Searching for Social Justice - Decentralised Governance and Rural Community Sustainability

Diane Costello
Brian Bishop
Curtin University of Technology

Abstract

Government policies in Australia are heavily directed towards local communities developing their civil society networks to solve complex social, economic and environmental problems. In response, rural communities in Australia have mobilised around principles of sustainability to adapt towards regional self reliance. While decentralised governance is a key mechanism aimed at facilitating local empowerment and community resilience, devolution of responsibility to the local levels also enables governments to distance themselves from decision-making processes that deliver inequitable outcomes. This case study examines the impetus for community engagement and the effectiveness of social mobilisation approaches in delivering socially just outcomes. It is argued that mandatory mechanisms of accountability are vital to ensure that decentralised governance structures are inclusive and facilitate the inter- and intra-generational justice concerns of all community members.

Introduction

Rural Australians face monumental sustainability challenges emanating from a multitude of forces. While climate change impact is yet to be grasped (Bi & Parton, 2008), many regional communities are struggling to adapt to the social and economic upheaval linked to globalisation (Talbot & Walker, 2007) and the consequential shift in governance of the state from that of provider to strategic enabler toward regional self-reliance (Pini, 2006; Lockie & Higgins, 2007). With predictions for more frequent and severe droughts that, coupled with water scarcity, poor soils and constraints of topography, pose deleterious threats towards food, farm and agriculture (Bi & Parton, 2008), little doubt remains as to the growing challenges facing the regions (IPCC, 2007). In response, regional governance structures have emerged as a key strategy to promote institutional collaboration at the local level (Edwards & Woods, 2004; Higgins & Lawrence, 2005). Institutional reform advanced *self-reliance* as the central feature of state and federal government policy and programs (Dibden & Cheshire, 2005). Rural regions are actively

encouraged by governments to be independent, to build social capital and to add value to their local produce (Eversole & Martin, 2006).

Decentralised governance complements the goals of sustainability (Jischa, 2008). In order to adapt, rural and regional communities have mobilised civil society networks in parallel with the principles of sustainability as the foundation for addressing local and regional planning and development pressures. Focussing on the dual challenges of local governance and community capacity building, this qualitative case study examines the adaptive responses of a small rural coastal town where strong community identities tied to mutual geography (see Stewart, Liebert & Larkin, 2004; Terkenli, 2005) inspire their visions for a sustainable future.

While this community emulates the ideals of a strong civil society (referred to here as a sign of cohesion where diverse stakeholders collaborate in the interest of collective social goals), research findings reveal the equity constraints of decentralised governance when power differentials are ignored. Not only is accountability an elusive feature of decentralisation but its absence leads to uneven outcomes for different civil society actors. To address inequity of the politically disempowered, coordination by government is required to advance robust governance structures where holistic conceptions of sustainability that tackle issues of transparency, accountability and social justice are incorporated. The consequences of ignoring the relationship of power in the governing of rural communities highlight the tension between the theory of local empowerment and the benefits flowing from the social engineering of rural and regional development initiatives.

This paper argues that just outcomes for all should be the primary goal of governments given that regional Australia endures many burdens flowing from global and national neoliberal transformation (Pini, 2006). While decentralised governance is a means by which locals are empowered to act, a possible result of an absence of accountability mechanisms is that politicians can evade responsibility for local development decisions that deliver uneven outcomes. Focusing on the social impacts of government policies for those most vulnerable is useful, it is argued, for creating potentials for policymakers and communities to create an environment more conducive to a fair and just process.

This paper comprises of five sections. Following this introduction to the background underlying rural Australia's transition toward globalisation, the second aspect outlines the conceptual framework integral to understanding Australia's transition towards globalisation and rural Australia's adaptation process toward sustainable development. In section three the methodological framework for undertaking this case study is outlined. This is followed by the analysis section where key thematic representations of the community's narrative and the survey responses are explored to highlight the factors that drive the community's action towards sustainability as well as the limitations of decentralised governance for delivering just outcomes for all members of the community. Lastly the conclusion highlights the extent to which this community has achieved success and what other issues need attention to promote intergeneration and intra-generational justice.

Conceptual Framework

Globalisation discourse

Globalisation, a phenomenon highly symbolic of our time, is characterised by Held (2005) as shaping a world of overlapping communities of fate. While there are conflicts over its definition, some commonalities include (Jones, 2004: 326):

> [the] *appearance of global markets in finances, goods and services, and labour, the convergence of consumer demand across different societies; the lowering of traditional barriers to trade and investment (along with a related convergence of government macroeconomic policies); and key technological developments in the areas of information processing, communications, transportation and organization that lower the transaction costs of doing business across national borders.*

A central proposition emerging from globalisation discourse is that somehow it is unprecedented (Graham & Neu, 2003). Challenging this, Amin (2001) views globalisation as a renewed form of imperialism, with contemporary multinational corporations mirroring earlier entities such as the British East India Company and the Hudson's Bay Company. While globalisation is not a new process (Hirst & Thompson, 1999), what is novel is the extent to which temporal and spatial dimensions have been compressed by information, communication and transportation technologies (Jones, 2002). Highlighting a key concern for national governance, Wiseman (1998: 15) warns that globalisation:

> … *has threatened the capacity of people and governments to regulate, resist or even fully comprehend the local impact of transformations that result from actions and decisions taken on the other side of the globe.*

A key revelation emerging from globalisation discourse is the intense conflict between critics, proponents and others over its costs and benefits to society and the planet. Four perspectives are pertinent. Firstly, the critics of globalisation emphasise its destructive effects on democratic processes (Martin & Schuman, 1997), workers' rights (Thompson, 2003), human rights (Liu & Mills, 2006), distributive justice (Palat & Arvind, 2007), the earth's natural resources (Shiva, 2000; Rees, 2006), women's status (Rao & Kelleher, 2005) and authority of the nation state (Cox, 2002). Secondly, the proponents exalt the virtues of growth in international trade leading to widely shared benefits and to a generally civilising effect (Dollar & Kraay, 2002; Deo, 2006). Challenging these realities, a third group argues that both its scope and effect are vastly exaggerated (Wade, 2004; Van Der Bly, 2007). A fourth group perceives globalisation as a matter of degree—a process well under way but accelerated by the diffusion of new technology, information, practices, free capital and transnational organisations (Guillen, 2001; Stiglitz, 2002).

Neoliberal globalisation – Australia's transition

Across the course of the late twentieth century, Australia followed most other nation states in opening up state boundaries to international capital and trade (James, 2007). The process of globalising the national economy involved four dimensions: deregulation, corporatisation, privatisation and micro-economic reform (Jones, 2002). The strategic direction for globalisation appeared in a 2001 federal government publication called

Globalisation and Poverty: Turning the Corner which proposed that 'faster and broader progress can be made in eradicating extreme poverty and further reducing inequality if policies for economic openness and reform are sustained …' (CIE, 2001, p. 26). James (2007) contends that while economic globalisation was embraced as the new utopia by Australian policymakers, they seemed unfamiliar with the numerous UN annual reports that documented the increasing division of wealth and poverty worldwide. As he highlighted (p. 172):

> *… 13-million children were killed by diarrhoea, a number that exceeds the count of all the people killed in armed combat since World War II. Each day, around the world, 30 000 children were still dying of preventable diseases.*

To ensure that Australia could benefit from globalisation, policymakers advanced economic liberalisation as a key institutional objective (Gleeson & Low, 2000). Emulating worldwide trends toward neoliberal reforms, Australian governments devolved responsibility for social welfare to non-state sectors in order to enhance individual responsibility (Beeson & Firth, 1998; Argent & Rolley, 2000). Reflecting the growing disenchantment of rural communities and advocating for the social needs of the regions, many have criticised Australia's neoliberal objectives (Reddel, 2002). This statement vividly reflects their sentiments: 'Dismantling of the welfare state and the triumph of capitalism have been the defining features of the Australian landscape' (Alston, 2002: 96). The arguments highlighting concerns about the negative effects of institutional reform for rural Australia are reviewed below.

