LOCAL POLITICS IN COWRA SHIRE

Structure, Ideology and Resources

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While I gratefully acknowledge the advice and assistance of many people, the research for and writing of this thesis are entirely my own work.

Ian Gray

19 January, 1989
To my parents
Abstract

The thesis offers explanation for the maintenance of local power relations in a rural community in terms of ideologies and the ways in which they are reflected, responded to and reconstructed in and around a local political system. It does so by developing concepts useful to the study of power processes and using them in analysis of observation of local politics and the ideological climate in which politics are enacted. A history of the locality and discussion of institutional apparatuses of local government move analysis towards political processes, in particular those processes in which the content of politics becomes constrained. That constraint is accounted for in terms of the values and beliefs of local people and their politicians, rather than conscious and intentional individual action. The thesis concludes that beliefs about the nature of local politics and the locality itself structure local politics in such a way that they favour farmers and business people over other identifiable groups.
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Chapter One

INTRODUCTION

The task of identification of locally powerful people has been undertaken many times under the banners of both sociology and political science, but explanations of local power in terms of its ideological antecedents and processes of maintenance have not been explored so often. This thesis attempts to explain the maintenance of the power structure of a rural locality. The problem it tackles lies in the persistence of a hierarchical social relationship, one between people who are and people who are not able to consistently extract benefit from a local political system. It explains why some people could make local politics work for them while others could not.

The community studies tradition provides a context for specification of the problem, as particularly identified by Bell (1978), and the rationale for the means of explanation. The thesis draws on many methods of research and sources of data, but depends heavily on the methods of community study which centre on participant observation. It does so in order to observe the effects of ideology on the interpretations of individuals, to observe the meanings which individuals attached to their social situation and events around them, and the way those meanings enabled some groups in local politics while disabling others.

The study of localities offers much to the study of society in the rural context. Recent theoretical development has aroused interest in locality study, and pointed to the attributes of the community study method. The relationship between theory and the methodological potential of community study is discussed in Chapter Two. The Chapter concludes with discussion of the research methods used in this study. It includes background to the research
process to permit consideration of the problems of subjectivity and ethics associated with participant observation.

Recent developments in social theory suggest a strategy for the study of power. The strategy and the problems it can expect to encounter are discussed in Chapter Three. Concepts are developed to enable the exploration of power processes, and so avoid both the shallowness and static approach of earlier local power studies. Chapter Three also reviews some Australian studies which directly or indirectly tackled problems of power. Those studies suggest some tentative applications of the concepts developed earlier in the Chapter, and thereby direct attention to some of the dimensions of local power structures. The Chapter concludes with propositions to guide further exploration.

The study of social process is a study of history which commenced long before the fieldwork for this project, so that to understand the events observed in fieldwork, it is necessary to establish their historical context. Chapter Four relates a history of Cowra Shire since white settlement. It provides background to ideas and structures by suggesting antecedents to the meanings which local people attach to people and events.

Chapter Five introduces the local political structure, as it focuses attention on local government. It offers some description of the institution of local government, its place in local politics and participation in it. In keeping with the individualistic aspects of the community power tradition, it also discusses the local political structure in terms of the reputations of political actors. This discussion offers a base for what follows rather than definition of a power structure. It draws attention to the weakness of earlier methods as it explores the ideologies associated with reputations for power.

As argued in Chapter Three, explanation of power relations demands study of power processes. Chapter Six is the first of four which do so. It looks at the processes in which local government resources were distributed. The politics of distribution are found to have been constrained by both the administrative apparatus and the beliefs of local government
members about the institution and their roles in it. This constraint raises the question of the content of local politics, for it suggests that political relations may have been structured by a process of agenda setting. Some groups who had legitimate political interests may have been unable to pursue them by raising issues.

The problem of issue raising is considered again in Chapter Seven, this time in relation to issues and non-issues surrounding economic development. The Chapter demonstrates that while the interests of some groups were not heard in local politics, others, notably farmers, were able to create a political crisis when they felt that their interests were threatened. The political profile of business and farm people provides a striking contrast with that of railway workers. Chapter Seven repeats a theme which first appears in Chapter Six: that of friction between council officers and councillors in the issues which constitute visible politics.

