity, local telephone calls were free and I could take advantage of the local grapevine. For me, just 'being there' was a powerful technique in itself; I could follow up hunches, it often acted as a prompt to possible question to ask that would be difficult to capture at a distance

With any method there are limitations, but being aware of them is of equal importance. Generally, interactive conversations are bound to be time consuming, but I also found a

problem of maintaining a balance between getting information and getting sidetracked for the sake of on-going relationships: the latter prevailed. Also, individual interviews compared to group interviews require a larger sample number to reflect the spectrum of people in the study area. Furthermore, I found some people used the opportunity to have a moan, particularly when changes were viewed negatively; others modified their talk to create a good impression, or to achieve an effect, and it is true that what people say maybe different from what people do.

The Field Research Process

The research process began in June 2000 with seeking permission from the Managers of the Town Councils in the study area, and the Head of the Southland District Council to visit and conduct research for six weeks during July–August 2000. This was done for a number of reasons; out of respect for coming into their territory, their experience and local knowledge they bring on the general context, their local connections with people who they thought ‘would have something to say’, and their ability to access information relevant to the topic and context such as regional or district reports.

Therefore, on entering the area these people were my initial contacts, and proved to be invaluable for getting started by helping to identify aspects of change that had affected the study area. They could be described as *key informants* or people who have a deep understanding of the social setting (Kumar, 1993:110). Although they were not the only people who could be described as such, I included a range of people with different backgrounds and experience who brought their own wealth of knowledge and diverse ideas and concerns to this study (Burgess, 1984:75).

The next process that helped lay the groundwork for the study was accessing secondary data relating to the topic and locality. These included official reports, previous research, maps, historical documents, newspaper articles, and the local area telephone directory (Chambers, 1997:116). Using these resources aided my decisions on where to go, whom to contact, what to be aware of in the way of the broad socio-economic trends, and they also acted as a cross check with those who were interviewed. For example, maps were sometimes used as a focus point for discussion, the directory was a source for finding out the local social organizations and contacts and the local

newspaper was a source of topical issues relating to the particular context at that particular time.

The next phase was contacting the people. Generally, people for this study were selected through a combination of methods, from personal contacts, intuition, and snowballing techniques³ to get a broad spectrum of people with different backgrounds and experiences, and to offset any bias of prioritising just one method. The intention behind this selection was to get a meaningful sample of people from the area; it was not to prioritise only the most informed, but to include the 'ordinary' person who contributes to the multiple-voices and diversity of interests present in this particular community, including those who may be considered by some as 'outsiders', in other words, 'newcomers' to the area.

In a sense, getting a composite sample of people was an on going process, which also included making the most of opportunistic moments. This was following Taylor and Bogdan's (1998:58) advice for exploiting the opportunities that are likely to yield data, because they may be significant and reflect aspects of social life in the area at that time. I found this to be the case, but I also wanted to make the most of local events. For example, dropping in on the play centre, the opportunities of attending an annual 'get together' of ex-Taranaki farmers meant I had access to a group who could otherwise be difficult to contact, or attending a district farewell was an opportunity to hear people's reflection on past district events.

Indeed, both sampling and interviewing were ongoing processes throughout the duration of the field study. (For a brief description and record of those interviewed turn to page 148) I preferred informal, open-ended interviews, whether that took place in public places, such as the local shops, pubs, church or the play centre, or in private homes. They differed only in that one was on the spot; the others were pre-arranged and allowed for more in-depth discussion. Yet in each case, I had a general idea of what I wanted to cover, I did not use a formal list of questions. The direction of questioning related to describing their ideas about recent changes in the community, their ideas about 'community', and the social activities that links them with others in

the community, and places or organizations of importance to them. Typically the discussions lasted about an hour, some were more. While the interviews were the cornerstone of the research, my immersion in the community was equally significant, for this provided background and context that was indispensable for interpreting the interview material.

In the majority of cases, the interviews were recorded on tape if the people felt comfortable about it; otherwise I took extensive notes. Although in public places I preferred not to take notes during informal surveys, instead they were written up as soon as possible. The interviews were transcribed and the transcriptions formed the basis of the analysis. The transcriptions were made to emphasise readability rather than the intricacies of the talk. Despite the lengthy process of transcribing, I preferred capturing people’s exact words, even speech errors and their terms of expression. Table 9 below illustrates the transcription notation used:

Table 9: Transcription Notation

[Square Brackets]	- Extraneous to the interview; added for clarity
(Round Brackets)	- My words; the interviewer
...	- Text has been missed out

Several ethical issues were considered. The first was protecting people’s privacy within the study area. As in most farming communities, the social networks are thoroughly interwoven; therefore, I was aware that many of the people would have known each other. The second, people interviewed were assured confidentiality and knew they could withdraw from the research at any stage, and that their names would not be included in the study. I appreciate there are disadvantages in doing so, the most important being that it impedes others from checking my findings that cannot be ‘checked’ as literature from secondary sources can.

DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

³ Where a person suggests to us who or where to go that would be helpful to the inquiry (Babbie, 1998:195-6).

Discourse analysis was used to identify the various constructions of the notion 'community' that were expressed in the conversations and secondary data linked to this study. While for simplicity's sake the term discourse analysis is used to describe the process of examining oral narratives and secondary data for reading meanings of 'community', in terms of the widely held beliefs and expressions of social connection. This thesis does not claim to be a study on discourse analysis; rather an analysis of the notion of 'community' expressed in conversations, practices and spaces related to a particular rural community in Southland, which drew on Ruth Liepins' (2000) conceptual framework for reading these different aspects of 'community'. However, using some of the techniques of discourse analysis were helpful in uncovering the way that ideas were formed and contested concerning the usage of the term 'community'.

Following Parker (1992), the term discourse refers to both talk and written language, it is about a system of statements that construct an object, it contains subjects, is a coherent system of meanings, refers to other discourses, reflects on its own way of speaking, and is historically located. Fairclough (1992) extends these ideas to suggest that discourse is also a form of social practice manifest in a linguistic form, or in other words, discourses are embedded in social practices.

Fairclough notes three further features of discourse as a social practice that are important to be mindful of in the analysis stage: it involves a 'text producer' (an individual) who has certain resources to draw on - particular interests, ideologies, assumptions, and situated knowledges when constructing and producing their particular version of, and understanding about, say community (ibid, 1992:80). This feature of text production suggests discourses will be a partial and partisan version of events, which implies they are vehicles of power, for the way they include and exclude certain resources. This also means in analysis, a critical stance must be taken toward the viewpoints being expressed in terms of the power relations in the social context.

Secondly, discourse is shaped and constrained by broader social structures and institutional practices: by class, by social norms (for e.g. patriarchal gender relations or norms in farming practices), but discourse equally contributes to the shape of these social structures through either conforming to, or contesting these conventional constructions (ibid, 1992:64). The second feature recognises a dialectical relationship

exists between discourse and broader social structures. In this way, discourse is not only a product of the broader context, but also a process where there is continual interplay between the two. This follows that the explanations of discourse, will relate to these broader contexts: to the economic, political and social settings the discourse is a part of.

Finally, Fairclough recognises there are important connections between discourse and power. Discourse, he argues, is a site where power relations are exercised and have an *effect* - the result of the exercise of particular social relations and practices. To understand the power relations in society, we need to examine the way discourses contribute to the production, and reproduction of relations of domination (ibid, 1992:86).

Analysing discourses can thus be seen to involve both a macro and micro analysis as a means of explaining the way 'text producers' produce and interpret texts, and how these texts are rooted in and oriented to broader social structures and norms. As a result, my study of the discursive constructions of this rural community in Southland assumes that it is possible to establish links between the local discourses and the broader social, political and economic context at the time the texts were generated.

Fairclough (1992) has developed an approach to analysing discourses that I believe is a valuable tool for unearthing the discursive dimensions of social change within this study. Primarily, his approach emphasises the socially constructed nature of discourses, the diversity of possible constructions, and the intertextuality of texts; the way that ideas represented in texts are constituted from other existing texts, which they assimilate, contradict, or give reference to. My central concern was to trace the connections between ways in which texts were put together and interpreted, their relationship to the broader social structures they were rooted in and oriented to and the dialectic relationship between the discursive constructions of 'community'.

The analysis process

Stage 1. *Selection*

Initially I read and re-read the full set of interviews, for what was being said about social life, to provide me with an overall understanding of the text. I read with a view

of noting particular themes and identifying emerging discourses. Key texts were categorised into three broad themes relating to shared meanings about 'community', identifying practices of social connection, and key sites and organisational spaces that give expression to ideas about 'community'. I then selected examples of texts relating to each of these themes, and noted commonalities and differences under each particular theme. I realised that becoming familiar with the transcript gave me a clearer idea of what some of the dominant discourses were in peoples' conversations.

Stage 2. *Micro Analysis*

This allowed for focusing on particular meanings, key understandings and representations expressed in the text, and noting the assumptions that were embedded within the narratives. This was achieved by identifying the presuppositions cued in texts. These key texts were then assessed for their connection to the broader social setting they were a part of.

Stage 3. *Macro Analysis*

The next stage focused on the intertextuality of the discourse samples. This focuses on text production and involved noting the way in which the text drew from the potential of wider societal discourses in which it were embedded, whether economic political or social, and then, identifying the manner in which that societal discourse was reflected in the text. This category allows for a deeper level of analysis and goes some way in addressing Pratt's (1996) call to acknowledge both the discourses and the context of their production. I have provided extensive examples of the ideas expressed under each theme, followed by an interpretation so that the reader can participate in the analysis process.

Stage 4. *Interrelationship between themes*

I then focused on reading the transcripts for the dialectic relationship between each theme. This involved looking at the ways in which a theme in text stood in relation to another theme, and assessing whether the effects were mutually constitutive or transformative of each other.

On reflection, discourse analyses, as a method of analysis was a complex process: a process that was not user friendly, or necessarily useful in its entirety for the purposes

of this study. On the other hand, some of the techniques of discourse analysis were helpful tools for this study (Fairclough, 1992:232-38). In particular, accounting for the discourses used and the contexts of their production, or the fact that people draw upon different discourses to construct their version of 'community'. However, for this study, these particular tools of analysis were considered along side and interwoven with analyses of the broader discursive context, and previous understandings about 'community', otherwise the exercise of analysing texts would remain a static surface description, without discovering the dynamics involved in the construction of a term, such as 'community'.

I am also aware that each level of analysis involves interpretation of the data by the researcher. I am also aware there is no single way of reading a text, or single truth to be discovered: any text can be interpreted in different ways, this can result from the text producer's social positioning, knowledges and value system, and my interpretation. I accept that working with people's own spoken views and ideas of their world, the process of transferring those ideas from them to me, and then on to the printed page is inevitably informed by and interacted with other writers ideas, past research, broader concepts, and the bias I bring to this account (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996:156). What follows is my interpretation of it.

CHAPTER SIX

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In the field work for this thesis the goal was to present an account of the Lower Maitara Valley from the point of view of people living in or linked to the district. From these collected oral narratives, the aim was then to identify the key meanings, practices and spaces that have contributed to the shape and articulation of this community. At another level, this research also attempts to show the changing nature of the community that people of the Valley were subscribing to. As such, reading the narratives for some of the linkages by which these meanings, practices, spaces and structures were mutually reinforcing and contradicting each other, this sense of 'community' fluidity was also shown. These two considerations form the basis of discussion for this chapter.

The following discussion is heavily reliant on excerpts from conversations I had with people during the field study. There was a wealth of information gathered from these conversations. However, not all of the issues that arose could necessarily be included in this discussion. Rather, I have included excerpts from the major issues which arose from people's conversations about the Valley that related to the three main elements (meanings, practices and space/structures) of Ruth Liepins' (2000) analytical framework for reading 'community'. This account, however, should not be read as if it was referring to all rural communities in New Zealand, rather it is a reflection of the local particularities and responses within the Valley to broader national and global trends at the time of the field study.

MEANINGS

When people talked about, and described their ideas of 'community' in relation to the Lower Maitara Valley, there was an array of meanings, as well as similarities and contradictions expressed in their narratives. What became more apparent when reading through the entire collection of interviews was people's different life experiences, interests and understandings, likes and dislikes that shaped their ideas of 'community'. Indeed, from these lay discourses there emerged a heterogenous conglomerate of ideas

that were drawn from these individuals' pools of knowledge about 'community'. Nonetheless, two themes did emerge. The first related to the physical environment and functions that were considered rural, the other highlighted the social connections and characteristics associated with people living in the Valley.