Impact of restructuring for rural Australians

The restructuring process toward globalisation and regional governance has had a profound social, economic and physical impact upon rural areas in Australia (Adams *et al.*, 2002; Fraser *et al.*, 2005). Rural decline has been strongly tied to diminishing terms of trade for primary produce within global markets (McKenzie, 1994). Also affecting rural economies are the process of agro-industrialisation (Burch & Rickson, 2001) and a drive towards economically competitive production (McMichael & Lawrence, 2001) resulting in farm amalgamations, fewer farming families and reduced employment of paid labour (Lawrence, 1999; Townsend, Mahoney & Hallebone, 2001). These developments have had a detrimental effect upon both the economy and population of towns servicing farming areas (Gray & Lawrence, 2001) and have led to increases in off-farm work and plurality of women's work roles (Shortall, 2002). Having serious implications for local social and health services, researchers also report higher rates of aging, due to an influx of retirees, and increased ill health in rural populations as well as an increase in poverty, unemployment and mental illness (Humphreys *et al.*, 2002; Fraser *et al.*, 2005).

Researchers have linked neoliberal transformation to the significant disadvantage and reduced overall sense of wellbeing reported by Australian rural residents compared to their urban counterparts (Walmsley & Weinand, 1997; Morley *et al.*, 2007). This is associated with lower average incomes, higher cost of living, limited job opportunities, scarcity of health services and other support services, and limited educational opportunities (Levantis, 2002; Pusey, 2003; Green & Lonne, 2005).

Many researchers have highlighted that government economic reforms have challenged the resilience of rural communities as social capital reserves have been severely depleted (Alston, 2000; Warin *et al.*, 2000; Kilpatrick & Abbott-Chapman, 2005). Social capital is generally defined and measured at the interpersonal, community, institutional or societal levels in terms of networks (bridging) and norms of reciprocity and trust (bonding) within those networks (Perkins, Hughey & Speer, 2002). The issue of concern is that government policies of devolution, privatisation and managerialism, underpinned by free market principles, fail to address the negative effects of diminishing social capital (Lynch, Due & Muntaner, 2000). Highlighting the social impacts of these changes, Fraser *et al.* (2005) and Kilpatrick (2002) noted that Australian rural people are becoming more socially isolated and alienated and are experiencing increasing difficulties in adapting to the current social and economic upheavals. Cumulatively, government policies and practices pose many challenges to the social sustainability of communities (Pritchard, 2000; Mungall, 2005). Despite the pressures facing the regions, decentralised governance structures are the dominant mechanism for promoting community sustainability.

New governance and new regionalism

Emerging in the 1990s, new regionalism, which represents a shift away from centralised expert management (Nelson, Howden & Stafford Smith, 2008), recognised that conventional policies of governments were inadequate for dealing with the impacts of globalisation and many of the challenges of sustainable development (Peterson *et al.*, 2007). New regionalism signified an evolution away from state-centred approaches towards regional management where institutions collaborate on matters such as economic growth, regional competitiveness, environmental issues and the building of networks (Wallis, 2006). Contemporary strategies for rural development in Australia are based on notions of self-help and bottom-up—community-based initiatives that assert to liberate the individual from the imposing structures of government intervention (Ward & McNicholas, 1998; Alston, 2002; Peck, 2004). The ideology underlying the new community development discourse reflects notions of individual and community responsibility, which mobilise the skills and resources of the local community (Little, 2001; Herbert-Cheshire, 2003).

Echoing neoliberal policies of personal responsibility, competition, efficiency and reduced assistance, such programs are indicative of wider changes that have taken place in the form and function of the state (Murdoch & Abram, 1998; Lane, 2006) and the corresponding shift towards new advanced liberal forms of governing (Eversole & Martin, 2006). In promoting community capacity building (Cox, 2002; Cuthill, 2002), all tiers of government have attempted to shift the responsibility of local sustainability to the community level (Reddel, 2002; O'Toole & Burdess, 2004). In Australia, in conjunction with local governance structures, many local councils and communities have adopted the principles of sustainability to steer the decision-making process towards more holistic conceptions of community development (Packer, Spence & Beare, 2002; Agyeman & Evans, 2004).

More than twenty years since *sustainability* was catapulted into international prominence by the Brundtland Commission (Frumkin, 2005), it continues to provoke conflict over its definition and interpretation (Molgaard & Golbeck, 2008). Rather than being forced into agreement, it makes more sense to regard sustainability as a discourse and accept a plurality of views and allow for a disaggregated approach to the concept (Dryzek, 1997; O'Riordan & Voisey, 1997). For the purpose of clarity the authors adopt Agyeman, Bullard & Evans' (2003) interpretation of sustainability as being: 'the need to ensure a better quality of life for all, now and into the future, in a just and equitable manner, whilst living within the limits of supporting ecosystems' (p. 5). Agyeman and Evans (2004) advance this definition as more holistic and explicit in its concerns for justice—on quality of life, on present and future generations, on justice and equity in resource allocation and on living within ecological limits. More importantly, this conception moves away from the dominant orientation of *environmental sustainability* to represent *just sustainability*—a balanced approach including an explicit focus on justice, equity and environment together (Agyeman *et al.*, 2003). Jacobs (1999) calls this the egalitarian conception of sustainability.

Australian researchers delineate three approaches to the application of sustainability: (a) green planning (b) institutional reform (c) social mobilisation (Dovers & Williams, 1997; Buhrs, 2000). While green planning is associated primarily with environmental policy developments, institutional reform focuses on government responses to the sustainability agenda (Dalal-Clayton, 1996; Papadakis, 1996; O'Riordan & Voisey, 1997). Although Australia can lay claim to advancing the social mobilisation approach through its Landcare partnerships and other initiatives undertaken in local communities, their effectiveness in terms of outcomes and as a pathway towards sustainability is less clear (Alston, 2002; Wilson, 2004). Nevertheless, social mobilisation programs and policies are supported by all tiers of government as a key strategy to enhance regional capacity (Carr, 2002; Herbert-Cheshire, 2003; Paton *et al.*, 2004).

In spite of the growth of community level leadership and participation to address local sustainability issues, the authors argue that without accountability mechanisms in place to assess the effectiveness of Australia's restructuring process, social justice for rural communities demands urgent review by governments.

Methodology

Case study community

This study focused on understanding the effectiveness of a social mobilisation approach to promote sustainability of a rural regional community adapting to socio-economic and political changes. A rural community on the south west coast of Western Australia located over 400km from the capital city of Perth was selected as the ideal case study site for several reasons. Key community stakeholders within this local shire have had previous involvement in social action research with the researchers and trust had been established. Further, it is a politically active community where environmentalists possess high level expertise with advocacy and development of sustainability strategies. Particular

sectors of the community are also highly acclaimed for their contribution to the arts, eco-friendly lifestyles and celebration of diversity. In view of these characteristics, this community presented as ideal for assessing civil society participation and adaptation within the sustainability paradigm.

Ecological theoretical framework

This study is informed by Broffenbrenner's (1979) ecological model for enhancing a multi-level analysis of individuals in a social context. To promote micro-, meso- and macro-levels of understanding, the research design involved a triangulation (Madill, Jordan & Shirley, 2000) of four data sources: (a) observational evidence (b) historical information from archival analysis (c) interview data (d) survey information from community informants. The best method of gaining a contextually-grounded understanding of the domain at ecological levels of analysis (Broffenbrenner, 1979; Prilleltensky & Nelson, 2002; Christens & Perkins, 2008) was a qualitative approach (Lincoln & Guba, 2000; Sandelowski, 2000). Community psychologists advocate that ecologically sensitive understandings of community functioning are enhanced when combined with more eclectic attitudes towards theory and methodology (Wicker, 1989; Bishop & Vicary, 2003; Prillentensky, 2003). In adopting this approach, a number of theoretical concepts have been incorporated to inform the analysis of: *sense of community* (Sarason, 1974; McMillan & Chavis, 1986) and *attachment to place* (Jorgensen & Steadman, 2001; Pretty, 2002; Long & Perkins, 2007) for understanding the impetus driving social action; *civil society* for understanding the interrelationships between the various sectors of society (Putnam, 1996; Berman, 1997; Giddens, 2000); and *social capital* for gaining insights about community resilience enhanced by participation in institutional structures (Bourdieu, 1986; Talbot & Walker, 2007).