Chapter Eight explores more non-issues. It examines the place of human services, with consideration of the interests of women and Aborigines, in relation to the local political agenda. This examination deepens the contrast between the strong position of business and farm interests and the weakness of others. Unlike the issues discussed in earlier chapters, the non-issues of human services were not associated with conflict between councillors and officers. The agenda setting process has again been found to have determined political relations.

The importance of agenda setting raises the problem of explanation for political action: what determined the interests which gained expression by creation of issues? Chapter Nine offers background to this question with discussion of institutional factors. It looks back over some of the issues discussed in earlier chapters as well as some new material. The later part of the Chapter focuses on the legitimacy of conflicts, as they were perceived by councillors, to help illuminate the interests which gained expression.

Chapter Ten turns to the electors, whose general interest the councillors sought to pursue in the processes which created specialised politics, keeping some interests off the political agenda.
Local politics are found to have reflected ideologies which pervade rural society and have a particular focus on local government. Beliefs which political actors interpreted from their electors and respond to in the political arena are found to have structured the political agenda.

Without necessary conscious intention on the part of political actors, the parameters of local politics were defined in such a way that some interests were given prolific expression while others were ignored. The thesis attributes cause to those beliefs, but recognises that they have been constructed in the context of local property relations, relations between town and country, and the institutional history of local government.
Chapter Two

ORIGINS AND METHODS

The community studies tradition provides an intellectual setting for the study of local power relations. Over the last ten to fifteen years it has waned in popularity, but has not died thanks partly to interest shown among human geographers. While human geography has come to advocate locality studies from a theoretical perspective, the reasoning offered is compatible with, and reinforces the value of, the more empirical approach emanating from the sociological community studies tradition.

Community study is a method in itself, a means of studying social relations in a locality, usually, in part at least, by participant observation. Community study therefore confronts problems of objectivity and accuracy, demanding discussion of the research process as well as specification of methods. After searching some literature to locate the thesis in the community studies tradition, this Chapter outlines the background to the study, introduces the research process, and discusses the methods used.

Intellectual Origins

The community studies tradition is still alive, although it may be hard to recognise. It might claim such recent Australian works as Kriegler (1980), Lea and Zehner (1986), Metcalfe (1988) and Williams (1981). Wild (1984) found community studies to be making a recovery after criticism for alleged abstracted empiricism in the 1960s, and decline of interest in locality in favour of mass society in the 1970s. Community studies' claim on many works of diverse
interests comes from the common features of locality and method. The distinction between community study as a method, and community as an object of study has often been made (Bell and Newby, 1971; Wild, 1981). The distinction lies between those studies which use participant observation, often in combination with other methods, to study "community", or social bonds, in a particular locality, and those which use similar methods to study some other social phenomenon, also in a particular locality.

The prominent themes in community sociology came from the ideal-type concepts of Toennies and Weber expressed as community and association, contrasting situations in which subjective feelings of belonging are present and absent respectively (Nisbet, 1970: 80). As the notion of community has been closely knitted to such abstract concepts and principles, it has been difficult to define and operationalise.

The notions of community and association are expressed in the rural-urban continuum model by relating them to place, although their original proponents may not have intended such a reification (Newby and Buttel, 1980). The rural-urban continuum proposes that ties to other individuals and to places are fewer or weaker in urban than in rural areas (Frankenberg, 1969). Although the rural-urban continuum has been discredited (Wild, 1981: 24), interest in community as affective local ties among individuals has persisted. This is illustrated by the Presidential Address to the 1985 Annual Meeting of the Rural Sociological Society which appealed to rural sociologists to continue the search for community (Wilkinson, 1986), and the work of Cohen (1982a, b; 1985; 1986) and Strathern (1982; 1984a, b). Wild (1983) found a model of community derived from the community and association continuum to be useful. Newby (1980) attributed loss of classic status by the community studies tradition to criticism of "community as object" studies for being "abstracted empiricism" (Mills, 1959). This occurred despite ample demonstration that study in localities could test theoretically derived propositions (Bell and Newby, 1971).

Stacey (1969) made a forceful attempt to abandon the classical notion of community and its reification. Being concerned about the conceptual problem of community and the observation
that community studies assume that institutions are both locality based and interrelated, she proposed a concept of local social system to describe situations in which institutions are interrelated and locality based without being locality constrained. The concept, she suggested, would permit the testing in localities of propositions "derived from existing empirical data seen in the light of general sociological theory" (Stacey, 1969: 139).