Meanings for the first theme often linked community with rurality, where ideas were centred on describing features associated with a rural environment. Alternatively, meanings were associated with the functional aspects of the Valley, particularly farming or the local service centres of Wyndham and Edendale. What is fascinating, however, is the different styles of construction people used: some spoke positively about the local physical environment, describing the intangible qualities of rural living, highlighting the idea of a slower pace of life that was less stressful than the push-and-shove of urban living. Others spoke defensively about features that could be viewed negatively, such as the cold weather, or they spoke in comparative terms, by contrasting the Valley with other places like urban centres or northern regions. Comments such as:

I'm still positive about our community - it's good. The idea of being here is better than cramped in a city (Interview 28)

We have a unique area and landscape... Auckland and beyond are enjoyable to visit, the harbour is beautiful, it's not the population, it's the traffic. I have quality time more than is possible in the rat race. They have all the facilities: we have so much freedom (Interview 12)

There's not a lot of people here, terrific. And it's more relaxed (Interview 2)

The Lower Maitāwhiri, well it's the wide-open spaces, and the Maitāwhiri [river], although I don't miss the floods...Like all small communities now, it's getting smaller (Interview 16)

The Valley was described as a place in relation to other places, particularly larger towns. For some, their perceived isolation was viewed positively, and certainly better than 'city life', most seeing country life far preferable. However, its close proximity to the main towns in the region had social and economic implications for the district, for

example, that it was seen as another factor 'killing' a sense of community, or that it was seen as conveniently located for accessing goods and services as these people have noted:

We're only ½ an hour away from town (Interview 2)

We're isolated, but really... compared to Taranaki, which is isolated (Event 9)

We're not an isolated community; ... we're so handy to Gore and Invercargill, so therefore we're not forced to come together [as a community](Interview 23)

However, isolation was not limited to just a geographic sense: politically, there was a sense of being excluded from the decision-making centres such as Wellington and Auckland.

Its distance from the markets, distance from the driving powers of the country: we don't exist... we think the world rotates around us, but it doesn't, it's rotating around somewhere else (Interview 21)

On the other hand, the Valley was described as a community made-up of distinct districts, even though each small district had lost their central gathering points like the school, dairy factory, church and store.

What seemed ridiculous was all these little districts, and they're very specific districts... there seemed to be all these dotted lines that demarcated the different districts and formed like a barrier of sorts (Interview 15)

Constructions such as these suggest that 'community' has been rendered what Mol and Law (1994) have described as an 'exclusive space'. In this case, those who have long-term attachments to a place have control over the social boundaries. Certainly such representations show that boundaries are not always necessarily observable or measurable, and that there is more to a location than what can be necessarily mapped.

Other constructions described the Valley in terms of the agriculturally related type of work and ancillary services that were available or not, as the case may be to the surrounding farming area. The reconfiguration of services away from the small rural

townships since the government restructuring meant that work opportunities and a broad range of services were not available locally. This meant people who had lived in the Valley for sometime often grumbled about the loss of services, particularly the closures of the banks and post offices in recent years.

Wyndham was first set up as a service town; we have all the sporting amenities...some of the local businesses are now another generation like garages... But there's nothing to hold people here...of course there's the Mataura Freezing Works, the Edendale factory...there's labouring, forestry and driving trucks (Interview 2)

What affects communities is, there is a lack of facilities. I mean it takes a real effort on my part to actually get to a bank when it's opened...That's pulling people outside their community (Interview 17)

However, farming continues to dominate the Valley landscape, and represent a core economic activity by which people make a living, consequently, community was often associated with its agricultural base. Around farming itself, there were a range of agricultural services industries involving local families, and these inter-linkages with farming have generated a range of shared interests as well as interdependencies between people in the Valley such as transport operators, agricultural contractors and engineers. In fact, the following constructions of 'community' reaffirm the central position of agriculture to ideas about rural communities, and represent a trend counter to some studies that have viewed rural landscapes as becoming increasingly utilised in diverse ways, which are not necessarily agriculturally based (Ilbery, 1998; Stockdale et al, 2000).

The community is a stable reliable farming area, regular incomes, there's structure (Interview 26)

Our way [Southlander's way] of doing things is an inherited style. Farmers are fixed in their ways, like how their father did it (Interview 12)

It's the rural scene; we have the farming sector, the people are dealing with the weather, stock and similar markets. We're in it together compared to the town (Interview 3)

As far as farming goes, I think Southland is the only place to be (Interview 19)

When I first came down, the South was a way behind the North in the factory and farming scene and its just now starting to catch up (Event 7)

Such narratives would suggest that generally conservative farmers have shaped the style of farming in the Valley, on account of the property-transfer practices to preserve family business continuity, along with the expectations of sustaining careful farm management practices that would be passed from one generation to the next.

Furthermore, the Valley was specifically portrayed as a community in relation to the dairy industry. People spoke of the major changes to this farming community: most notably, the growth in dairying and drop-off in sheep farming. This recent change in land use, however, has not been without its readjustments. Changing production practices, landownership structures (including corporate owners and equity partnership), and employment structures (with managers and sharemilkers and farm labourers) are now a part of the new dairy farming arrangement in the Valley, and reflect varying commitments levels to the linkage between the farm and family. Dairy farmers were taking advantage of the improving terms of trade for dairy exports, by expanding production, buying further run-offs, and taking on bigger workloads. These changes have had major social and economic implications for the Valley. For instance people suggested:

In my day most of the farms were all around 150-200acres, it's not the case now. It's normally 400-800 acres and employing staff (Interview 12)

When all the dairy around here took off, it was AppleFields and Tasman who bought most farms...[But also] the style of farming has changed, more sharemilkers have moved in, and people aren't so permanent (Interview 23)

A lot of farms have disappeared, 5 farms are owned by one-person sort of thing...Now you've got to have 3 or 400 cows: our neighbour has 970 cows (Interview 27)

I like my cows. I knew my cows by their name, you knew them you see, a cow had that dignity and now there's too many, they're just numbers, they're a function rather than an identity (Interview 24)

Money talks: the returns aren't there for sheep. With 5 boys taking over the farm, I've encouraged them to look elsewhere. I've worked all year and at the end, we're standing still, it's demoralising (Interview 26)

These insights suggest that 'community' is not an entity insulated from the economic and political processes occurring at a broader spatial scale. Indeed these examples illustrate spatial processes of specialisation, concentration and intensification that were occurring at a local level in response to these broader processes. They also show the process of changing power relationships linked to the changing economic fortunes of dairy farming relative to sheep farming, and would suggest that the likelihood of intergenerational inheritance of farms via sheep farming is no longer viable. Furthermore, constructing differences between farming as nurture (the traditional path) or as a business (the innovative path of maximising production) that McEachern (1992) highlighted were also illustrated. However, these changing circumstances meant that some individuals and social groups could take advantage of sheep farmers more marginal economic position, and take advantage of historically low prices for quality land in the area, as this comment suggests:

It's an unknown place; you can produce a third more for land that's less than half the price (Event 9)

This was but one example of the sort of response from new landowners I met at the annual 'Taranaki do'. Others suggested:

We've heard so much about the scope and performance of the farms down here we wanted to come and have a look for ourselves (Event 9)

Down here there's bigger herds, better pay and opportunities are greater ... and there's a shortage of staff and the weather is a bit different (Event 9)

Similarly, these responses show how different perspectives on the same community can be constructed from different positions, and present a different angle on the same place (Harvey, 1996:283). In this case, the new voices in the area viewed the Valley from the perspective of being a land of opportunity. These responses would suggest that new buyers often associated ideas about the Valley in terms of a space for economic productivity and investment opportunities in relation to dairy farming. Perhaps a striking feature of these accounts is their similarity to the images being portrayed by various enterprises currently marketing Southland for its competitive advantages, like Farming in Southland.

Besides meanings of 'community' being built around the rural environment, by far the most commonly spoken about meanings related to the social aspects of community. Whether that was expressing beliefs about the distinctive characteristics and shared cultural norms that were perceived to exist, or whether it was describing the various social groups within or connected to the community.

There were a number of commonalities among the long-term residents narratives of 'community'. Comments were often affirming 'their' community, because to affirm, in a sense validated the rationality for living there. Comments tended to idealise the 'we'/'our' relationships and circumstances based on their long term associations with each other, and possibly out of an awareness of, and in response to what Novitz (1989) noted was the threat of new residents coming in and rocking the boat of stability and familiarity to how social life had functioned in the past. However, within people's narratives of 'community' a number of distinctive characteristics were expressed. Some people suggested:

Everybody kind of looked the same, seemed to dress the same, ... there was not the same diversity as Northland as far as Maoris, Polynesians, solo mothers, radical groups like the surfies, communes, I miss that diversity (Interview 15)

Around here you work or you're retired and because people know each other, the pressure is on to conform (Event 4)

We're conservative people we're not going to be high profile people... we 're common sense, practical people...although they keep things to themselves rather than ask for help (Interview 2)

These constructions portray the Valley as a monoculture that is tradition bound, rather than a social collective inclusive of great diversity, and social extremes. In fact, the final comment has traces of the early pioneering image about it – where people were described as being practical, resourceful and hard working people (Hatch, 1992: 168). What these examples would also suggest, is that the Valley represents a social collective of what Philo (1992) would call 'Mr (and Mrs) Average', in other words, people who are white, middle class, straight, law-abiding citizens, devoid of any quirky religious or political beliefs. Indeed, these examples would suggest that 'Mr (and Mrs) Average' have influenced the standards of conformity that locals should adhere to: to do anything other would be considered unacceptable to the status quo.

Other constructions projected a powerful image of harmony and consensus based on the romanticized notion of *gemeinschaft*, where 'close-knit ties and everybody knows everybody', and where old-fashioned virtues still linger were acclaimed to be distinctives of the Valley.

The rapport between people, the relationship between locals, it's a very comfortable feeling to know we belong, ... it's a wonderful thing to think you are a part of it (Interview 25)

It's a safe place, nice and friendly. They've still got the old values like the neighbour would still bring in your washing if it was raining, is still there: that's gone in larger centres (Interview 1)

We're all like one big happy family really, specially when you've got connections with school, church and Division [Women's Division] and all that sort of thing. Everybody knows every body... or, you know what going on amongst the families (Interview 16)

I think it's quite a friendly, people friendly sort of place... some people see it as almost backward because of the way it is (Interview 17)

We can't breed snobs here (Interview 2)

What was significant about these constructions was the way that meanings of 'community' were linked to the past, and 'the way things were': they were constructions tinged with nostalgia by which the past was viewed more positively than the present. These representations indeed had a self-validating tendency where the sense of community solidarity based on values of familiarity, friendliness, helpfulness, closeness and social equality were affirmed, and assumed to exist without necessarily demarcating between pragmatism-'it's as if we were all (equal)', and the rhetoric-'we're all (equal here)' (Cohen, 1985:35). Iris Young points out, however, that these portrayals of community also presume social wholeness, but also "depends on excluding some elements, separating the pure from the impure" (1990:303). However, some narratives comment on the less preferred characteristics, which also exist:

[They're] friendly, but keep off my patch, don't upset the boat. But because dairy came in and was taking their land, locals were quite bitter (Event 9)

I think that caring business, yea, I think that's a real strength, ... and identifying with people who live in your community... The flip side is your parochial, you can't look any wider than your own patch, which makes you narrow minded (Interview 22)

These accounts seem to confirm the existence of a caring and friendly community, but go further by unmasking the degree of intolerance to difference that also exists. Furthermore, they also show a process of self-protection against other groups, practices and ideologies considered to be out-of-line with the locals' sense of attachment to place (Pickering, 1990:48).

Alongside these expressions of 'community' meaning, other ideas of community were also understood in terms of being a collective of distinctive social groups who were more or less prominent, accepted, and or involved in community life in the Valley. In most cases, people recognised the conventional division between groups - classically

the local, newcomer division. However, there were other distinctions that were noted, particularly in terms of gender, occupation, and length of residency and generational distinctions. These points of differentiation would indicate that social relations in the Valley were more heterogeneous than has initially been portrayed. What are significant about these constructions of 'community', however, are the responses that local people make of these perceived social differences, and these very much depended on the positionality of the individual in relation to 'the other': the person or social group being described (Pickering 1990).