Interview participants

Using purposeful (Patton, 1990; Williams & Lewis, 2005) and theoretical sampling techniques (Punch, 1998), 80 interviewees were selected. Interviewees comprised key stakeholders in leadership roles, including informants representing the diversity of sectors of federal, state and local governments, as well as from key organisations representing environmental, business and social welfare concerns. They were chosen for their knowledge relating to the function and operation of local governance structures and willingness and ability to share information on their experiences of community development and action (Morse, 1989). Procedures involving semi-structured, open-ended interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim. Interviews ceased on reaching saturation point (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

Survey participants

A questionnaire was mailed out to 500 residents randomly selected from the local shire telephone directory and a total of 348 surveys were received. From a total of 348 respondents, 55 percent were female and 45 percent were male. The age range was classified into three categories and 10 percent of the respondents identified as *under 30 years* of age, 50 percent identified as between *30-55* years and 40 percent identified as *over 55*

years of age. With regard to socio-economic status, respondents ranged across unemployed (5%); pensions and social security benefits (15%); self funded retirees (10%); farming related work (20%); light industry and hospitality (10%); self employed and business owners (20%); professionals (20%). The survey also revealed that while 40 percent of respondents did not belong to any committees or groups, the remaining 60 percent reported being actively involved in a number of committees and groups. Of the 60 percent who belonged to committees and groups within the Shire and the South West region, 35 percent identified as participating in environmental groups, 35 percent identified as participating in business and development related issues and 30 percent identified as participating in community and welfare matters.

Grounded theory analysis

Strauss and Corbin (1990) define grounded theory analysis as the generation and development of concepts, categories and propositions as an iterative process. Concepts are the basic units of analysis since it is from conceptualisation of data, not the actual data per se, that theory is developed (Glaser, 1978; Strauss & Corbin, 1994, 1998). Categories, formed by grouping concepts and propositions, indicate generalised relationships between a category and its concepts and between discrete categories (Pandit, 1996). Grounded theory is inductively derived from the study of the phenomenon it represents (Glaser, 1978; Hall & Callery, 2001), that is, discovered, developed and provisionally verified through systematic data collection and analysis of data pertaining to that phenomenon (Pandit, 1996).

Through the process of emergence (Glaser, 1978, 1992), codes and categories were generated directly from the transcribed interview data by the researcher and two colleagues independently of one other. This followed axial coding where relationships among the core set of categories are linked to produce higher-level categories (Miller & Fredericks, 1999). The integration and interrelationships of the categories, especially the core categories, formed the basis of the grounded theory analysis (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Emergent theory was then compared to other literature and perspectives to capture holistic insights and to validate or point out differences or gaps in current understandings of the phenomena (Pope-Davis *et al.*, 2002). Validity is enhanced through informant verification and when emergent theory is compared to existing theory (Glaser, 1998).

The analytic process revealed four overarching themes categorised as follows: (1) Spirituality - Principles Underlying Community Vision (2) Geographic Affinity - Symbol of [the town's] Natural Beauty (3) Vibrant Sense of Community and Cultural Diversity (4) Holistic Sustainability Framework. For pragmatic purposes these themes have been condensed for this paper and analysis related to sense of community and belonging underlying community visions, including effectiveness of local governance for delivering just outcomes. Following are key understandings related to community transition and adaptation towards community sustainability for a just future.

Analysis of Themes

Thematic representation of survey

Table 1 illustrates key issues of most concern to survey participants. The survey responses have been thematically categorised into four dimensions: (1) social welfare (2) environment (3) economic development (4) institutional capacity, which reflect a holistic conception of the issues that need to be addressed to promote community sustainability.

Table 1 – Issues of Most Concern to the Community

Social Welfare	An upgraded hospital (government duty of care) in [town]
	Aged care & accommodation urgent
	Address long-term unemployment, the disadvantaged, better education, youth issues, drugs, rental crisis, homelessness, increasing crime;
	Housing affordability, high costs of shopping locally, fuel price disparity
	Insurance escalating
	Banks closing
	Retain rural character of town - restrict development in town
Environment	Develop [town] in a sustainable way - balance between natural environment and, commercial/private interests
	Conservation of [inlet] - restrict housing development and commercial fishing
	Protect pristine environment - control population growth and tourist activities
	Prevent destruction of old growth forests
	Sustainability key to planning, energy efficiency and ecological integrity
Economic Development	Continue growth and development while retaining [the town's] natural beauty
	Industrial development essential for employment
	Attract green industries - no mining or heavy industry
	Environmental issues take precedent over everything - discouraged to contest this
	Leadership needed - review bureaucracy prohibiting tourism enterprises
Institutional Capacity	Devolution - more responsibility - less funding
	Redirect more resources from state/federal governments to support local initiatives
	Develop business infrastructure -increase tourism potential
	Increase local government powers to enforce their own policies and not be over-ridden by state government
	The classic syndrome of city-bush culture—parochial, petty narrow minded views of community—but starved of resources compared to city

Source: Original table.

Impact of restructuring - Key findings

Confirming previous studies, this community also deals with the impacts of social and economic upheaval associated with institutional reforms toward regional self-reliance. However, this study revealed that not all sectors share the burdens equitably as the community is bifurcated into *rich* and *poor* and access to social capital resources is uneven. While the wealthier sectors with higher levels of social capital adapt more easily, the disadvantaged with diminished access to social capital struggle to survive. Some key issues affecting the disadvantaged more acutely are unemployment, underemployment, poverty,

homelessness and a lack of access to vital government and social services. This is also exacerbated by the lack of recourse disadvantaged groups perceive they have to political institutions to make demands for their needs.

While regional governance is hailed as a key strategy to address local development issues, this study reveals that social mobilisation is inadequate to address systemic inequity. For example, while this community demonstrated its political prowess by mobilising its strong civil society networks in order to prevent closure of its hospital, it also reported feeling powerless to address many environmental, social and human problems. Most concerning, however, is that although the more vulnerable sectors are disadvantaged by the processes and outcomes of local governance structures, governments are not held accountable for the inequity.

To elaborate, within this local governance structure the more powerful environmental groups are highly competent at accessing resources to target environment issues while other sectors (such as arts, health and business) struggle to survive and access the scarce funds and resources. As a result some issues are targeted for action while others are ignored. Hence, the vulnerable community sectors experience the consequences of rationalisation and devolution more heavily. Despite the severity of social and economic issues facing the more vulnerable sectors of the community, there is consensus for environmental values to underpin development decisions within the regional governance structure. For instance, the majority of the community passionately opposes any entrepreneurial activity perceived as being motivated by capitalist greed. While this appears admirable these actions reflect a complex attitude with negative implications for intra-generational justice.

Sense of community and attachment to place

A number of factors are linked to the community's motivation to protect their environmental heritage. The most significant is their strong sense of community and identity to *place*, inextricably linked to the geographic beauty of the region. These excerpts from community interviews powerfully reveal: '… a wonderful safe environment for children … it's a real community, a nice community to live in … we fell in love, the community is vibrant, lots of variations of people … conservative farming, people who care deeply about the forest … those establishing new ventures … very environmentally aware … less materialistic, less class conscious …' These sentiments also resonate with notions of *place attachment*, a key domain of sense of community that refers to residents' emotional bonding or ties to their community (Jorgenson & Stedman, 2001; Long & Perkins, 2007). Their intense attachment to place also as a symbol of community identity is eloquently captured as: '… an awesome natural beauty, it has a sacred mystique … the karri forests, rolling hills, the majestic panorama of beautiful coastline … its beauty and spiritual awakening leads to fulfilment, contentment …' Community identity is defined as personal and public identifications with a specific physically bounded community possessing its own character, which in turn affects residents' personal and group identity (Kim & Kaplan, 2004). Their strong identification to both community and environment underpins their sustainability principles for community development.