Advocates of the community study method have found that this concept had not been developed as it should. Wild (1984) attributed the neglect to the waning of interest in micro level social processes during the 1970s. The possibility that locality may contribute to explanation, without being determinant, was ignored. Austin (1982) attempted to take Australian community studies into mainstream sociological interests. She saw potential for community studies as method to "transcend the boundaries of locality even whilst they retain a fieldwork method" (page 218). She suggested a focus on ideology, being an important area of sociological analysis which is amenable to field study. In a later work (Austin, 1984) she analysed the contribution community studies had made to discussion of class in Australian society.

It is possible to look positively upon a "personal quality" in community studies arising from intimate observation and close connection between the writer, theory and methods (Wild, 1981: 12). This feature implies individualism in that individuals or "individuals in the last instance" are used as units of explanation (Dunleavy, 1980: 27). This stood in contrast to the social structural analysis of cities undertaken during the 1970s, especially that by Castells. However, Austin's analysis of class and ideology used structural features of the communities studied, identified in individual behaviour, as explanation. Individual behaviour may be dependent on conditions which are external to the actor (Hindess, 1986a: 114). This study, like Eipper (1986), aims its attention at social relationships, rather than the behaviour of individuals.

Energy aimed at conceptual problems by those of the structurationist school has spotlighted locality studies as it has endeavoured to overcome the agency-structure dilemma.³ By moving away from structuralism, and at the same time adopting a concept of "locale" which allows
some explanatory power for spatial factors, structurationist theory has attracted attention to community studies. The concept of locale is a product of Giddens' concern for the temporal and spatial attributes of social behaviour (Giddens, 1979: 202). Locale refers to the setting for interaction, features of which "are routinely drawn upon by social actors in the sustaining of interaction" (Giddens, 1979: 207).

Application of structuration to locality studies in the Stacey (1969) style of community study has not, however, been realised. During the 1970s the role of place in geography was down-played, reminiscent of the demise of the rural-urban continuum and the concern about extra local forces in community studies. Both geography and sociology wrote-off local determination, believing that local change could only be a product of forces operating in wider society. Recognition that social relations are constructed over space, and that localities differ socially, has reawakened interest in locality study. But unfortunately, Giddens' structuration does not provide a ready made research agenda for locality studies. Empirical application is made difficult because the concept of locale does not necessarily operationalise as locality, and because the central concept of duality of structure does not on its own, with its high level of abstraction, offer a model for empirical research.4

Locality studies still confront the same problem of extra-local influence which Stacey (1969) recognised. They must be sensitive to extra-local forces and aware of inter-local relations. That "locale" can transcend locality is inherent in the concept at the theoretical level. This has been recognised for some time at the empirical level. As Newby (1980: 78) found "... there is now a recognition of the need to bring together an analysis of both indigenous and exogenous causal factors into a more holistic analysis of community change." A concept of locale is not new to community studies. Bell and Newby (1971: 44) used the word locale to describe the spatial context of social relationships, although they criticised community typologies for using locale deterministically.

Themes similar to those of structuration theory are to be found in the community studies tradition. Giddens included among the core features of structuration a notion of the

Giddens "prior principles" lie close to the heart of the community studies tradition. They include the importance of learning "what it is to "go-on" in the activities which constitute [a] form of life", the necessity of treating actors as knowledgeable and conscious in terms of what they know about how to "go-on" and how they articulate the conditions of action, and recognition of the "unintended consequences of action" (Giddens, 1983: 75-77). The methods of community studies, involving essentially participant observation, lend themselves to pursuit of these principles because "they do not remove the social and cultural data they encounter from the web of connections, functions, mutual supports, complementary placements, etc., they seem to have in the life of the people of the community undergoing study" (Arensberg and Kimball, 1974: 337). Giddens may object to use of the word "function" (Giddens, 1981: 16) and the functionalist overtones of interconnectedness, but the interweaving of agency and structure implied by Arensberg and Kimball lends itself to the hermeneutic approach which he advocates. He proposed to escape functionalist teleology by studying the "unacknowledged conditions" and "unintended consequences" of action, all of which reinforces the view of those such as Stacey (1969), Austin (1982) and Bradley and Lowe (1984) that the community studies tradition has much to offer.