The greatest social difference between groups revolved around the 'local' and 'newcomers' dichotomy and the constructing of 'otherness' whereby the other are treated as all the same (Cloe & Little, 1997:6). The loss of the 'old names,' and the recent arrival of new families into the Valley were challenging the notion of 'community' meanings based on the idea of 'everybody knows everybody'. Many locals were alarmed at the arrival of what they described as an 'unknown breed' from the North Island, despite the fact they shared the commonality of being 'farming stock'. In fact, the constructed boundaries of difference were generally negative, and stereotypical, with the use of terms such as 'imports', 'they', 'outsiders' or 'transients', as these following comments suggest:

All these imports seemed to be focused on is production, and they get all their ideas from the seminars (Interview 1)

North Islanders are a different breed, uncommunicative, won't talk... Most of us find they don't join the sports things, or social things they're too busy. Their children are feeding calves; their wife is always out working, that's their lifestyle (Event 8)

These portrayals of difference would imply that 'community', as a social institution is not open to all. In fact, these examples show the processes of defining and constructing 'the others' lifestyle as negative and inappropriate to them; while at the same time exposing the entrenched view that local's have of difference 'to them'. Cohen would argue that this sense of difference lies at the heart of people's awareness of their own culture, which they would prefer to view in fixed and uniform terms (Cohen, 1985:2). These constructions might also suggest that newcomers may often hold different

priorities to long term residents which were less Valley-centred which could either lead to a social cleavage, or could mean the process of social integration will not always be smooth, as one old timer put quite succinctly "It will take a while for the North Islanders to mellow and the Southlanders to thaw" (Interview 26). Pickering (1990) suggests that labelling 'others' in negative terms is a common response when a sense of distinctive identity is considered under threat. Nonetheless, on the positive side, others noted the 'approved of' attributes shared in common (work hard, get involved in the community, and being a nuclear family), and the new energies that were adding to social fabric of the community:

The folk from Taranaki have got webbed feet like we have, and the Waikato boys have \$ signs running round their eyes. But in saying that, there were also some good hard working farmers who get involved in the community and come as a family unit (Interview 21)

The new dairy farmer is a high achiever, ... they're goal setting, ... they're innovators, they stretch the boundaries (Interview 28)

These new families have brought a new mindset, which is to work hard and make a profit, to make something of themselves, and not so much for social interaction (Interview 13)

These comments illustrate that not everyone reflects the dominant mindset of creating difference based on a negative image. Nevertheless, these remarks indicate how newcomers' style of farming was different to their own and more in line with the expectations neo-liberal discourse of being more 'competitive', market-led producers instead (Liepins & Bradshaw, 1999).

However, others recognised that the Valley was already composed of different groups, or social cliques, before the 'influx of new comers', irrespective of the fact that locals were already accepted and included on the basis of 'being born and bred there' (Relph, 1976). This would suggest that community is also inclusive of what Smith and Katz (1993) refer to as 'multiple identities'. However, this meant that each group was endowed with more or less power and indeed fractured along numerous lines of difference, as the following comments would suggest:

But even within the local community, to belong to certain families you were also labelled, people stick with a particular group and to move would take a bomb (Interview 4)

There's always rivalry, there's distinct lines and politics plays a part, there's the working class and their fixed thinking, then their the farming community and their fixed thinking, and the farmers of Seaward Downs, Matura Island and Wyndham wouldn't bend (Interview 12)

Edendale has no community spirit, and as for Wyndham, they would die if a moat was put around them (Interview 5)

Other examples indicate there were also politics of difference within, particularly in relation to farmers, as these comments would suggest:

I've noticed the dairy farmer he's very focused on milking cows that's it, and sheep farmers focused on sheep. But I've noticed with some dairy farmers who are very focused on dairying, and that's it, and anything outside that is alien: they're not observing what the sheep farmers are doing too much. But I've noticed that sheep farmers are noticing what's happening around them a bit more (Interview 21)

[Dairy Farmers] they're a boring bunch, unless they've been here for years...the privileged people around here are the sheep farmers - they have their holidays. Yes, they have their rough times but they have a nice lifestyle (Interview 1)

Sharemilkers... keep some horrendous hours some of them, and perhaps they just don't socialise the same (Interview 23)

Sheep people, who've been in the area for a while, perceive the sharemilkers as milking the land as well as the cows, and they don't give much back. They don't join Rural Women, or the Federated Farmers or the local PTA, or... very few of them go to church or whatever, they don't put anything back into the community (Interview 22)

These quotations are indicative of the commonly spoken about distinctions between sheep farmers and dairy farmers, but went further by creating another category for sharemilkers. These constructions, nonetheless, are illustrative of the processes of creating differences based on what Hatch (1992) refers to as 'insiders' construction of an 'internal ranking of acceptability'. In this case acceptability was centred on a person being available and contributing to local community activities. Dairy farmers and sharemilkers, for example, were often portrayed as prioritising individualistic interests over the collective interests of the community, and in this way challenging previous notions about assumed involvement in the wider community.

PRACTICES

Tracing the meanings of 'community' has provided a way of gaining insights into, and knowledge about the Lower Mataura Valley; however, these sets of understandings provide only one dimension of the processes that have shaped this particular locality. But if we were to complement these understandings by considering the social processes that link people and activities across the Valley, then we can recognise how ideas of 'community' are lived out and contested in practice.

People were asked to describe the sorts of activities that involved them being in contact with other people in the Valley. From the collected narratives, people seem to distinguish between the different types of activities in terms of their spontaneity, or regularity, or in terms of being social or economic activities. Or, people often spoke about 'how things used to be', and pointed to processes that were challenging the way in which practices of community were articulated.

The Valley has been narrated as a farming community, but given that farming is essentially a loner's job offering few opportunities for social interaction outside of the immediate household, this meant that contact with other locals nearby provided a moment to build a sense of community. It also meant an opportunity for a yarn, a catch up on the latest gossip, or a time for sharing in each other's concerns. This simple action of neighbourliness was one of the key activities people spoke about in relation to the Valley.

Your neighbours would call in and say giddy and vice versa, and just when you need a hand with something, the neighbours would be there... every body would arrive up with a bit of baking and that sort of thing (Interview 19)

Haymaking time was always the hot cups of tea, hot scones, and fed up like the king and queen; it was a time to have a good yarn (Interview 12)

Like when we grew up, haymaking was a peoples thing...but now, you're bailing hay for the dairy farmer, he might well it up...and at 3 o'clock he'll say I'll see ya, and you just carry on baling ...and that's the last you see of him because he's away to milk the cows (Interview 21)

These accounts reflect the way meanings of 'community' were articulated based on activities that built interdependencies between neighbours. However, people noted that farmers' greater use of economic contracts had diluted those moments of social interaction between neighbours and had cut out the long-term practice of reciprocity, although some indicated that this practice still exists particularly where there were adjoining sheep farming properties.

We also work in with quite a few others [neighbours], like we co-own with X and also Y [persons name], at the end of the road... We share weighing scales...cos they're quite expensive, and we share the hay trailers and the hay baler (Interview 22)

Other serendipitous meetings included both economic and educational activities, like shopping, or filling up at the garage, or dropping the kids off at school. In fact, these taken-for-granted types of social interactions formed the bases of social connection in the Valley.

[Shopping in Wyndham was to] come down here to see everybody, it was for having a good catch up (Event 8)

Parents are always in and out [of the school] when they're dropping in, or when the rugby children combine with Edendale and have lunchtime practice, so it means involving parents (Interview 17)

However, some of these commonly shared activities were considered to be under threat as this comment suggests:

The young ones [young families], they don't patronise the small towns. Instead, they get in their cars and shop elsewhere, because of the banking and shopping (Event 8)

People don't shop in Wyndham as much as they shop in town... Some of them you know that they don't [shop locally] because you keep an account of where people go shopping (Interview 19)

The centralisation of services away from Wyndham and Edendale illustrates how the practice of 'community' assumed on a sense of allegiance to the local community, and that this was no longer the case.

Although for some, the sense of allegiance to certain local regular activities was real enough. For instance:

The gossip at the pub... The young ones go [to the pub] on a Friday and Saturday night... The X boys [social group named] go there and kick up merry hell on a Friday night... They have entertainment in the hotel; it's not just drinking you know (Interview 7)

Not only did drinking at the local pub reflect a regular cultural activity that contributed to a sense of social cohesion among certain social groups, it also perpetuated the egalitarian myth that everyone was mates here (Event 2), and reaffirmed the conventional gender relations, based on the idea that this is what kiwi blokes did – have a drink together, and spin a yarn with their mates at the pub (Phillips, 1996:26). This notion was reaffirmed by some 'regulars' who recalled how the 'new factory management' were not above occasionally dropping in for a drink after work and joining in with the regulars (Event 5). In this case, we see management conform to the kiwi bloke image, because they played down their social position by acting as one of the boys: they were also given the nod of approval and a form of honorary membership for conforming to the practices of 'the regulars'.

Various interest groups were also noted as playing an integral part in terms of building a sense of community life. In fact, 'being involved' in voluntary community activities were part of the expectations of belonging to a rural community, whether it was sports, church, and women's groups, or, service groups such as the Lions Club or the Volunteer Fire Brigade.

For example, interest groups like the Women's Division Federated Farmers [WDFF] have been an important cultural activity for rural women, in terms of what was considered the appropriate thing for rural women to do. Practices like the competitions for the best blooms, baking and handiwork, or standing for the creed, or providing a homemade sponge for the guest speaker, were still current practices that reaffirmed the importance of 'a woman's place is in the home' discourse (Event 1).

Going to Division was having another woman to talk to... You've got to sort of learn to shut your mouth and just listen, because you know every one does things differently (Interview 10)

Women's Division is still going strong. They go back - the young ones still join in - to the 80 year olds (Interview 14)

Like Little's findings (1997), these activities reflect how 'community' social relations have been shaped and sustained by these conventional gender relations, and served to reinforce the 'natural' domestic role of women within the Valley. However, some women saw these homemaking activities as "not their thing" (Interview 14), alternatively, some were not free and available to reproduce community in this way: some had other priorities, or others preferred Play Group as an opportunity to meet other women with children of a similar age (Event 3). But there were others who were not content with maintaining this particular tradition, as the following comment suggests:

I didn't want to get involved in Women's Division - it wasn't for me. I went along once and couldn't believe what I saw - cooking and baking aren't my thing, plus I don't really have the time (Interview 15)

People still have the idea of scones and a cup of tea and a sponge cake and that sort of thing, and that's what Women's Division is all about. But it's not

really... You know, a lot of [Rural Women's] issues interested me, you suddenly realise what they really do, do, and the good that they can do (Interview 23)

These examples suggest that practices of 'community' cannot be assumed as being fixed and unchanging; rather these accounts illustrate how constructions of a woman's assumed conventional role was being contested, and they also show that not all women can be treated as a single unified group.

Likewise, there were other core social activities that were deeply embedded into the cultural constructions of rural life in the Valley. Nevertheless, these core community practices that contributed socially to a sense of community were struggling to be maintained as these folk explain:

Sporting is really good. Netball is now run on a Friday night with 230 kids along, and then the seniors play on Saturday morning. But rugby has lost it... They were just getting creamed and you can only take losing 82-0 for a certain length before you become demoralised, so they're now second grade (Interview 2)

Probably people can't commit to rugby like they used to. (People go into golfing) You can do it when you want (Interview 8)

The racing club is struggling because they've changed the gambling system; the rugby club is struggling because farmers' sons are away, and because of shift work; and the bowling club is struggling to have a team this year (Interview 26)

Indeed, sports interests had changed considerably in the Valley in recent years. Previously, rugby and netball were assumed to be part of the Saturday ritual of what people did, and this served to perpetuate the in-house rivalries between local clubs, maintain the culture of hard physical work, and affirm the sense of parochial community pride. Even some newcomers considered team sports were "life savers" for "being accepted" (Interview 15), because to participate in an established cultural practice like rugby, was considered to enhance the chances of integrating into the

'established' community. However, like Scott et al's (2000) findings for a Northland rural community, the transition from team-sports to non-team sports illustrates a process of social fragmentation of a traditionally important cultural activity in rural communities, in terms of maintaining local community pride. But it also meant the hard-physical-worker-image-of-men exhibited on the rugby field was also under threat of being lost, or at best being tarnished. Instead, individual interests and minimal time constraints were now features shaping the character of leisure activities in the Valley, thereby diluting opportunities to enhance community solidarity based on traditional sporting activities.

Likewise, practices of 'community' are not necessarily neutral activities, but can reflect certain entrenched positions and unequal power relations that can exist within, as the following resident suggests:

It surprises me down here the way netball was changed for a rugby game. Like netball will finish early if there a major rugby game. And rugby is changed for duck shooting opening (Interview 18)

Prioritising rugby matches over netball illustrates there are clearly defined gender relations in the Valley. In this case, women's activities took a secondary position to men's activities, which in turn reflected the assumed subordinate position of women in relation to men. While duck-shooting, on the other hand, enabled the settler man capable of dealing with anything that comes along image be exhibited, and also be reproduced on an annual basis at the start of the duck-shooting season in May (Phillips, 1996:21).

Opportunities for social connection were not just related to the regular activities, but to less regular events, or occasions, which also built a sense of community. Events like having a get together with the neighbours down the road, or the mid-year 'old time dance' where everybody got up on the floor and knew how to dance, or mid year get-togethers, or the welcome and farewells to the district, or the annual Edendale Crank-Up Day, or the Ex Taranaki do were the events that people spoke about.