Sustainability and the environmental movement

Given their strong attachment to community and place, it is therefore not surprising that adaptive responses are framed around ideologies emanating from local, national and global contexts emphasising sustainability and community responsibility. These excerpts articulate a holistic vision of sustainability: '… to have a happy community … thinking and acting for the long term … prosperity, sustainable, gradual balanced development that preserves our pristine environment … a secure future … care and compassion, better social support for vulnerable people … young people to stay … successful businesses … resist ad hoc development …' These statements echo the principles and ethics endorsed by Ife (2002) '… informed by spiritual values of holism, sustainability, diversity, equilibrium and social justice' (p. 318).

Acceptance of sustainability principles can be attributed to the powerful influence of the environmental movement facilitating cultural change. Green initiatives instigated by these groups stimulated the sustainability agenda and issues of social justice. Hence, *critical consciousness* of sustainability has provided a platform for participation and community mobilisation. Success, however, is dependent on all participants possessing appropriate skills (Claridge & Claridge, 1997). Also significant is the scale of funds and resources which social movements procure to coordinate strategic actions. The success of the environmental groups in this case study community is a result, in part, of their highly developed social networks that extend well beyond the local community. These groups also possess the expertise and political prowess to tackle issues at local, national and global levels. Their dense social capital networks, high-level academic skills and political sophistication have empowered them to attract greater levels of funding to meet many environmental goals and sustainability-related aspirations. These leaders have not only facilitated *conscientization* (Freire, 1972) of environmental justice but galvanised potential for transformational change which resonates with Newbrough's (1995) 'human social system' (p. 14) for meeting the social needs of the disadvantaged by emphasising interdependence and balance as the goals for human and community development.

Intergenerational and intra-generational justice

Protecting the environment is clearly motivated by a strong concern for intergenerational justice—a consciousness captured by Syme *et al.* (2000) in: '… although the next generation has no lawyer representing its rights in the present … there is a general sense of justice for intergenerational ecological risks and "heritage"' (p. 117). Communities are therefore motivated to reduce future risks when intergenerational injustices are perceived. Although the case study community's opposition to unsustainable development proposals can be viewed as a triumph for environmental sustainability and intergenerational justice, their actions also pose threats for the social sustainability of this regional community. A pertinent issue not addressed by the local governance stakeholders is that the environmentalists are politically powerful. Hence, no matter how ethical their motivation, the responsibility for addressing the social and economic costs of their decisions are relegated to the less capable spheres of civil society. As a consequence the needs of the less powerful in this community are ignored by both the centralised political system and decentralised governance structures.

The principle of intergenerational equity (concern for the future) is therefore unintentionally pursued at the expense of intra-generational equity (concern for the poor). In view of this unfair situation, the social justice dimension of sustainability is incomplete and the community's ethical framework needs review.

Acknowledging the complexity of such a feat, Benton (1999) noted that, taken separately, both intra-generational and intergenerational justice pose complex philosophical and political problems. Furthermore, any attempts at unifying both justice claims lack the '… elegance and consistency of a well-formed ethical theory' (cited in Okereke, 2006: 202). Given the intricacies of pursing an integrated justice goal, it is understandable that, in this community, ecological integrity and intergenerational justice take precedence. Nevertheless, this case study revealed that the disenfranchised are denied a voice over their future and, hence, sustainability demands a more inclusive conception of justice. For alternative justice frameworks to emerge, Okereke suggests resisting neoliberalist conceptions—the market as inherently just—as solutions to poverty. Focus must be directed at correcting systemic inequities and redistribution of available resources, as both intergenerational and intra-generational justice underlie environmental sustainability (WCED, 1987).

Governance and integration of goals

The community faces a number of issues that have implications for the viability of their local economy. These include the dominance of environmental sustainability to guide future visions, the powerful influence of the environmentalist sector and the lack of government policy and infrastructure to address the inequitable needs of this rural community. Given these forces, local governance structures face monumental challenges in managing the needs and aspirations of diverse groups including determining a more equitable division of the costs and benefits to be shared by the various sectors.

While there is consensus for the principle of sustainability, community groups diverge markedly in interpretation of environmental, social and economic goals. For example, while eco-friendly industry is promoted as a solution by the pro-environment supporters, others believe that the *high* social and economic costs of restricted economic development cannot be ignored. The community division is best captured by their perspectives on economic development. One group supports, in principle, consideration of any entrepreneurial economic growth to promote economic and social goals of the community. The second group advances ecologically responsible economic development because the long-term protection of the natural environment is their primary sustainability goal. Although philosophical conflict over such contentious issues is not uncommon, most significant to the analysis is the sector-based political dynamics. The eco-friendly strategies to generate economic activity are conceived and pushed by the more powerful environmentalist sector. The alternate view advanced by the less powerful farming and business sectors is that economic development within these constraints affects the vulnerable sectors more harshly. Furthermore, this agenda leads to improving the economic and employment prospects of a select group and therefore is not representative of the diversity of skills in the community. As a result many members of the local business

sector and the farming community distance themselves from the regional governance structures as the sustainability goals are considered restrictive.

The contention is also that the governance process involved with developing sustainability strategies is not truly egalitarian as alternative or conflictive visions are suppressed through power and exclusion. As a result, many of the stakeholders who do not support the more powerful environmental coalition doubt integration of sustainability goals as achievable due to the lack of parity between the diverse groups in the community. The researchers observed that the powerful community partnerships comprise mainly of environmentalists and supporters of their vision. Other stakeholders not associated with this environmentalist alliance, including the disenfranchised who may disagree with their vision, are absent from this decision-making body. Discerning the nuances of governance networks, Thomas-Slater (1994) noted that, despite the best of intentions, efforts to engage local residents runs the risk of neglecting the poor and disenfranchised. Those who are marginalised and powerless are likely to be both unorganised and silent, and even when organised their voices may still be muted by more powerful interest groups. Hence, 'enabling disenfranchised groups to achieve voice and agency is a significant challenge in any community context' (Thomas-Slater, 1994: 1486).

Clearly the community struggles with balancing the needs of a diverse community including acknowledging the inherent power differentials. Although the powerful environmental groups are driven by ethics of just sustainability, there is the sense that they now represent the new oppressors. As powerful leaders of the community they will need to be more reflective about inclusiveness, processes of participation and just outcomes. In her exploration of community sustainability within a globalised context, Fyson (1999) advised that keeping a balance between justice and oppression is difficult. Macmurray (1954) warned that 'Without justice, cooperation becomes impossible' (p. 204). This relational dynamic between community and power is made explicit by McMillan (1996) as 'the need for authority (which is to serve the many and not just the self) to maintain a sense of order and therefore, trust' (p. 319). While the principles of procedural and distributive justice can enhance trust, more complex is the pursuit of *just sustainability* where there is explicit focus on integrating justice, equity and environment (Agyeman, 2002).

Civil society networks and transformational community

Community capacity building is about creating an environment based on 'social partnerships in which government acts as facilitator, sharing the role and responsibility for providing, regulating and delivering services and welfare' (Stone, 2000: 10). Despite the success achieved by the environmental sector, missing from this community's key collaborative networks are the government officials and the regional agencies with greater access to vital infrastructure and resources to support the entrepreneurial goals of the community. Also absent are the entrepreneurs and private sector capital essential to facilitate the economic vitality of this community. To promote *linking social capital*, this community planning partnership will need to increase its vertical spread of networks to gain the resources and expertise essential for undertaking entrepreneurial activities that transcend local borders (Woolcock, 1998; Mowbray, 2004). Many have emphasised the

essential role of *civil society* for building community capacity, but what needs consciousness is that it cannot flourish without economic sustenance (Lane & Morrison, 2006).

Effective collaborative networking requires this community to confront its decision-making processes to ensure inclusivity by acknowledging its power base and limitations to achieving a truly civil society (Dasgupta, 2000; Zollinger, 2003). The practice of coordinated decision-making also requires moving outside existing social structures, bringing together opposing values, exercising flexibility and changing traditional independent and competitive mindsets among sectors of society (Pizzocaro, 1998; Miller, 2005). Talbot (1998) accentuates *tolerance for compromise* and a willingness to *agree to disagree* as essential elements in managing sustainability. Other dimensions such as institutional disincentives, historical and ideological barriers, social dynamics, risk perceptions, technical complexities and politics are also critical (Florida, 2002; Golding, 2004). Collaboration entails more than just economic or technological solutions to promote sustainability, but also requires careful attention to leadership, decision-making, fairness and relationship management (Rushton, 2002; Miller, 2005).

Accountability and civil society

Crucial factors emerging from the stakeholders' narratives are the community conflict over the interpretation of *sustainability* and the beneficial effects of civil society that flow for the diverse sectors. Decentralised governance therefore requires effort to mediate contests between the powerful and the powerless by building the capacity of marginalised actors who may otherwise remain entrenched in inequality (Mitlin, 1999). At the institutional level it seems prudent that governments mandate monitoring of civil society initiatives to ensure a level of fairness for all citizens. In the absence of accountability, civil society enterprises lead to uneven development and those excluded from participation are likely to remain marginalised and disadvantaged (Hanberger, 2008). Mitlin (2001) highlights that the importance attributed to grassroots in poverty reduction is over-stated, as the relationship between civil society organisations, social capital, economic growth and social transformation are more complex and long-term. Many civil society organisations seem more concerned with immediate alleviation of pressing problems than with either empowering the poor or achieving substantial material improvements in their situation (Crook & Sverrisson, 2001; Steiner, 2007; Mubangizi, 2008). Evaluation of partnership initiatives in Johannesburg suggests that civil society fails to be effective even in poverty alleviation except on a small scale (Beall, Crankshaw & Parnell, 2000; Devas, 2001).

If policymakers are committed to a just sustainability framework then all tiers of government, particularly global institutions, must move beyond prescribing initiatives such as horizontal democracy by focusing on mechanisms that ensure that transparency and accountability are legally binding (Véron *et al.*, 2005). Promoting a means by which transparency and accountability can be improved, Behn (2001) suggests that democratic accountability should refer to 'a compact of mutual, collective responsibility' (p. 125) instead of searching for someone to blame and punish. This notion of accountability shifts attention to the responsibility of all those constituting the accountability environment— that is, all those engaged in and affected by public policy (Hanberger, 2008). This notion draws attention to justification for public policy and collective responsibility for policy

failure and success. While we would avoid local auditing approaches that could lead to a *tyranny of transparency* (Strathern, 2000), a better option is to give citizens greater opportunities to assess public policy directly and form opinions about accountability that include expectations of moral responsibility (Hanberger, 2008).

No simple solution exists to this conundrum and, as Lane and Morrison (2006) state, '… the structural democratization of the public sphere, combined with the crisis of legitimacy in state action and regulation, makes "horizontal" governance a key feature inevitable' (p. 240). Given this reality, the authors advocate engaging with civil society organisations in a critical way that rigorously assesses both their strengths and limitations and reserves political space for public interest. Reflecting on methods to protect democratic representation, the public interest in public policy and accountability within decentralised governance is vital for contributing to a society of trust and moral responsibility (Weber, 1999; Fischer, 2003; Nelson *et al.*, 2008).

Conclusion

Community narratives powerfully echo a transformation of discourse which, according to Evans, Hanlin and Prilleltensky (2007), facilitates deeper understanding and may be a necessary antecedent for strategic action. However, inextricably linked to *transformational change* is the role of visionary leadership (Fyson, 1999). When there is a consensus for change, a new visionary leader is required to institutionalise the *revitalisation* process (Bass & Avolio, 1994). This is similar to what Etzioni (1964) described as 'the cycle of non-bureaucratic heads, whereby charismatic leaders routinely establish new organizations' (p. 54). In view of these deeper-level signifiers of change, it is evident that the community is in its early stages of development and will need to grapple with the processes of leadership, reflection and trust central to visioning and transformational community. Institutional policies are powerful instruments of change and possess the good intentions to promote justice to the planet and people. Nevertheless, this research reveals that, despite the best intentions of policy and community capacity building, the powerless are excluded and continue to battle with a greater share of burdens.

For sustainability goals to be successfully implemented it will require the conscientious and purposeful efforts of governments as well as the full support of all stakeholders. Governments, however, must take the leadership role in instituting accountability in decentralised governance to tackle power differentials and inequity in outcomes. Also important is for stakeholders to embrace transformational change toward a *human social system* where the political principle of *equality* ensures all members of society are provided with resources to have meaningful participation and opportunity to improve their lives (Newbrough, 1995). However, to develop communities that are caring and competent, the principle of fraternity is vital as the binding concept of community. No blueprint for change exists except that, as researchers, we need to promote a slow cultural revolution that will allow serious consideration of living differently. Rather than discard the concept of just sustainability, it is a useful framework to debate the choices for humanity based on an appreciation of the close links between sense of community, the environment and society and the power structures that both empower and exploit people and the planet.

References

Adams, P.D., Horridge, M., Madden, J.R. and Wittwer, G. (2002) Drought, regions and the Australian economy between 2001−02 and 2004−05. *Australian Bulletin of Labour*, 28 (94) pp 231−46.

Agyeman, J. (2002) Constructing environmental (in)justice: Transatlantic tales. *Environmental Politics*, 11 pp 31−63.

Agyeman, J., Bullard, R. and Evans, B. (2003) *Just Sustainabilities: Development in an Unequal World*. Earthscan, Mit Press, London.

Agyeman, J. and Evans, B. (2004) 'Just sustainability': The emerging discourse of environmental justice in Britain? *The Geographical Journal*, 170 (2) pp 155−64.

Alston, M. (2000) Social capital in rural Australia. *Proceedings of the International Third Sector Research Conference*, Dublin.

Alston, M. (2002) Social Capital in Rural Australia. *Rural Society*, 12 (2) pp 93−104.

Amin, S. (2001) Moving on: Institutionalism in economic geography. *Environment and Planning,* 33 pp 1237–41.

Argent, N. and Rolley, F. (2000) Financial exclusion in rural and remote New South Wales, Australia: A geography of bankbranch rationalization, 1981−1998. *Australian Geographical Studies*, 38 pp 182−203.

Bass, B.M. and Avolio, B.J. (1997) *Full range leadership development: Manual for the multifactor leadership questionnaire*. Mind Garden, Redwood City, CA.

Beall, J., Crankshaw, O. and Parnell, S. (2000) Local government, poverty reduction and inequality in Johannesburg. *Environment and Urbanization*, 12 (1) pp 107−22.

Beeson, M. and Firth, A. (1998) Neoliberalism as a political rationality: Australian public policy since the 1980s. *Journal of Sociology*, 34 (3) pp 215−21.

Behn, R. (2001) *Rethinking Democratic Accountability*. Brookings Institution Press, Washington, DC.

Benton, T. (1999) Sustainable development and accumulation of capital: Reconciling the irreconcilable? In Dobson, A. (Ed) *Fairness and Futurity*. Oxford University Press, Oxford. 199−229.

Berman, S. (1997) Civil society and political institutionalization. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 40 (5) pp 562−75.

Bi, P. and Parton, K.A. (2008) Effect of climate change on Australian rural and remote regions: What do we know and what do we need to know? *Australian Journal of Rural Health*, 16 pp 2−4.

Bishop, B. and Vicary, D. (2003) Paradoxes, parables and conundrums: A new sense of community? *Network*, 14 pp 33−7.

Bourdieu, P. (1986) The forms of capital (R. Nice Translation). In Richardson, I.C. (Ed) *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education.* Greenwood Press Westport, CT. 241–58.

Broffenbrenner, U. (1979) *The Ecology of Human Development.* Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA.

Buhrs, T. (2000) Green planning in Australia and Canada: Dead or alive? *Environmental Politics*, 9 (2) pp 102–25.