There's this sort of established pattern... they call it the [X] Road do... and the local's find an excuse of having some sort of party or meal at least twice a

year.... It's a family thing... we generally have a meal or a barbeque or a coffee and dessert (Interview 22)

The get together in June. We have a night there... you get these men there, and they take a bit of getting home and they really enjoyed their natter last time... We've farewelled a lot of old residents... you sort of had this sad feeling about it all, because it was part of our history sort of removing themselves (Interview 23)

The Edendale Crank Up Day... provides a family day out with a country atmosphere. Attractions include vintage machinery, cow milking the old way, granny's kitchen... The event proves popular, attracting 4,000-5,000 people... from far and wide (Edendale Concept Paper, 1997)

These events describe practices around core occasions that have contributed to building a sense of community identity. The organization of, and involvement in these occasions demonstrated the propensity for people wanting to gather together and create their own forms of entertainment. In the case of the Edendale Crank-Up Day, it shows the capacity of people wanting to celebrate and preserve practices of community based on their agricultural heritage. These seemingly neutral events, nonetheless, have hidden power plays that lie buried within. For example, events such as these would suggest they require some people to organise, some to take prominent positions, others to work behind the scenes, while still others who may not be involved or included at all. In this way, practices of 'community' reflect what Harvey refers to as a moment when social relations are crystallised, and an ordering of social relations can be viewed as differentiated according to certain activities, whereby some individuals or groups were invested with more or less social power than others (Harvey, 1996:79).

Although, opportunities for social connection have diluted over the years with fewer families, and people suggesting they were much busier than before. These circumstances were considered to have "killed a lot of the shows around here now" (Interview 10), while others suggested, some people just never join in anyway, or, alternatively: "there's not a lot of people here, but it's the same people on the committees" (Interview 2), while still others spoke positively about some activities that

were “well patronised” or were “great for meeting people” (Interview 26 & Event 8). These circumstances concur with Jones’s (1995) findings in regards to the way that lay discourses on ‘community’ practices appear to be contradictory. This could partly be a reflection of the competing subject positions and different interests of people within the Valley.

KEY SITES and ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURES

Locating community involved identifying material sites and organisational structures where cultural practices and meanings of ‘community’ were either expressed or occurred, and indeed, where social relations were collectively displayed in terms of being contested or maintained. Across the body of texts there were two distinct issues that dominated people’s conversations in relation to where community occurred: one centred on a contracted social infrastructure within the Valley, the other centred on the expansion of industrial space associated with the dairy industry.

First, the key sites of community that people spoke about, included natural features like the Mataura River, or land marks, like the war memorials, or social infrastructures like the halls, schools, churches, pubs, Old Peoples Home, or the main street in Wyndham were the examples suggested. Indeed, each site reflected aspects of community and added to the mosaic of ideas about the social and cultural life of the Valley.

For example, people commented about the main street:

[In Wyndham], everything looked so run down...there were so many empty shops on the main street...There was the United Trading Company...it sold – everything you could imagine hardware wise...that was a social force as well...people there would introduce you to a lot of other people and that’s gone too (Interview 18)

Previously this main street was associated with the place where locals go shopping and catch-up with other locals. However, with the closures of all banking services and other core businesses in recent years indicates how this site was no longer considered the hub or connecting force for locals, compared to the past. Rather, meanings attached to the main street would suggest that Wyndham was no longer an important focus for social

life within the Valley, since its economic centrality had diminished the opportunities for casual interaction.

By contrast, the schools remained an important focal point amongst locals. This was reinforced by the fact that there being fewer occasions or gathering places in the Valley that drew people together, therefore, schools played an important role for collective community activities. For example:

The school has a certain social function amongst the parents because they meet at the school events. I guess it's their official centre for the parents as well as the children... It holds the community together because that's where a lot of them meet and have a common ground (Interview 17)

Schooling has given us a foot in the door and I've noticed a difference (Event 9)

The school was the heart of the community, when you took that out you took out the heart, it's never been the same since (Interview 5)

Indeed, these accounts would suggest that schools were more than mortar and bricks they were recognised as key sites for drawing people together, on a regular basis, whether that was for children's organised activities or for adult night classes or for the working bees or the end of year break up or PTA meetings. In addition, schools were portrayed in terms of being a means for being included in the community, or as central to sustaining the social and cultural life of the community. These examples illustrate how sites are invested with meaning.

Other key sites invested with meaning were found in the well-maintained war memorials in each district, as if to remind the present generation of the sacrifices made by the past generation - 'Lest we forget' (see Plate 5); or, in the Mataura River as a boundary that sometimes served as a social barrier, rather than simply a physical obstacle as this comment would suggest: "But if you talk about an amalgamation [between the Edendale and Wyndham rugby clubs], it's like a red rag to a bull: there's a dotted line up the Mataura (Interview 23); or, in the small district halls as a reminder of the heydays of small rural districts when the long-termers remembered when they

socialised locally. I don't think the halls are used at all, (Farewells?) No, not the way they were. They're not dancing like it was, and (farewells?) often they combine them with a welcome to the district (Interview 10). These examples illustrate that there are politics to a place, indicated by the way in which people constructed a place. In these cases, people perpetuated certain understandings about and loyalties to a place through the preservation of particular imageries or traditions (Harvey 1996:323).



Plate 5: The Brydone War Memorial

Equally, there were key organizations that occupied a form of institutional space through which community was maintained or contested. For example, the Edendale Dairy Co-operative was recognised as an expanding industrial space that was instrumental in reshaping aspects of their community. Expanding production capacity,

changing management structures, increasing production efficiencies, and employing more staff had major implications for the Valley. Previously, people suggested that:

Of course you knew all the people in the Dairy factory, you knew all the fellas, the farmers sons you see... We used to know all the people on first name terms; they came from the area (Interview 25)

The dairy factory in Edendale would have been well run a few years ago, you could talk to the manager on a first name basis (Interview 13)

These accounts illustrate how this industrial space overlapped with the social networks connected to the Valley. Indeed, this work site fulfilled a dual function; it was a place of social connection and a place of work. This interrelationship portrayed ideas of stability and permanence. However, since the expansion process began, there have been other discourses giving shape to this space:

Now I wouldn't know the name of the site manager he's just a cog in the wheel, and the CEO is in Hamilton (Interview 13)

The Dairy factory employs about 300 and only a quarter would be locals... The factory workers are shift workers, all their lives are tied up with work- they call it the 4 to 4 shift (Interview 1)

Most of the staff comes from Invercargill: there hasn't been the trickle into the community. There's a number of people there, but the people are drawn in from elsewhere. Before, they just lived down Hunter St., Melville St. in Edendale: they were local (Interview 28)

In these cases, we can see how this industrial structure was reweaving space in the Valley so that people involved in the factory were now inclusive of new identities linked to places beyond the region. Likewise, work was about maximising production and efficiency in keeping with the broader institution: the market place instead of moments for social connection. 'People didn't get know each other the same... workers were treated like numbers': it was 'just a job, nothing else' (Event 2). Consequently, this industrial space represents a transforming force reshaping cultural practices and opportunities for social connection in the Valley.

The church was another key institution that has provided a space for perpetuating the strong Christian tradition and Presbyterian heritage in the Valley. This social space enabled a coherent and binding sense of what was right and wrong, how to live, what to believe be maintained. People recognised this Christian tradition as coming from the core long-established farm families who were the regular churchgoers (refer to Plate 6).



Plate 6: Retired farmers outside church catching up with neighbours and friends

These families enabled a distinct character of loyalty and faithfulness that springs from their deeply held values to influence the broader social space and cultural identity of the Valley, as these comments would suggest:

With the church, most of the Christians are rural folk; they're carrying on the traditions of their parents, compared to the townsfolk who go to church (Interview 12)

I've always described this area as the Bible belt... [It] is still alive and well (Interview 18)

Coming down here it's an area with smallholdings, then there's the Presbyterian thing: it's really strong, very traditional (Event 9)

Youth group, it's a safe place for them and a place to have fun. We don't worry or fear when they go out; they're not interested in drink (Interview 3)

Likewise, there were other organizations recognized as shaping their community. Their spheres of influence may be differentiated, but they do share commonalities, as these comments would suggest:

The hall committee, they are a bit of the old guard, they only hire the hall out for \$30 dollars a day with the heating and everything... We don't progress quickly (Interview 17)

The Town Board are a tight knit group, slow to make decisions, they need a bomb under them (Event 8)

These examples illustrate how certain organizations were symbolic spaces of conservatism and carefulness, which in turn supported and guided their organisational practices of how things should be done in the Valley.

Finally, during the fieldwork it became apparent how certain spaces were considered as being key resources to be preserved and safeguarded. For example, some people spoke of when the Presbyterian Social Services' decision to close the Old People's Home in Wyndham and centralise their facilities in Invercargill had triggered a strong response from locals to fight this closure. The idea that 'outsiders' had intentions of closing a local resource that was considered to be for 'their' elderly, in order to maintain a sense of shared history and social connection was enough to mobilise a number of locals into action.

PSS [Presbyterian Social Services] were threatening to close it [the Old People's Home] several times. They finally said they'd pull the pin and close it... Well, we thought it could be run properly by the community, and subsequently we did. They wanted to get it [the Old People's Home] all back into the big centre [Invercargill] and chop out all the weeds. We thought old people should stay in among their relatives and friends... Oh, I think the

community sort of took it on... it struck a tender chord... They were sick of everything closing in the town (Interview 13)

Still others spoke about how some of empty premises in Wyndham were transformed into new community resources, which some viewed as resources that could rebuild a sense of community pride, such as making a library out of the BNZ building.

We've got a brilliant library. People come from outlying areas, even the imports and cow cookies come on Tuesdays and Thursdays, for the library days. If they were to be doing any shopping, they're more likely to come on those days (Event 8)

Here we see how a community space previously used primarily for economic transactions was transformed into a social space for preserving opportunities of social connection. Furthermore, we see how the transformation of this space was, in a sense, drawing locals back into the township of Wyndham. Accounts such as these indicate how community space is not static but capable of being redefined through changes in social practices.

So far, the focus of discussion has been on the way meanings, practices and spaces/organizations associated with 'community' have contributed to the shape of the Valley, as it exists today. People's accounts have suggested both the tangible and intangible forms of community: they also have expressed a range of both regular and occasional social activities through which a sense of community was built or contested, and the politics of life were displayed; they also have identified a number of significant sites and organisational spaces where meanings and practices of community both occur.

DYNAMICS OF 'COMMUNITY'

This final section emphasises the way in which the notion 'community' is as much a dynamic social phenomena in constant negotiation, as it is a social entity with a particular shape and character (Liepins, 2000). The approach to reading this sense of fluidity is by considering the processes by which these key meanings, practices and

spaces/structures (that people identified) are mutually constituting or challenging each other.

Beginning with the interaction between meanings and practices of community, data from the Valley pointed to both these key elements of community as being mutually constitutive. People's accounts on meanings of 'community' (refer to the earlier section on meanings) showed how the Valley was described as a farming community inclusive of two small service townships that provide basic support to the surrounding dairying and sheep farming properties. These meanings have in turn validated certain community practices like the Edendale Crank-Up Day, WDFF, duck shooting, or the welcome and farewells to the district for example. In fact, these are just examples of how socio-cultural practices enabled those involved in these particular activities, participate in the circulation of meanings about the Valley as a 'traditional' farming community.

However, recognising the dialectic relationship between meanings and practices means that practices may also challenge, or even give meanings of 'community' a certain directionality. This interrelationship was noted in regards to the changing patterns in agriculture¹ in the Valley. For instance, as land-use changed from sheep to dairying and as farm operations were generally expanding both in scale and carrying capacity, and utilising agricultural contractors instead of neighbours; and then as new identities² bought out old identities to take advantage of the dairying opportunities in the Southland, and as women were increasingly participating in the paid workforce (whether as a lifestyle choice or means of survival) were noted as factors that were changing practices of community in the Valley. But more generally, changes in people's personal mobility and recreational pursuits were considered to be affecting the sense of the Valley being reproduced as the traditional farming community as it had been portrayed.

¹ For further details on the possible inter-discursive linkages to the broader economic and political circumstances and local context that may have shaped or prompted any one of these changes or coincide with some of these texts, refer to the Southland Context under the subsection, post-restructuring era.

² The new identities were in the form of corporations as well as sharemilkers and dairy farmers originally from the North Island.