Burch, D. and Rickson, R. (2001) Industrialised agriculture: Agribusiness, input-dependency and vertical integration. In Lockie, S. and Bourke, L. (Eds) *Rurality Bites: The Social and Environmental transformation of Rural Australia.* Pluto, Annandale. 165–78,

Carr, A. (2002) *Grass Roots and Green Tape: Principles and Practices of Environmental Stewardship.* Federation Press, Sydney.

Centre for International Economics (CIE) (2001) *Globalisation and Poverty: Turning the Corner.* Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra.

Christens, B. and Perkins, D.D. (2008) Transdisciplinary, multilevel action research to enhance ecological and psychopolitical validity. *Journal of Community Psychology*, 36 (2) pp 214–31.

Claridge, G. and Claridge, C.L. (1997) Expanding the role of collaborative management and stewardship in the conservation management of Australia's marine and coastal resources. *Australia's Oceans Policy: Socio-Cultural Considerations*, Issues Paper 5, October. Department of Environment, Canberra.

Cox, E. (2002) Australia: Managing the lucky country. In Putnam, R.D. (Ed) *Democracies in Flux: The Evolution of Social Capital in Contemporary Society.* Oxford University Press, Oxford. 333–58.

Crook, R.C. and Sverrisson, A.S. (2001) Decentralisation and poverty-alleviation in developing countries: A comparative analysis or, is West Bengal unique? IDS Working Paper 130. Institute of Development Studies, Brighton.

Cuthill, M. (2002) Exploratory research: Citizen participation, local government and sustainable development in Australia. *Sustainable Development*, 10 pp 79–89.

Dalal-Clayton, D.B. (1996) *Getting to Grips with Green Plans National-Level Experience in Industrial Countries.* Earthscan, London.

Dasgupta, P. (2000) Economic progress and the idea of social capital. In Dasgupta, P. and Serageldin, I. (Eds) *Social Capital: A Multifaceted Perspective.* World Bank, Washington, DC. 325–424.

Deo, N. (2006) Is globalisation our friend? Women's allies in the developing world. *Current History*, 105 (689) pp 105–111.

Devas, N. (2001) The connections between urban governance and poverty. *Journal of International Development*, 13 pp 989–96.

Dibden, J. and Cheshire, L. (2005) Community development. In Cocklin, C. and Dibden, J. (Eds) *Sustainability and Change in Rural Australia*. UNSW Press, Sydney. 212–20.

Dollar, D. and Kraay, A. (2002) Spreading the wealth. *Foreign Affairs*, 81 (1) pp 120–33.

Dovers, S. and Williams, J.E. (1997) Implementing the convention on biological diversity: The Australian experience. Presentation to Southern Connections II conference, Valdivia, 6-11 January.

Dryzek, J.S. (1997) *The Politics of the Earth: Environmental Discourses*. Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Edwards, B. and Woods, M. (2004) Mobilizing the local: Community, participation and governance. In Holloway, L. and Kneafsey, M. (Eds) *Geographies of Rural Cultures and Societies*. Ashgate, Aldershot. 173–96.

Etzioni, A. (1964) *Modern Organizations*. Prentice Hall, Sydney.

Evans, S.D., Hanlin, C.E. and Prilleltensky, I. (2007) Blending ameliorative and transformative approaches in human service organizations: A case study. *Journal of Community Psychology*, 35 (3) pp 329–46.

Eversole, R. and Martin, J. (2006) Jobs in the bush: Global industries and inclusive rural development. *Social Policy & Administration*, 40 (6) pp 692–704.

Fischer, F. (2003) *Reframing Public Policy: Discursive Politics and Deliberative Practice*. Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Florida, R. (2002) *The Rise of the Creative Class*. Basic Books, New York, NY.

Fraser, C., Jackson, H., Judd, F., Komiti, A., Robins, G., Murray, G., Humphreys, J., Pattison, P. and Hodgins, G. (2005) Changing places: The impact of rural restructuring on mental health in Australia. *Health & Place*, 11 pp 157–71.

Freire, P. (1972) *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Penguin, Ringwood.

Frumkin, H. (2005) *Environmental Health: From Global to Local*. Jossey-Bass, San Francisco, CA.

Fyson, S.J. (1999) Developing and applying concepts about community reflections from the field. *Journal of Community Psychology*, 27 (3) pp 347–65.

Giddens, A. (2000) *The Third Way and its Critics*. Polity Press, Oxford.

Glaser, B.G. (1978) *Theoretical Sensitivity: Advances in the Methodology of Grounded Theory*. Sociology Press, Mill Valley, CA.

Glaser, B.G. (1998) *Doing Grounded Theory: Issues and Discussions*. Sociology Press, Mill Valley, CA.

Glaser, B.G. (1992) *Basics of Grounded Theory Analysis: Emergence Versus Forcing.* Sociology Press, Mill Valley, CA.

Glaser, B.G. and Strauss, A.L. (1967) *The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research.* Aldine, Chicago, IL.

Gleeson, B. and Low, N. (2000) *Australian Urban Planning: New Challenges, New Agendas.* Allen & Unwin, St Leonards.

Golding, B. (2004) The applicability of networks to Australian adult & vocational learning research. Presentation to the AVETRA conference. Available: www.avetra.org.au/ Conference_Archives/2004/abstracts.shtml.

Graham, C. and Neu, D. (2003) Accounting for globalisation. *Accounting Forum*, 27 (4) pp 449–71.

Gray, I. and Lawrence, G. (2001) *A Future for Regional Australia: Escaping Global Misfortune.* Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Green, R. and Lonne, B. (2005) Great lifestyle, pity about the job stress - Occupational stress in rural human service practice. *Rural Society*, 15 (3) pp 252–66.

Guillen, M.F. (2001) Is globalisation civilizing, destructive or feeble? A critique of five key debates in the social science literature. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 27 pp 235–60.

Hall, W.A. and Callery, P. (2001) Pearls, pith, and provocation, enhancing the rigor of grounded theory: Incorporating reflexivity and relationality. *Qualitative Health Research*, 11 (2) pp 257–72.

Hanberger, A. (2008) Democratic accountability in decentralised governance. *Scandinavian Political Studies*, 31 (4) pp 1–22.

Held, D. (2005) Toward a new consensus: Answering the dangers of globalisation. *Harvard International Review*, 27 (29) pp 14–17.

Herbert-Cheshire, L. (2003) Translating policy: Power and action in Australia's country towns. *Sociologia Ruralis*, 42 (4) pp 454–73.

Higgins, V. and Lawrence, G. (2005) *Agricultural Governance: Globalization and the New Politics of Regulation.* Routledge, London.

Hirst, P. and Thompson, G. (1999) *Globalisation in Question (2nd Ed).* Policy Press, Cambridge.

Humphreys, J., Hegney, D., Lipscombe, J., Gordon, G. and Chater, B. (2002) Whiter rural health? Reviewing a decade of progress in rural health Australian. *Journal of Rural Health*, 10 pp 2-14.

Kilpatrick, S. (2002) Learning and building social capital in a community of family farm businesses. *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, 21 (5) pp 446–64.

Kilpatrick, S. and Abbot-Chapman, J. (2005) Community efficacy and social capital. Published paper. Centre for Sustainable Regional Communities, La Trobe University. Retrieved: 30 June 2008 from www.latrobe.edu.au/csrc/2ndconference /refereed.

Ife, J. (2002) *Community Development: Community Based Alternatives in an Age of Globalisation.* Longman, Melbourne.

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) (2007) *Climate Change 2007.* Synthesis Report. Contributing to Working Groups I, II to the third assessment report of the IPCC. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Jacobs, M. (1999) Sustainable development as a contested concept. In Dobson, A. (Ed) *Fairness and Futurity, Essays on Environmental Sustainability and Social Justice.* Oxford University Press, Oxford.

James, P. (2007) Reframing the nation state: Rethinking the Australian dream from the local to the global. *Futures*, 39 pp 169−84.

Jischa, M.F. (2008) Review challenge future – Technical progress and globalisation. *Clean Journal*, 36 (3) pp 255−63. Retrieved: 30 July 2008 from www.clean-journal.com.

Jones, M.T. (2002) Globalisation and organizational restructuring: A strategic perspective. *Thunderbird International Business Review*, 44 (3) pp 325−51.

Jones, M. (2004) Social justice and the region: Grass-roots regional movements and the English question. *Space and Polity*, 8 pp 157–89.

Jorgensen, B.S. and Stedman, R. (2001) Sense of place as an attitude: Lakeshore owners attitudes toward their properties. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 21 pp 233–48.

Kim, J. and Kaplan, R. (2004) Physical and psychological factors in sense of community: New Urbanist Kentlands and nearby Orchard Village. *Environmental and Behavior*, 36 pp 313–40.

Kumar, A. (2008) Paradoxes of paradigm shift: Indian engagement with liberalization and globalisation. *Futures*, 40 pp 762–66. Retrieved: 30 August 2008 from www.science direct.com.

Lane, M. (2006) Critical issues in regional natural resource management. Paper prepared for the 2006 Australian State of the Environment Committee, Department of the Environment and Heritage, Canberra. Available http://www.deh.gov.au/soe /2006/integrative/nrmissues/index.html.

Lane, M.B. and Morrison, T.H. (2006) Public interest or private agenda? A meditation on the role of NGOs in environmental policy and management in Australia. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 22 pp 232–42.

Lawrence, G. (1999) Agri-food restructuring: A synthesis of recent Australian research. *Rural Sociology*, 64 pp 186−202.

Levantis, C. (2002) Country towns: Impact of farmers' expenditure on employment and population in Australian towns. *Sustaining Regions: Publication of the Commonwealth of Australia Regional Initiative*, 1 (1) pp 38–42.

Lincoln, Y.S. and Guba, E.G. (2000) Paradigmatic controversies, contradictions and emerging confluences. In Denzin, N.K. and Lincoln, Y.S. (Eds) *Handbook of Qualitative Research (2nd Ed)*. Sage, New Delhi.

Little, J. (2001) New rural governance? *Progress in Human Geography*, 25 (1) pp 97–102.

Liu, J.H. and Mills, D. (2006) Modern racism and neoliberal globalisation: The discourses of plausible deniability and their multiple functions. *Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology*, 16 pp 83–99.

Lockie, S. and Higgins, V. (2007) Roll-out neoliberalism and hybrid practices of regulation in Australian agri-environmental governance. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 23 pp 1–11.

Long, D.A. and Perkins, D.D. (2007) Community social and place predictors of sense of community: A multilevel and longitudinal analysis. *Journal of Community Psychology*, 35 (5) pp 563–81.

Lynch, J., Due, P. and Muntaner, C. (2000) Social capital – Is it a good investment strategy for public health? *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health*, 54 pp 404–8.

McKenzie, F. (1994) Population decline in non-metropolital Australia: Impacts and policy implications. *Urban Policy and Research*, 12 (4) pp 253–63.

McMichael, P. and Lawrence, G. (2001) Globalising agriculture: Structures of constraint for rural farmers. In Lockie, S. and Bourke, L. (Eds) *Rurality Bites: The Social and Environmental Transformation of Rural Australia*. Pluto, Annandale.

McMillan, D.W. and Chavis, D.M. (1986) Sense of community: A definition and theory. *Journal of Community Psychology*, 14 (1) pp 6–23.

McMillan, D.W. (1996) Sense of community. *Journal of Community Psychology*, 24 (4) pp 315–25.

Macmurray, J. (1954) *Persons in Relation*. Faber and Faber, London.

Madill, A., Jordan, A. and Shirley, C. (2000) Objectivity and reliability in qualitative analysis: Realist, contextualist and radical constructionist epistemologies. *British Journal of Psychology*, 9 pp 1–20.

Martin, H. and Schuman, H. (1997) *The Global Trap*. Zed Books, London.

Miller, C.A. (2005) New civic epistemologies of quantification: Making sense of indicators of local and global sustainability. *Science, Technology, & Human Values,* 30 (3) pp 403–32.

Miller, S.I. and Fredericks, M. (1999) How Does Grounded theory explain? *Qualitative Health Research*, 9 (4) pp 538–51.

Mitlin, D. (1999) *Civil Society and Urban Poverty.* International Development Department, School of Public Policy, University of Birmingham, Urban Governance, Partnership and Poverty, AWP5, Birmingham.

Mitlin, D. (2001) A can of worms: Governance inside civil society. *Environment and Urbanization*, 13 (2) forthcoming.

Molgaard, C.A. and Golbeck, A.L. (2008) Principles of sustaining community response to environmental disaster: Lessons from Minimata, Japan and Libby, Montata, U.S.A. *The International Journal of Environmental, Cultural, Economic And Social Sustainability*, 4 (5) pp 107–14. Retrieved: 30 August 2008 from www.Sustainability-Journal.com.

Morley, B., Pirkis, J., Naccarella, L., Kohn, F., Blashki, G. and Burgess, P. (2007) Improving access to and outcomes from mental health care in rural Australia. *Australian Journal of Rural Health*, 15 (5) pp 304–12.

Morse, J. (Ed) (1989) *Qualitative Nursing Research: A Contemporary Dialogue.* Aspen Publishers, Rockville, MD.

Mowbray, M. (2004) Community development the third way: Mark Latham's localist policies. *Urban Policy and Research*, 22 (1) pp 107–15.

Mubangizi, B.C. (2008) Responses to poverty in post-apartheid South Africa: Some reflections. *International Journal of Social Welfare*, 17 (2) pp 174–81.

Mungall, I.J. (2005) Trend towards centralisation of hospital services, and its effect on access to care for rural and remote communities in the UK. *Rural and Remote Health*, 5 p 390.

Murdoch, J. and Abram, S. (1998) Defining the limits of community governance. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 14 (1) pp 41–50.

Nelson, R., Howden, M. and Stafford Smith, M. (2008) Using adaptive governance to rethink the way science supports Australian drought policy. *Environmental Science & Policy*, 11 (7) pp 588–601. Retrieved: 4 September 2008 from www.science direct.com.

Newbrough, J.R. (1995) Toward community: A third position. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 23 pp 9–38.

Okereke, C. (2006) Global environmental sustainability: Intragenerational equity and conceptions of justice in multilateral environmental regimes. *Geoforum*, 37 pp 725–38.

O'Riordan, T. and Voisey, H. (1997) The political economy of sustainable development. *Environmental Politics*, 6 pp 1–23.

O'Toole, K. and Burdess, N. (2004) New community governance in small rural towns: The Australian experience. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 20 pp 433–43.

Packer, J., Spence, R. and Beare, E. (2002) Building community partnerships: An Australian case study of sustainable community-based rural programmes. *Journal of Community Development*, 37 (4) pp 316−26.

Palat, C.F. and Arvind, R. (2007) A new economic growth vs. distributive justice among emerging powers in the global south. *Futures*, 40 pp 762−66.

Pandit, N. (1996) The creation of theory: A recent application of the grounded theory method. *The Qualitative Report*, 2 (4). Available: from www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/QR2-4/pandit.html.

Papadakis, E. (1996) *Environmental Politics and Institutional Change*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Paton, S., Curtis, A., McDonald, G. and Woods, M. (2004) Regional natural resource management: Is it sustainable. *Australian Journal of Environmental Management*, 11 pp 259−67.

Patton, M.Q. (1990) Humanistic psychology and humanistic research. *Person-Centred Review*, 5 pp 191−202.

Peck, J. (2004) Geography and public policy: Constructions of neoliberalism. *Progress in Human Geography,* 28 pp 392−405.

Perkins, D.D., Hughey, J. and Speer, P.W. (2002) Community psychology perspectives on social capital theory and community development practice. *Journal of Community Development Society*, 33 (1) pp 33−52.