There's little opportunity for social contact, ... we're just too busy, but that's the way we've chosen to make it. As far as dairying goes, typically, you'll be pretty busy till Christmas and you don't have time to surface (Interview 15)

Well you just don't bother trying to get to know them [sharemilkers] because a lot of them weren't interested; they're only going to be there for 12 months, they're only on a 12-month contract (Interview 21)

I think it's [farming] always had to be like a business, but sure, it was more relaxed and perhaps there was more an element of a way of life. It [dairying] doesn't have a spin-off for the district, even though there are a lot of younger ones here, but probably because of the hours that they have to work... You see, they always have a winter cabaret... and this year they cancelled it because everybody was either away or had other things on you see, or, on holiday (Interview 23)

The rugby clubs have struggled to get members for the team, the players have been forced to choose between work and play: they can't have both. So instead, the golf club has been an option because it's a non-team sport (Interview 1)

There's a transient population: the community is in a continual state of flux. It takes time to get used to people. It's like you go to [X's] Garage and you'd think who's is that Ute? It could be anybody's: you wouldn't know from June to Christmas (Interview 28)

Fitting in is easier for husbands [who were sharemilkers] because the service people come, but it's hard on wives, because they don't get out and the men are tired, unless they have kids, then they can make contact at the school. But fitting in depends on the individual. Our policy is, if we're asked out anywhere, we go (Event 9)

These accounts all reflect different aspects of how farming practices, leisure pursuits and moments for social connection were rapidly changing to becoming more

differentiated, and how the function of the Valley as a social community was in decline. For instance, these discourses suggested that the 'business' of farming had minimised opportunities for participating in regular social or voluntary activities during certain seasons of the year. They also point out that time constraints associated with dairying, both on the farm and in the factory meant that people were choosing leisure activities that were highly individualistic. But they also demonstrate that the recent transition from the solely owner operator arrangement to incorporating sharemilkers in the social fabric of the Valley had effectively exposed the idea of neighbourliness (of having the time of day for a yarn), as being a selective activity not necessarily inclusive of the sharemilking network. Indeed, interviews and observations also indicated that this temporary contract arrangement had a social cost on women, who were caught between a constantly changing social environment, and a population unfamiliar with a transient population.

Other discourses also focused on the changing social status of women, moving from homemaker to workingwomen, and indicated that this transition had upset the balance of women's 'expected' voluntary role of acting as the social glue in the community. The most notable transition was the dwindling interest in WDFV amongst the younger women, and the fall-off in women 'keeping an eye on their neighbour'. On the other hand, interviews also indicated that younger women were fully involved in community activities (like Play Group), but more so, in selective voluntary tasks that revolved around their children's recreational activities.

Women are working a lot as well; in my generation you never worked...that was a no no... it was part and parcel of the culture... I've heard a lot of people saying, I've never met the lady next-door, cos they're away, or when you're there, they're busy (Interview 10)

But the problem now is the shortage of time to care: we need to get rid of the wives working, there's too much independence...that's where the jobs have gone (Interview 2)

Women's Division or Institute, or whatever, are just about dying out, the majority are 60plus, cos so many of the young ones are carting their kids here there and everywhere (Event 8)

Mothers are very busy and too tired. They're always ferrying kids. Every week they are away somewhere (Interview 26)

Still others noted and observations indicated that Invercargill and Gore were their economic centres. Their accessibility, nevertheless, further separated the opportunities of economic practices intersecting with social practices as in former times. However, the issue of accessibility became a factor, which also differentiated between those with access to transport and those without.

The people are so mobile now; they just hop in the car and go into town, just to buy their groceries, and just don't think anything of it, unless you get something to draw them to Wyndham (Interview 24)

The people who keep the local shops going are the retired who don't move around so easily (Interview 12)

Cumulatively, these changes in social practices were weakening local ties in the Valley thereby challenging previous community meanings based on a traditional farming community of close connections where 'everybody knows everybody' was acclaimed. These narratives also demonstrate that in the communication realm, 'community' meanings are not necessarily fixed, but can undergo times of negotiation, where alternative sets of meanings about 'community' maybe required, to depict this Valley.

Directing attention now to the linkages between practices and spaces/structures. This interrelationship might show how community practices are an integral part of, and take place in (material and social) spaces or structures, which in turn can affect how practices can occur. This dialectical relationship was expressed in a number of examples. For instance, people pointed out places like the district halls, the fire brigade, the recreation centre, and even the boundary fence as important sites that provided social spaces for various community practices.

Nonetheless, conversations with locals would suggest that some of these social spaces were aligned to the interests of certain social networks. For instance, the fire brigades were noted as a key space where local volunteers met for "doing something for the

community” (Event 4). Observations, however, indicated that this social space was managed by what Phillips (1996) would call ‘good kiwi blokes’ on account of the conversations: “...if you bring a bird along to the do, you’ll have to pay for her too”, or, “...rugby, that’s all they talk about here”, or, if women joined, “ they have to give as good as they take and share the same jokes - and they’ll fit in fine” (Event 7); the round of drinks once the official meeting part was over; and the “following in their fathers footsteps of joining the force” were spoken of. These particular organisational spaces shaped by ‘good kiwi blokes’ ensured that social activities at the fire brigade were reproduced through spatially gendered relations.

Likewise, the district halls were key sites that provided a social space for various local groups and community activities to occur. These halls were recognised as sites managed by ‘born and bred locals’ with long-term attachments to the Valley. However, observations and interviews indicate that these sites were more often spaces that were utilised by the ‘normal regulars’ loyal to the local ‘do’s.

If a farm changes hands we’d have this welcome and farewell. It gives us an opportunity to meet, but most times the new ones don’t come; some are too tired, some are not community minded, or shyness... [Although], the card evenings down at Seaward Downs over the winter are well patronised (Interview 26)

We had a potluck tea up at the hall, it used to be full, but $\frac{3}{4}$ of the hall was empty. It was supposed to be at 6:30 but there was not a soul about, it took 10 or 15 minutes before anybody else turned up. It’s disappointing; it’s not a busy time (Interview 27)

These examples illustrates how the district halls constituted a space that was governed and utilised by those who were well established locals, and who subscribed to what Hatch (1992) referred to as an insiders ‘ranking system of acceptability’ - of being loyal to the local community, whereas some of the ‘new ones’ did not necessarily subscribe to, or have the same allegiance to the shared histories attached to local community activities. For them, local community activities do not appear to be a major reference point. This would suggest that the reproduction of this space for traditional community activities was being replaced by practices independent of this community site, and

those who managed it. Interviews also confirmed that some new social networks initiated their own 'get togethers', independent of the local born and bred social gatherings and district halls.

We [the Taranaki farmers] started the reunions six years ago...it drew the Taranaki people together, we can have a grizzle and a moan, it's a support thing. Last year we didn't know if we'd keep going...but we kept going and the same ones keep coming back (Event 9)

Similarly, the Edendale dairy factory has always been an important site that provided a source of employment and an opportunity for social contact for a number of men in the area. Yet, interviews would indicate that this site was no longer managed like a co-operative, where the manager knew the workers. Rather, it was recognised as site now managed and controlled by New Zealand's largest dairy company, the NZDG based in Hamilton.

The management is totally different. They are very clever people, very smart and sharp, but my word the pressure is on, it's huge compared to years ago (Interview 12)

Workers' at the factory are a commodity: they work hard - they work 12 hours (Interview 26)

These examples illustrate how the current management structure created an industrial space that wanted to sustain its competitive edge in the global market economy, and expected that work practices would also adopt this same mode of operation. In part, this echoes Jesson's (1999) argument that this generation had witnessed a shift in control in management practices: from one that prioritised a co-operative style of operation, to one that maximised processing efficiencies and profit. Indeed, the 12-hour shift system influenced the type community activities workers could participate in. Although, people were divided over the effects of this changing work environment. Some workers felt that since the "corporate takeover" work was no longer a "fun place... people didn't know each other", while business operators noted that "it's been positive for the business", and still the Volunteer Fire Brigade noted, "some times there's a problem between September and May, in the 6 am to 6 pm [shift] we're struggling for a crew" (Event 2, Interview 8 and Event 4). The constitution of this

space effectively had reconfigured some community practices to revolve around the production demands of the factory. In other words, the wider discourse on maximising efficiency had reconstituted social life in the Valley.

Also, boundary fences were considered a key site for building the highly valued practice of neighbourliness, although, this was usually conditional on keeping stock within their borders. However, the following comments would suggest that not all farmers were embracing this neighbourly practice:

Now I'm hemmed in between dairying...you can't even put your foot up to the boundary fence and have a yarn with your neighbour; he's never there (Interview 26)

We had a job getting accepted. The majority of the time we're busy, we're tired, we start at 4 am, and don't get a social life, or see much of the neighbours; we do our own business (Event 9)

These circumstances reflect Liepins and Bradshaw's (1999) argument that many farmers were now acting more like 'market-led producers', which effectively undermined the significance of the boundary fences as a social space for perpetuating moments of social connection.

Changing practices were also noted at the recreational centre in Wyndham. This community resource was noted as an important site that provided a social space for various sporting activities like rugby racing, golf and netball. Observations indicated that while the recreational centre was a space where many sporting groups met, in practices that fostered a sense of local community parochialism, this space was now subject to the requirements of people's work commitments.

And the rugby, everybody goes to the rugby field yelling and arguing on the field. They don't do that anymore... The crowds aren't the same: they're not. I don't know why they don't come... A lot of people play golf now, there's not a lot of team stuff (Interview 7)

In this case, a community site was being shaped by people's work practices - working non-standard hours, or around the fixed time schedule of milking cows. These practices

often involved a switch in sporting allegiance: from team sports to non-team sports, and from spectator involvement to none. In other words people looked to non-team sports as a more expedient use of time. This transition in the use of community space from collective to individual activities reflected how negotiations over what activities may occur, also involved people participating in the politics of choice.

Finally, considering the dialectic relationship between spaces/structures and meanings highlights the transforming potentialities of the notion 'community' that people were subscribing to. Certain spaces and structures enable the viewing of particular 'community' meanings, and in turn these particular meanings can become embedded in these specific spaces and structures. There were a number of examples that illustrate this relationship.

Numerous long-term residents noted that Brydone Primary School was the sole surviving small district school in the Valley (excluding Wyndham and Edendale primary schools). But because schools were often referred to as 'the heart of community', and this school was under threat of closure, Brydone Primary became a contentious issue for a number of long-term residents (refer to Plate 7). For them, the school was seen as the materialisation of collective memories about a shared history of social connection. Yet, interviews indicate that this community space did not necessarily hold the same sense of meaning for all.

When the dairy people arrived they by-pass the local school, some have gone to Edendale. They assume with one teacher the opportunities aren't great, others assume one teacher may lack expertise (Interview 26)

On the 1st of June it could be either lots of kids or none at the schools. Some families haven't considered us, I don't think...they just come into the district and look elsewhere (Interview 17)

If everybody in the district went, there should be 31 children. So that's a two-teacher school...they're going to Wyndham mostly, or Edendale...I feel that those people isolate themselves from our community (Interview 23)



Plate 7: Brydone Primary School

Contrary to Houghton and Wilson's (1995) findings on new families boosting school rolls in rural Southland, these views would suggest that parent's 'choice' over schooling options could mean the difference between this social space being eliminated or not, along with a sense of community identity that was thought to be embodied within this site. These responses from long-term residents would suggest that decisions over children's educational opportunities were a burning issue. They also illustrate that there were politics invested in certain sites. Here we see how new residents with school aged children had the power to shape the future of this socially significant community space.

Likewise, key spaces on State Highway 1 at the entrance to Edendale were also observed to constitute ideas about 'community' (refer to Plate 8a & b). Entering Edendale from the west was a sign that conveyed ideas of entering a friendly community with pride in its productive rural heritage and pioneering³ past. On entering Edendale from the north, was another sign, conveying a message about professionalism, a branded product, and appropriate warnings about entering an industrial site.



Plate 8(a & b): Two constructions of the same place

These signs illustrate how texts and the type of presentation can communicate specific meanings about 'community', but meanings that convey two different stories about the same place. These examples illustrate that a community resource, such as a sign are not

³ 'Pioneer' was also the brand name of Southland produced cheese, prior to the takeover by NZDG.

necessarily neutral, but as Foucault (1980) argues, have the power to produce certain knowledges about place construction.

Another shifting social phenomenon was highlighted by the changing population structure in the Valley. People indicated that there had been a loss of long-term farming families and arrival of many new faces following Marketing Southland and the Southland Dairy Co-operative's proactive moves of promoting dairying in Southland. This changing population structure was frequently noted as challenging meanings about community stability and familiarity. However, some long-term residents felt strongly that their sense of collective sense of identity must be preserved, otherwise the Valley's history would be lost, if the old-timers stories were not told, or if the artefacts of the past were not gathered and displayed as signifiers of 'our roots'. Indeed, certain sites on Wyndham's main street enabled meanings about 'our past' to be viewed. The restoration of the BNZ building into a Library, and transformation of the United Trading Co. into a museum were recognised as sites where meanings about community pride in the 'our' history were manifest.