Peterson, A., Mcalpine, C.A., Ward, D. and Rayner, S. (2007) New regionalism and nature conservation: Lessons from South East Queensland, Australia. *Landscape and Urban Planning*, 82 pp 132−44. Retrieved: 20 June 2008 from www.sciencedirect.com.

Pini, B. (2006) A critique of new regional governance: A case of gender in a rural Australian setting. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 22 (4) pp 383−402.

Pizzocaro, S. (1998) Steps into industrial eco-systems: New models for interfirm interaction. Presentation to the 7th Greening of Industry Network (GIN) Conference, Rome, November.

Pope-Davis, D.B., Toporek, R.L., Ortega-Villalobos, L., Ligiéro, D.P., Brittan-Powell, C.S., Liu, W.M., Bashshur, M.R., Codrington, J.N. and Liang, C.T.H. (2002) Client perspectives of multicultural counseling competence: A qualitative examination. *The Counselling Psychologist*, 30 (3) pp 355−93.

Pretty, G.M.H. (2002) Young people's development of the community-minded self: Considering community identity, community attachment and sense of community. In Fisher, A.T., Sonn, C.C. and Bishop, B. (Eds) *Psychological Sense of Community: Research, Applications, and Implications*. Kluwer Academic/Plenum, New York, NY. 183–203

Prilleltensky, I. (2003) Understanding, resisting and overcoming oppression: Towards psychopolitical validity. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 31 pp 195−201.

Prilleltensky, I. and Nelson, G. (2002) *Doing Psychology Critically: Making a Difference in Diverse Settings*. Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke.

Pritchard, B. (2000). Negotiating the two-edged sword of agricultural trade liberalisation: Trade policy and its protectionist discontents. In Pritchard, B. and McManus, P. (Eds) *Land of Discontent: The Dynamics of Change in Rural and Regional Australia*. University of New South Wales Press, Sydney.

Punch, K.F. (1998) *Introduction to Social Research: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*. Sage, London.

Pusey, M. (2003) *The Experience of Middle Australia: The Dark Side of Economic Reform*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Putnam, R.D. (1996) The Strange Disappearance of Civic America. *American Prospect*, 24 pp 34−48.

Rao, A. and Kelleher. D. (2005) Is there life after gender mainstreaming? *Gender and Development*, 13 (2) pp 57−69.

Reddel, T (2002) Beyond participation, hierarchies, management and markets: 'New' governance and place policies. *Australian Journal of Public Administration*, 61 (1) pp 50−63.

Rees, W.E. (2006) Globalisation, trade and migration: Undermining sustainability. *Ecological Economics*, 59 pp 220−25. Retrieved: 30 June 2008 from www.sciencedirect.com.

Rushton, K. (2002) Business ethics: A sustainable approach. *Business Ethics: A European Review*, 11 (2) pp 137−9.

Sandelowski, M. (2000) Focus on research methods: Combining qualitative and quantitative sampling, data collection, and analysis techniques in mixed-method studies. *Research in Nursing & Health*, 23 pp 246−55.

Sarason, S.B. (1974) *The Psychological Sense of Community: Prospects for a Community Psychology*. Jossey-Bass, San Francisco, CA.

Shiva, V. (2000) *Stolen Harvest: The Hijacking of the Global Food Supply*. South End, Cambridge, MA.

Shortall, S. (2002) Gendered agricultural and rural restructuring: A case study of Northern Ireland. *Sociologia Ruralis*, 42 (2) pp 160−77.

Steiner, J. (2007) A trace of anger is enough: On the enforcement of social norms. *Economics Bulletin*, 8 (1) pp 1−4.

Stewart, W.P., Liebert, D. and Larkin, K.W. (2004) Community identities as visions for landscape change. *Landscape Urban Planning*, 69 (2/3) pp 315–34.

Stiglitz, J. (2002) *Globalisation and its Discontents*. W.W. Norten & Co: New York, NY.

Stone, W. (2000) Social capital and social security: Lessons from research. *Family Matters*, 57 pp 10–13.

Strathern, M. (2000) The tyranny of transparency. *British Educational Research Journal*, 26 pp 309–21.

Strauss, A. and Corbin, J. (1990) *Basics of Qualitative Research: Grounded Theory, Procedures and Techniques*. Sage, Thousand Oaks, CA.

Strauss, A. and Corbin, J. (1994) Grounded theory methodology: An overview. In Denzin, N.K. and Lincoln, Y.S. (Eds) *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Sage, Thousand Oaks, CA. 273–85.

Strauss, A. and Corbin, J. (1998) *Basics of Qualitative Research: Grounded Theory, Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory (2nd Ed)*. Sage, Thousand Oaks, CA.

Syme, G.J., Kals, E., Blair, E., Nancarrow, E.B. and Montada, L. (2000) Ecological risks and community perceptions of fairness: A cross cultural model. *Risk Analysis*, 20 (6) pp 905–17.

Talbot, R. (1998) Creating infrastructures for sustainable local economies. Presentation to the 7th Greening the Industry Network (GIN) Conference, Rome, November.

Talbot, L. and Walker, R. (2007) Community perspectives on the impact of policy change on linking social capital in a rural community. *Health & Place*, 13 pp 482–92.

Terkenli, T.S. (2005) New landscape spatialities: The changing scales of function and symbolism. *Landscape Urban Planning*, 70 (1–2) pp 165–76.

Thomas-Slater, B.P. (1994) Structural change, power politics and community organizations in Africa: Challenging the patterns, puzzles and paradoxes. *World Development*, 22 (10) pp 1479–90.

Thompson, P. (2003) Disconnected capitalism: Or why employers can't keep their side of the bargain. *Work, Employment and Society*, 17 (2), 359–437.

Townsend, M., Mahoney, M. and Hallebone, E. (2001) Countering rural policy impacts: Community development initiatives for local control. *Just Policy*, 21 pp 16–27.

Van Der Bly, M.C.E. (2007) Globalisation and the rise of one heterogeneous world culture: A microperspective of a global village. *International Journal of Comparative Sociology*, 48 (2-3) pp 234–56. Retrieved: 1 September 2008 from www.sagepublic ations.com.

Véron, R., Williams, G., Corbridge, S. and Srivastava, M. (2006) Decentralised corruption or corrupt decentralisation? Community monitoring of poverty-alleviation schemes in Eastern India. *World Development*, 34 (11) pp 1922–41.

Wade, R.H. (2004) Is globalisation reducing poverty and inequality? *World Development*, 32 (4) pp 567–89.

Wallis, A. (2006) *The New Regionalism*. Retrieved: 10 July 2008 from www.munimall.net/eos //wallisregionalism.nclk.

Walmsley, D.J. and Weinand, H.C. (1997) Is Australia becoming more unequal? *Australian Geographer*, 28 pp 69–88.

Ward, N. and McNicholas, K. (1998) Reconfiguring rural development in the UK: Objective 5b and the new rural governance. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 14 (1) pp 27−39.

Warin, M., Baum, F., Kalucy, E., Murray, C. and Veale, B. (2000) The power of place: Space and time in women's and community health centres in South Australia. *Social Science and Medicine*, 50 pp 1863–75.

Weber, E.P. (1999) The question of accountability in historical perspective: From Jackson to contemporary grassroots ecosystem management. *Administration & Society*, 31 pp 451−94.

Wicker, A. (1989) Substantive theorizing. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 17 pp 531−47.

Williams, W. and Lewis, D. (2005) Convergent interviewing: A tool for strategic investigation. *Strategic Change*, 14 pp 219−29.

Wilson, G.A. (2004). The Australian Landcare movement: towards 'post-productivist' rural governance? *Journal of Rural Studies*, 20 pp 461–84.

Wiseman, J. (1998) *Global Nation? Australia and the Politics of Globalisation*. Cambridge University Press, Melbourne.

Woolcock, M. (1998) Social capital and economic development: Toward a theoretical synthesis and policy framework. *Theory and Society*, 27 (2) pp 151−208.

World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) (1987) *Our Common Future*. Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Zollinger, B. (2003) A future for regional Australia: Escaping global misfortune. *Rural Sociology*, 68 (3) pp 463−7.