Well, the BNZ had been there for over 100 years, but it's now the library, and I go there now and do voluntary work... it keeps me in touch with people too: people coming in who I wouldn't know from round about (Interview 20)

Yet others looked beyond these two sites and noted that the main street no longer operated effectively as a community space where economic transactions took place or where people met and exchanged local 'gossip' (refer to Plate 9).

You know, when I worked in the garage down there, I knew everybody in Wyndham. But if you go down there now... I don't know anyone who comes in... There was a guy who used to come every Saturday morning, we just had a yarn about what was happening and so forth We've lost a few in Wyndham... you know, they were identities you might say in the community and they all disappeared (Interview 14)

I don't know sometimes I look around the town, sometimes I think nobody is doing anything; do you ever get that feeling? We should put a rose garden down at the monument ...but we need something [to beautify Wyndham](Interview 7)

[Wyndham] Oh it's dead, it's quite sad really. Like sometimes you go out onto the street to see what's going on, and get a breath of fresh air, and there's no cars...all you see is empty shops and nobody around, there's nothing to pop in for (Interview 24)

Interviews indicate that views about the main street were divided; yet this space remained socially significant for what Pickering (1990) would argue, was a resource of cultural identity where memories about past social connections were embedded within this site.



Plate 9: The affects of downsizing on Wyndham Township

Summary

This analysis has provided an account of the Lower Maitaura Valley from the standpoint of the people living in or connected to the place. It has shown that people drew from a range of discourses, practices, spaces and structures to construct their ideas of 'community' in relation to the Valley, and that these constructions often echoed the broader political, economic and social contexts in which they were embedded within. These constructions have created a tapestry of ideas in relation to the

notion 'community', including the physical, relational and spatial aspects of the term, whilst also highlighting the multiple identities and power relations involved in shaping social life in the Valley. Furthermore, this conceptual framework for reading 'community' has also demonstrated that rural life in the Valley was not static, but that the idea of 'community' that people were currently subscribing to was changing. Indeed, 'community' could be better understood as a negotiated process involving multiple voices, diverse meanings and contested practices that have the potential to reconfigure the spaces and structures of 'community' (Liepins, 2000:339). As such, this study has responded in part to Phillips call to look beyond just the tangible, measurable and observable constructs of rural life, but recognise the experiential and the political dimensions also (Phillips, 1998: 146-147).

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSION

The aim of this thesis, as was outlined in Chapter One, was to unpack the increasingly researched yet still contentious notion of 'community' as it is understood and experienced in the context of rural New Zealand. Secondly, I wanted to uncover more of the interconnections between agricultural changes and rural communities, from a more explicitly cultural and poststructural approach, to find out more about the nature of 'community' that residents were currently subscribing to. This was achieved by focusing on a place-specific community in Southland, and the ways in which residents constructed their ideas about 'community' by tracing the tangible and intangible forms of community, and then highlighting the processes involved that showed 'community' to be also as much a dynamic phenomenon in perpetual process.

In Chapter Two it was contended that the 'ideal' rural community has been based on a bundle of assumptions and expectations that continue to guide current discourses on rural communities. Past approaches to studies of rural communities were then reviewed. The chapter drew from broader social thought to provide further resources for a more robust conceptualisation of 'community'. The challenges from contemporary cultural studies, as well as from post-modern and post-structural thought, would suggest that community studies need to recognise the multiple meanings, signifying practices and sites of social connection that shape ideas about 'community', together with the diversity of people involved in its construction. Ruth Liepins' (2000:30) conceptual framework of 'community' that outlined the key elements through which both the material and cultural dimensions of community could be addressed provided an important insight.

The aim of Chapter Three was to outline the broader economic, political and social forces of change at work in rural New Zealand since 1945, in order to provide a contextual background for this study. It was contended that the recent historical developments since the period of economic reform in the 1980s has had differential impacts on individuals, rural communities and regions resulting in some being either in

a weaker or stronger position, depending on their location and resource base. The implication was that the situated meaning of these broader discursive changes needed to be discovered from the lived experiences of ordinary people in place-specific communities.

Chapter Four provided an overview of the regional particularities within which the field study took place. These contextual features were included so that the reader could engage with some understanding of the different processes involved in shaping the local context, and their linkage to the discursive constructions of 'community' that were expressed by the Valley residents.

Chapter Five elaborated on the process involved in undertaking a qualitative research approach from the position of being an 'insider'. The processes involved in gathering data were outlined. Then analysing people's narratives for their expressions of 'community' (in relation to the meanings, practices and spaces of 'community'), their inter-linkage to the broader discursive contexts, and their dialectic relationship to each other and broader context were also outlined, so that the material and immaterial forms of community and the processes shaping the notion of 'community', were both considered.

The findings of Chapter Six show that the experiences of rural life in the Valley were structured in part around meanings, practices and spaces associated with 'community'. People's ideas of 'community' revolved around expressions that related to the local environment, economic, and social dimensions of 'community'. Farming and the rural setting clearly indicated the rural aspects of 'community'. However, it was the social features - the character and networks of social connection - that dominated people's constructions. The 'local born and bred' residents tended to draw on the 'everybody knows every body' discourse, maybe in an attempt to assert there sense of cohesion in response to the recent influx of new residents. On the other hand, new residents tended to draw on the 'economic and environmental benefits of dairying in Southland' discourse, maybe as a reflection of their motives for moving to Southland (Lewis, 1998). Their narratives also showed that community existed around different social groups that were more or less accepted, or involved in social life: notably the insider/outsider and sheep farmer/dairy farmer dichotomy. Nonetheless, not all

residents shared these commonly held constructions, or fitted neatly into these categories. These differing senses of what people take community to be, show social relations in the Valley were not necessarily as harmonious as they were portrayed.

While discourses on practices of community indicated that activities involving socialization were critical to maintaining or building a sense of social connection, whether that was referring to daily activities, or regular or semi-regular events. Practices involving opportunities for a yarn, or allegiance to local community activities characterised the expectations of how social connection should be lived out. However, ideas about 'community' social relations were translated into everyday social practices, which in turn, influenced the behaviour and expectations of community involvement. Examples like Women's Division, sporting activities, and even social drinking indicated the entrenched positions that also existed. Put simply, this meant that to participate in, and be accepted into certain social practices, required conforming to conventional gender relations. Thus, the prevailing power relations, in the Valley, sought to ensure that this farming community was reproduced in the ways it has always been.

Cumulatively, narratives on the physical and organisational spaces indicate that people were practicing community and investing meanings to certain spaces and sites. We see that the number of gathering places had diminished, leaving schools as key locations for sustaining a sense of collective community identity, and indeed, where the politics of community life were displayed. Still other locations, such as the halls, war memorials, or renovated buildings were important community resources in which certain memories were preserved. Likewise, certain institutional spaces, such as the church and Southland Dairy Co-op were recognised as contributing to the distinctive character of community, whilst also creating contrasting images about the way social life was enacted: one coloured by its Presbyterian heritage, the other by the demands of competing in the global market place.

Together, these three dimensions of community have captured both the tangible and intangible forms of social life in the Valley. However, the processes involved in reshaping notions of community were also noted. Certain patterns emerged from local insights into the evolving links between agricultural change and the nature of

community that people were subscribing to. Of particular note was the interdiscursive links to processes occurring at various spatial scales. For example, the shifts in international commodity prices for sheep and dairy products, the deliberate change in policy by New Zealand Government since 1984, and then, the entrepreneurial strategies to market Southland as an 'agricultural paradise' were recognised as affecting how social life in the Valley was changing.

These influences have contributed to a marked shift in land-use from sheep to dairying; to farmers acting like market-led producers or going under; to the centralisation of services to larger urban centres; and to an influx of mainly North Island dairy farming families (including sharemilkers) taking advantage of the differential land prices between the two places, and for sharemilkers, the opportunity for making more money from the bigger dairy herds.

Like Liepins and Bradshaw (1999), I would argue that this shift in production and cultural behaviour of many farmers echoes the neo-liberal discourse espoused by government for greater efficiencies, in order to be internationally competitive. These processes, coupled with the shift from the flexible hours associated with sheep farming, to the fixed daily routines of dairying, have encouraged processes of specialisation and independence to shape the social practices in the Valley. Essentially, these transitions meant a reduced pool of people being the social glue in the Valley, team sports and collective social activities were struggling to survive, and the boundary fence was no longer symbolic of the site for having a yarn. Instead, individualistic activities and the business of farming were becoming features of social life. In addition, opportunities for shopping intersecting with having a yarn in local places were diminishing. These processes, together with the influx of new dairy farming families into a place unused to 'outsiders', contributed to changing the social composition of the population, and to changing meanings of 'community' previously based on familiarity and stability, and exposing the degree of intolerance to people considered to be transient, or not adapting to existing ways of doing things.

Likewise, the expansion processes associated with the Southland Dairy Co-operative in terms of scale, ^{hne1}personal, and modes of operation have been influential processes at work in the reconfiguration of notions of 'community'. Of particular note, was that this

co-operative was now managed by external agents with no social connection to the Valley, was inclusive of many factory workers sourced from beyond the Valley, was structured around maintaining its competitive advantages, and was marketing under the brand name Anchor Products. Together, these changes were reshaping the spatial boundaries of social connection, and were redefining ideas about the Valley to be more associated with an industrial production site and an internationally marketed product, than a traditional farming community, as in former times.

Discussion

This qualitative research approach has shown that notions of 'community' cannot be taken for granted, rather they were discovered through people's everyday talk (Halfacree, 1993:4). In fact, through examining these lay discourses on the everyday cultural patterns and practices of community, enabled us to gain greater understanding of the dynamics involved in rural communities. These discourses included "both abstract concepts and the concrete images" of community. These in turn, have yielded a rich resource of detail to better inform our understanding of the complex and contingent nature of the concept, and the people involved in its construction (Halfacree, 1995:2). It has also shown the value of drawing information from 'ordinary people' in rural societies, recognising the role that such information, and such voices contribute, to what we know about rural communities.

There can be no doubt that, drawing on the discourses of 'ordinary people' unveiled the diversity of perspectives, and multiple voices involved in constructing ideas that constituted notions of 'community' (Pratt, 1996:69). They also highlighted that community relations can be better understood as "fractured along numerous lines of difference" (Philo, 1992:201), rather than assumed as being a cohesive whole. And as such, place-based communities need to be recognised as a social space alive with differences between people. But more importantly, there needs to be understanding about what conclusions people make of these differences.

At another level, while Philo (1992) has sensitised social research to the existence of marginalised groups in rural spaces, and to the fact that researchers have tended to privilege the narratives of 'Mr Average'. This study found there was not the social groups that Philo referred to as 'the neglected other'. In fact, I would argue, to

privilege 'the neglected other' in rural communities would be to underestimate the differences and the marginalizing processes that exist even within the 'Mr (and Mrs) Average's' group, in terms of which individuals or groups perceived themselves as more or less powerful, or accepted than the other. Therefore, further studies on rural communities need to continue to be sensitive to the heterogeneity of people's experiences of social life.

Likewise, this study has shown that the history, and broader contexts in which a community is a part cannot be ignored, nor can 'community' be treated as fixed. Rather, I would suggest that 'community' should be treated as unstable and interactive, involving the intersection of social relations and the broader socio-economic and political conditions of which it is a part. So, in crude terms the shape of community may be different at different times, in different economic and social circumstances, and will vary depending on the different people involved in its construction. Therefore, by considering 'community' more in terms of being a negotiated process involving populations of diversity, multiple meanings, diverse social practices, that occur within and influence certain organizations and material spaces, this approach has provided resources to trace these influences contributing to the changing shape of social life of rural communities (Liepins, 2000:29-32).

These findings, however, are one interpretation, my interpretation, and demonstrate beyond all else that further research could proceed in other directions. One such direction I would be interested to see developed is a repeat of the same study, only this time, using the PRA approach of 'handing over the stick' to members from within the community, and the researcher taking on a facilitator's role to see whether different emphases, or different discourses were drawn upon in their identification of various change processes affecting the place.

However, for the research to have any benefit for the community in question, the process would need to extend a further stage. This would require the various social networks to collectively develop strategies for appropriate actions that could be taken to reflect the diversity of circumstances, interests, and the interconnections that exist within the population. In this way, research outcomes are not just destined to the library shelves, but the outcomes could be inscribed into the lives of those willing to

recognise the differences and uneven power relations that exist within a local population, and accommodate those tensions in any development strategies. Another direction would be to consider another place-specific community, in an acknowledgement that the precise nature of rural communities will vary between people, and over space and time, and that the reflections expressed in here should not be assumed as mirroring another context. Or, alternatively, further studies could examine the ways in which a particular social group within a place specific community experience community, in order to discover more about the gaps in understanding about the power dynamics of 'community' for developing social policy.

While this study was not aimed at developing a policy in relation to rural communities. It does suggest that there can be no single set policy for rural communities, rather policy must be developed in a manner that accounts for the processes of change, rather than the state of being, for reducing the scope of policy appropriate to the context.

Finally, this present study on expressions of 'community' in context has offered a valuable contribution to studies on rural communities in New Zealand from a more discursive and cultural perspective, by considering the socially constructed nature of places and the discursive processes involved in the social formation of communities. By including these aspects, the reader gains greater insights into the ways in which 'community' as a term was discursively constructed, and into the politics and practices of everyday life for residents of a particular farming community in southern New Zealand.

Nevertheless, I would argue that these findings have relevance to place-based communities both in Western and developing countries, since we have discovered that the notion of 'community' is as much a social construction shaped by people, as it is a material form. The questions that I brought to this study on 'what is a community', and 'how does it function and change,' were answered not by the researcher, but by 'ordinary people' living in the Valley. These same questions I believe can be asked of 'ordinary people' in other communities, irrespective of location or culture. Therefore, this study brings a challenge to community development practitioners, policy makers and professionals to take the time to find the answers to these questions from 'ordinary

people' before considering what are appropriate development strategies or policies for communities.

APPENDICIES

SUMMARY OF INTERVIEWS

1.	Local Council Representative	M
2.	Local Council Representative	M
3.	Members of a local church	C
4.	Minister	M
5.	Retired sheep farmer	M
6.	Real Estate Agent	M
7.	Freezing Worker	F
8.	Transport Operator	M
9.	Recently Retired Sheep Farmer	F
10.	Sheep Farmer	M
11.	Community Health Worker	F
12.	Justice of the Peace	M
13.	Representative of farming in Southland	M
14.	Members of the Old People's Home Trust	M
15.	Ex-North Island Dairy Farmer	C
16.	Retired Sheep Farmer	F
17.	Primary School Teacher	F
18.	High School Teachers	M&F
19.	Truck Driver/ex-Sheep Farmer	M
20.	Older resident of Wyndham Township	F
21.	Local Agricultural Contractor	M
22.	Teacher/ Sheep & Beef Farmer	F
23.	Dairy Farmers	C
24.	Shop Owner	F
25.	Sheep Farmer	M
26.	Sheep Farmer	M
27.	Retired Dairy Farmers	C
28.	Dairy Farmer	M

Events

1.	WDFP	F
2.	Wyndham Pub	M
3.	Seaward Downs Play Group	F
4.	Edendale Volunteer Fire Brigade	M
5.	Edendale Pub	M
6.	A Farewell 'do' at the Maitara Island Hall	M&F
7.	Wyndham Volunteer Fire Brigade	M
8.	Conversations with Shop Owners	M&F
9.	The ex-Taranaki Dairy Farmers 'do'	M&F

Key

M - Male F - Female C - Couple

INFORMATION SHEET

I am Shirley Howden a student at Massey University doing a Masters degree in Development Studies at the School of Global Studies. My supervisors are Professor John Overton and Dr. Terry Kelly both who may be contacted at (06) 356 9099.

My research is looking at the changing nature of rural communities. It seeks to capture the dynamics of multidimensional changes that have occurred over the past decades and the way these changes are expressed by people living in the Lower Maitara Valley. I have chosen the Lower Maitara Valley District in Southland as the context of my study. I want to understand what these changes mean to the people themselves and the way it has shaped the present day context. This means I am looking at this topic from the local community's perspective and allowing them to tell their own story of how it is.

This style of research involves semi-structured interviews conducted in an informal open-ended manner with individuals who are willing to be a part of this study, which would take approximately one hour of their time. I would want to assure the participants in this study, that their identities would not be revealed in any publications resulting from it unless they give me permission to be named. As a participant you would have the right:

- To decline to participate;
- To refuse to answer any particular question;
- To withdraw from the study at anytime;
- To ask any questions about the study at any time during participation;
- To provide information on the understanding that your name will not be used unless you give permission to the researcher;
- To be given access to a summary of the findings of the study when it is concluded.

Yours sincerely

Shirley Howden

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Agnew, J. (1993) 'Representing space: space, scale and culture in social science' in J. Duncan and D. Ley (eds) *Place/Culture/Representation*. London: Routledge, pp. 241-271.
- Babbie, E. (1998) *The Practice of Social Research*. (8th ed), Belmont: Wadsworth.
- Benediktsson, K., Manning, S., Moran, W. & Anderson, A.G. (1990) *Participation of Raglan County Farm Households in the Labour Force*. Occasional Paper No. 27, Department of Geography, University of Auckland.
- Blunden, G., Moran, A. & Bradly, A. (1997) "'Archaic' relations of production in modern agricultural systems: the example of sharemilking in New Zealand" *Environment and Planning A* 29, 1759-1776.
- Bollard, A. (1992) *New Zealand 1984-1991*. Country Studies No. 10, San Francisco: ICS Press.
- Britton, S., Le Heron, R. & Pawson, E. (1992) *Changing Places in New Zealand: Geography of Restructuring*. Christchurch: New Zealand Geographical Society.
- Brohman, J. *Popular Development: Rethinking the Theory and Practice of Development*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Brooking, T. (1981) 'Economic transformation' in W.H. Oliver (ed) *The Oxford History of New Zealand*. Wellington: Oxford University Press, pp. 226-249.
- Broughton, B. & Hampshire, J. (1997) *Bridging the Gap: A Guide to Monitoring and Evaluating Development Projects*. Canberra: Australian Council for Overseas Aid.
- Burborough, T. & Trost P. (2000) *Southland District's Economic Development 1991-2000*. MAF Policy, Technical Paper 2000/14, Dunedin.

Burgess, R. G. (1984) 'In the field: an introduction to field research' in M. Bulmer (ed) *Contemporary Social Research*: 8. London: Routledge.

Cairns, P. (1992) *The Economic Risk of Otago/Southland's Dependence on Sheep Farming*. MAF Policy, Technical Paper 90/10, Wellington.

Campbell, H. (1992) 'Conducting ethnography at home' in R.W.M. Johnson (ed) *Proceedings of a Workshop on Rural Community Studies*. MAF Policy, Technical Paper 93/7, Wellington, pp. 89-93.

Cant, G. (1980) 'Rural depopulation: patterns and processes' in G. Cant (ed) *People and Planning in Rural Communities*. Studies on Rural Change, No. 4, Department of Geography, University of Canterbury, Christchurch, pp 3-14.

Cant, G. (1989) 'The context of rural ministry' in G. Cant & L. McKay (eds) *Rural Church Alive*. Studies on Rural Change, No. 14, Department of Geography, University of Canterbury, Christchurch, pp. 5-21.

Chambers, R. (1994) 'Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA): analysis of experience' *World Development* 22,9 1253-1268.

Chambers, R. (1997) *Whose Reality Counts?* London: Intermediate Technology Publication.

Chapman, R. (1981) 'From Labour to National' in W.H. Oliver (ed) *The Oxford History of New Zealand*. Wellington: Oxford University Press, pp. 333-368.

Cloke, P. (1996) 'Looking through European eyes? A re-evaluation of agricultural deregulation in New Zealand' *Sociologia Ruralis* 36,3 307-330.

Cloke, P. & Little, J. (1997) *Contested Countryside Cultures*. London: Routledge.

- Coffey, A. & Atkinson, P. (1996) *Making Sense of Qualitative Data*. Thousand Oakes: Sage.
- Cohen, A.P. (1982) *Belonging: Identity and Social Organisation in British Rural Cultures*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Cohen, A.P. (1985) *The Symbolic Construction of Community*. London: Tavistock.
- Crouch, D. (1992) 'Popular culture and what we make of rural, with a case study of village allotments' *Journal of Rural Studies* 8,3 229-240.
- Day, G. (1998) 'Working with the grain? Towards sustainable rural community development' *Journal of Rural Studies* 14,1 89-105.
- Dempsey, K. (1990) *Smalltown: A Study of Social Inequality, Cohesion and Belonging*. Melbourne: Oxford University Press.
- Easton, B. (1987) 'Agriculture in New Zealand's economy' in L.T. Wallace & R. Lattimore (eds) *Rural New Zealand-What Next?* Lincoln College: Agribusiness & Economics Research Unit, pp. 1-14.
- Easton, B. (1997) *In Stormy Seas: The Post-War New Zealand Economy*. Dunedin: Otago University Press.
- Edendale Concept Paper, August 1997.
- Ellen, R.F. (1984) *Ethnographic Research: A Guide to General Conduct*. Research Methods in Social Anthropology 1, London: Academic Press.
- Fairburn, M. (1989) *The Ideal Society and its Enemies: The Foundations of Modern New Zealand Society 1850-1900*. Auckland: Auckland University Press.
- Fairclough, N. (1992) *Approaches to Discourse Analysis*. Cambridge: Blackwell Press.

- Fairweather, J.R. (1992) *Agrarian Restructuring in New Zealand*. Research Report No. 213, Agribusiness & Economic Research Unit, Lincoln University, Lincoln.
- Farming In Southland (nd.) 'Southland: the land the opportunity', Promotional Pamphlet, Southland.
- Foucault M. (1980) 'Body/Power' in C. Gordon (ed) *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977*. New York: Pantheon, pp. 55-62.
- Feierman, S. (1990) *Peasant Intellectuals*. Madison WI: University of Wisconsin.
- Gardner, W.J. (1992) 'A colonial economy' in G.W. Rice (2nd ed) *The Oxford History of New Zealand*. Auckland: Oxford University Press, pp. 57-96.
- Gilling, M. (1997) *Farm Families and Sustainability in the mid Rangitikei*. MAF Policy, Technical Paper 97/19, Wellington.
- Halfacree, K.H. (1993) 'Locality and social representation: space, discourse and alternative definitions of the rural' *Journal of Rural Studies* 9,1 23-37.
- Hammersley, M & Atkinson, P. (1983) *Ethnography: Principles in Practice* (2nd ed). London: Routledge.
- Harberger, A.C. (1992) 'Introduction' in A. Bollard (ed) *New Zealand 1984-1991*. Country Studies No. 10, San Francisco: ISC Press, pp. ix-xi.
- Harington, P. (1997) "'Community': language and ideology' in C. Bell (ed) *Community Issues in New Zealand*. Palmerston North: Dunmore Press, pp. 17-34.
- Harper, S (1989) 'The British rural community: an overview of perspectives' *Journal of Rural Studies* 5,2 161-184.
- Harvey, D. (1996) *Justice, Nature and Geography of Difference*. Cambridge: Blackwell Publishers.

- Hatch, E. (1992) *Respectable Lives: Social Standing in Rural New Zealand*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Hawke, G.R. (1981) 'The growth of the economy' in W.H. Oliver & B.R Williams (eds) *The Oxford History of New Zealand*. Wellington: Oxford University Press, pp. 369-395.
- Hawke, G. (1987) 'Overview of New Zealand Agriculture' in L.T. Wallace & R. Lattimore (eds) *Rural New Zealand~What Next?* Lincoln College: Agribusiness & Economics Research Unit, pp. 1-11.
- Houghton, R.M & Wilson A.G. (1995) *The Southland Dairy Cooperative Ltd: Social Effects Reports*. University of Otago Consulting Group, Dunedin.
- Houghton, R.M., King, A. & Piper, R.K. (1996) *Land Use and Community in Rural Southland: A Summary of Information on Economic and Social Change Since 1970*. MAF Policy, Technical Paper 97/6, Wellington.
- http://www.stats.gov.nz/domino/external/web/prod_serv.nsf/htmldocs/Population
- <http://www.maf.gov.nz/statistics/primaryindustries/regions/tables/southland.htm>
- Hunter, K. & McKenzie, J. (1989) *Life at the Island: A History of the Maitai District and its People*. Invercargill: Craig Printing.
- Ilbery, B. (1998) 'Dimensions of rural change' in B. Ilbery (ed) *The Geography of Rural Change*. Essex: Longman, pp. 1-10.
- Jesson, B. (1988) 'The libertarian right' in B. Jesson, A. Ryan & P. Spoonley (eds) *Revival of the Right: New Zealand Politics in the 1980s*. Auckland: Heinemann Reed, pp. 30-55.
- Jesson, B. (1999) *Only Their Purpose is Mad*. Palmerston North: Dunmore Press.

- Johnsen, S. (1999) 'Agricultural restructuring and response: inter-relationships between farm adjustment strategies in Waihemo, 1984-1997' *New Zealand Geography* 55,1 25-34.
- Johnson, R (1987) 'Government and the farmer' in L.T. Wallace & R. Lattimore (eds) *Rural New Zealand-What Next* Lincoln College: Agribusiness & Economic Research unit, pp. 1-14.
- Jones, K. (1995) *People and Participation in Rural Areas: A Community Development Approach*. Western Bay of Plenty District Council, New Zealand.
- Jones, O. (1995) 'Lay discourse of the rural: development and implications of rural studies' *Journal of Rural Studies* 11,1 35-49.
- Joseph, A.E. & Chalmers, A.I. (1998) 'Coping with rural change: finding a place for the elderly in sustainable communities' *New Zealand Geographer* 54,2 28-36.
- Joseph, A.E. (1999) *Towards an Understanding of the Interrelated dynamics of Change in Agriculture and Rural Communities*. Discussion Papers No. 32, Population Studies Centre, University of Waikato, Hamilton.
- Kearns, R.A. & Joseph, A.E. (1997) 'Restructuring health and rural communities' *Progress in Human Geography* 21 18-32.
- Keating, N.C. & Little, H.M. (1991) *Generations in Family Farms: Transfer of the Family Farm in New Zealand*. Research Report No. 208, Agribusiness & Economic Research Unit, Lincoln University, Lincoln.
- Kelsey, J. (1999) *Reclaiming the Future*. Wellington: Bridget Williams Books.
- Kloppenborg, J. (1991) 'Social theory and the de/reconstruction of agricultural science: local knowledge for an alternative agriculture' *Rural Sociology* 55 519-548.

Kumar, K. (1993) *Rapid Rural Appraisal Methods*. Washington DC: World Bank.

Lawrence, G. (1990) 'Agricultural restructuring and rural social change in Australia' in T. Marsden, P. Lowe & S. Whatmore (eds) *Rural Restructuring: Global processes and Their Responses*. London: David Fulton Publishers, pp. 101-128.

Le Heron, R. (1989) 'A political economy perspective on the expansion of New Zealand livestock farming, 1960-1984- Part 1 agricultural policy' *Journal of Rural Studies* 5,1 17-32.

Le Heron, R. (1991) 'New Zealand agriculture and changes in the agriculture-finance relation during the 1980s' *Environmental Planning A* 23 1653-1670.

Le Heron, R. & Pawson, E. (1996) *Changing Places in New Zealand: New Zealand in the Nineties*. Auckland: New Zealand Geographical Society.

Lewis, G. (1998) 'Rural migration and demographic change' in B Ilbery (ed) *The Geography of Rural Change*. Essex: Longman, pp. 131-160.

Liepins, R. (1996) 'Reading agricultural power' *New Zealand Geographer* 52,2 3-10.

Liepins, R. (2000) 'New energies for an old idea: reworking approaches to 'community' in contemporary rural studies' *Journal of Rural Studies* 16 23-35.

Liepins, R. (2000) 'Exploring rurality through 'community': discourses, practices and spaces shaping Australia and New Zealand rural communities' *Journal of Rural Studies* 16 325-341.

Liepins, R. & Bradshaw, B. (1999) 'Neo-liberal agricultural discourse in New Zealand: economy, culture and politics linked' *Sociologia Ruralis* 39,4 561-582.

Little, J. (1997) 'Constructions of rural women's voluntary work' *Gender, Place and Culture* 4,2 197-209.

McEachern, C. (1992) 'Farmers and conversation: conflict and accommodation in farming politics' *Journal of Rural Studies* 8,2 159-171.

McMichael, P. (1996) *Development and Social Change: A Global Perspective*. Thousand Oakes: Pine Forge Press.

Marsden, T., Munton, R., Ward, N. & Whatmore, S. (1996) 'Agricultural geography and political economy approach: a review' *Economic Geography* 72,4 361-375.

Massey, D. (1993) 'Politics and space/time' in M. Keith & S. Pile (eds) *Place and the Politics of Identity*. London: Routledge, pp. 141-161.

Massey, D. (1994) *Space, Place and Gender*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Mol, A. & Law, J. (1994) 'Regions, networks and fluid: anaemia and social topology' *Social Studies of Science* 24 641-671.

Moran, W. (1993) 'The conceptual approach' in R.W.M. Johnson (ed) *Proceedings of a Workshop on Rural Community Studies*. MAF Policy, Technical Paper 93/7, Wellington, pp. 13-22.

Moran, W. (1997) 'Farm size change in New Zealand' *New Zealand Geographer* 53,1 3-13.

Moran, W., Blunden, G. & Greenwood, J. (1993) 'The role of family farming in agrarian change' *Progress in Human Geography* 19,1 22-42.

Murdoch, J. & Pratt, A.C. (1993) 'Rural studies: modernism, postmodernism and the 'post rural'' *Journal of Rural Studies* 9,4 411-427.

Naples, N.A. (1994) 'Contradictions in agrarian ideology: restructuring gender, race-ethnicity and class' *Rural Sociological Society* 59,1 110-135.

- Novitz, D. (1989) 'On culture and cultural identity' in D. Novitz & B. Willmott (eds) *Culture and Identity in New Zealand* Wellington: GP Books, pp. 275-291.
- Olssen, E. (1992) 'Towards a new society' in Geoffrey. W. Rice (2nd ed) *The Oxford History of New Zealand* Auckland: Oxford University Press, pp. 254-284.
- Pahl, R (1996) 'The rural-urban continuum' *Sociologica Ruralis* 6 299-327.
- Parker, I. (1992) *Discourse Dynamics: Critical Analysis for Social and Individual Psychology*. London: Routledge.
- Pawson, E & Scott, G. (1992) 'The regional consequences of economic restructuring: the West Coast, New Zealand (1984-1991)' *Journal of Rural Studies* 8,4 373-386.
- Pearson, D.G. & Thorns, D.C. (1983) *Eclipse of Equality*. Sydney: George Allen & Unwin.
- Phillips, J. (1996) *A Man's Country? The Image of the Pakeha Male - A History*. Revised ed. Auckland: Penguin Books.
- Phillips, M. (1998) 'The restructuring of social imaginations in rural geography' *Journal of Rural Studies* 14,2 121-153.
- Phillips, M. (1998) 'Social perspective' in B. Ilbery (ed) *The Geography of Rural Change*. Essex: Longman, pp. 31-54.
- Philo, C. (1992) 'Neglected rural geographies: a review' *Journal of Rural Studies* 8,2 193-207.
- Pickering, M. (1990) 'Mass communication and the quest for cultural identity' *Sites* 21 (Spring) 44-63.
- Pickering, M. (1991) 'Social power and symbolic sites: in the tracks of cultural studies' *Sites* 21 (Spring) 3-32.

Plant, R. (1974) *Community and Ideology: An Essay in Applied Social Philosophy*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Plant, R., Lesser, H. & Taylor-Gooby, P. (1980) *Political Philosophy and Social Welfare: Essays on the Normative Basis of Welfare Provision*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Pratt, A.C. (1996) 'Discourse of rurality: loose talk or social struggle?' *Journal of Rural Studies* 12,1 69-78.

Press, D. & Newell, J. (1994) *New Zealand Regional Diversity. Part Two, Rural Change 1986-1991* Monitoring and Evaluation Research Association Ltd., MAF Policy, Wellington.

Relph, E. (1976) *Places and Placelessness*. London: Pion Limited.

Rice, G.W. (1992) 'A revolution in social policy, 1981-1991' in G.W. Rice (2nd ed) *The Oxford History of New Zealand*. Auckland: Oxford University Press, pp. 482-497.

Robinson, G.M. (1990) *Conflict and Change in the Countryside: Rural Society, Economy and Planning in the Developed World*. London: Belhaven Press.

Roche, M.M., Johnston, T. & Le Heron, R. (1992) 'Farmers' interest groups and agricultural policy in New Zealand during the 1980s' *Environmental and Planning A* 24 1749-1767.

Salamon, S. & Tornatore, J.B. (1994) 'Territory contested through property in a Midwestern post-agricultural community' *Rural Sociological Society* 59,4 636-654.

Scott, K., Park, J. & Cocklin, C. (2000) 'From 'sustainable rural communities' to 'social sustainability': giving voice to diversity in Mangakahia Valley, New Zealand' *Journal of Rural Studies* 16 433-466.

Smith, J. (1993) 'The lie that blinds: destabilizing the text of landscape' in J. Duncan & D. Ley (eds) *Place/Culture/Representation*. London: Routledge, pp. 78-92.

Smith, M.D. & Krannich, R.S. (2000) "'Cultural clash" revisited: newcomer and long-term residents' attitudes towards land use, development and environmental issues in rural communities in the Rocky Mountain West' *Rural Sociological Society* 65,3 396-521.

Smith, N. & Katz, C. (1993) 'Grounding metaphors: towards a spatialized politics' in M. Keith & S. Pile (eds) *Place and the Politics of Identity*. London: Routledge, pp. 67-83.

Southland Dairy Co-operative Ltd. (1998) *Edendale Heart of Dairying in Southland: Historic Account of the Southland Dairy Cooperative Limited*.

Southland District Council (1997) 'Summary of the Southland District statistics, development and management services' Southland District Council, Invercargill.

Statistics New Zealand (1997) *People and Places: New Zealand Now Series Two*. Wellington, New Zealand.

Statistics New Zealand (1999) *A Regional Profile: Southland*. Wellington.

Stockdale, A., Findlay, A. & Short, D. (2000) 'The repopulation of rural Scotland: opportunity and threat' *Journal of Rural Studies* 16 243-257.

Storey, D. (1997) 'Hey Joe! What are you doing?: practising participatory research in urban poor communities – lessons and experience from the Philippines' *Institute of Development Studies*, Working Paper No. 97/2, Palmerston North: Massey University.

Taylor, C.N. & McCrostie-Little, H. (1995) *Means of Survival?: A Study of Off-Farm Employment In New Zealand*. Christchurch: Taylor Baines & Associates.

Taylor, S.J. & Bogdan, R. (1998) *Introduction to Qualitative Research Methods: A Guide Book and Resource (3rd ed)*. New York: John Wiley & Sons.

The Southland Times (2000) 'Dairying sweeps NZ says farm statistics.' Invercargill, 2.6.2000:12.

The Southland Times (2000) 'Dairy moves lead Southland revival.' Invercargill, 29.6.2000:1.

The Southland Times (2000) 'Dairy farmers told to raise levels or lose.' Invercargill, 4.7.2000:13.

The Southland Times (2000) 'Dairy growth predicted.' Invercargill, 6.7.2000:15

The Southland Times (2000) 'North farmers show interest.' Invercargill, 15.7.2000:25.

The Southland Times (2000) 'Meeting plans to fix image.' Invercargill, 28.7.2000:10

The Southland Times (2000) 'Efforts to sell the province continue.' Invercargill, 16.8.2000:9.

The Southland Times (2000) 'Dairy revolution is well under way in Southland.' Invercargill, 15.2.2001:5.

Underwood, R. & Ripley, J. (2000) *The Influence of Social factors on the Future Performance of the Primary Production Sectors*. MAF Policy, Wellington: Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries.

Venture Southland (2000) 'Southland Economic Profile' Southland District Council, Invercargill.

Wallace, T. & Lattimore, R. (1987) 'Tough decisions ahead' in L.T. Wallace & R. Lattimore (eds) *Rural New Zealand-What Next?* Lincoln College: Agribusiness & Economic Research Unit, pp. 1-5.

- Wax, R.H. (1971) *Doing Fieldwork: Warnings and Advice*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Welch, R.V. (1992) 'Capital restructuring and local economic development: perspective from an ultra-peripheral city-economy' *Regional Studies* 27,3 237-249.
- Webber, M. (2000) 'Globalisation: local agency, the global economy, and Australia's industrial policy' *Environmental and Planning A* 32 1163-1176.
- White, P. (1986) 'Rural' in R. Johnston, D. Gregory & D. Smith (eds) *Dictionary of Human Geography*. Oxford: Blackwells, pp. 413.
- Williams, R. (1983) *Keywords*. London: Fontana.
- Willis, R. (1997) *Rural Change in South Taranaki: an Update*. Department of Geography, Wellington: Victoria University of Wellington.
- Wilson, O.J. (1994) 'They changed the rules' *New Zealand Geographer* 50,1 3-13.
- Wilson, O.J. (1995) 'Rural restructuring and agricultural-rural economy linkages: a New Zealand study' *Journal of Rural Studies* 11,4 417-431.
- Wilson, P.L. (1961) *Fresh Plains of Edendale*. Balclutha: South Otago Newspapers Limited.
- Wright, S. (1992) 'Image and analysis: new directions in community studies' in B. Short (ed) *The English Rural Community*. Cambridge University Press, pp. 195-217.
- Young, I.M. (1990) 'The ideal of community and the politics of difference' in L.J. Nicholson (ed) *Feminism/Postmodernism*. New York: Routledge, pp. 300-323.