From an empirical angle, one might add, following Massey (1985), that differences in social characteristics among localities are sufficient reason to study localities, particularly when those differences are in the form of inequality. But again, concepts of rural and urban must be applied carefully. Newby (1982), in criticising attempts to resurrect the rural-urban continuum, declared that while there may be differences between rural and urban behaviour,
the concept of "rural" is spurious if "ruralness" cannot be shown to have some explanatory power. Within the structurationist theory of Giddens, "ruralness", so far as it embodies locale, may have such power. Saunders expressed the view that, although urban sociology had responded enthusiastically to Giddens' theoretical work, it presented no justification for building "a sociology constituted around the study of specific spatial forms such as the city ..." (1985: 69). As Thrift (1983) mentioned, the relation between locale and space is to be explored, rather than assumed.

Newby and Saunders present essentially the same argument. That is, there is no justification for attributing social causation to a spatial entity. This does not mean, however, that spatial factors have no place in a causal model of social relations. It does suggest that we should ignore the generality of urban and rural, and focus on the particularity of place, remembering that place can be more than, or less than, locale. The fear expressed by Cloke (1985) that a-spatial structuralism will threaten rural research as a field of study should only be allayed if rural locale is shown to generally have some uniquely rural feature.

Rural sociology has moved towards a critical approach with the development of a sociology of agriculture. Newby (1982, 1983) praised this development, seeing it as offering new empirical ground as well as being more theoretical in approach. It offered an escape from the theoretical "time-capsule" (Bradley and Lowe, 1984: 2) of the rural-urban continuum. The rise of the sociology of agriculture is at least in part a response to policy concerns accompanying the farm crisis of the late 1970s in the United States (Newby, 1983). Again one could draw a parallel with the development of urban sociology as a response to urban conflict in the late 1960s and 1970s. The special relationship between rural and community studies may be maintained because the dominance of household production in agriculture, by keeping capital local and hence retaining important local decision making functions, provides a useful arena for the study of power relations and processes. The community studies tradition is methodologically equipped for the task.
Personal Origins

The community studies tradition is, however, confronted with problems of objectivity and presentation of evidence associated with the participant observation method. These problems have been put most succinctly by Bell (1969: 418) in terms of participant observation data offering illustrations rather than proof, and the possibility of "retrospective selection" of data. Recognition of these problems has brought forth calls for "natural histories" of research, by for example, Bell (1969), Gray (1980) and Wild (1981). This section relates a brief natural history and discusses methods.

I started my Ph.D course in July, 1985, having spent five years doing social and demographic research for the Commonwealth Government. (During that time I completed a part-time M.A. in Sociology.) I decided to do a 'community study' as I decided to do a Ph.D. No other field attracted my attention. It was to be a rural community study because, although I had been raised in Sydney, my parents, their siblings and most of their nieces and nephews had grown up in the country, some in towns and some on farms. I therefore had plenty of contact with country people. I spent much of my school holidays, and some time since, staying with country relatives. This time, had not, however, given me what I felt to be a satisfying understanding of the country and its people. I saw a Ph.D as an opportunity to learn about life in the country sociologically: a means that none of my family and relatives had an opportunity to apply.

My theoretical perspective came from pre-fieldwork reading, and was developed and reinforced by fieldwork experience. I found encouraging potential in the community study method and the emerging critical approach in rural sociology. Critical analysis seemed timely as late 1985 brought another of Australia's intermittent rural economic crises, this time with added vitality from developing farmer militancy, and the casual speculation on my part that when the rural economy falls down, the politically as well as economically weakest people will hit the ground hardest. I also prepared myself for fieldwork by reading some background material on participant observation, including Burgess (1984) and Miles and Huberman (1984), and some
of the anthologies and discussions of research experience, including Hammond (1964), Johnson (1975), Bell and Newby (1977) and Bell and Encel (1978).

Methods

I chose Cowra because it is of medium size (within the limit Wild (1978: 185) placed on practicality for one field worker), its economy is based on agriculture, it is reasonably close to Canberra, and, perhaps most importantly, it was passing through a local political crisis, which from reports in the local newspaper, was a big one. (It was a planning matter and will be discussed in Chapter Seven.) I correctly anticipated that this would make talking to people about local affairs easy. Before deciding on Cowra I looked at recent Commonwealth Census data, read some newspapers from other towns, and made a one day tour around most of them. After making a tentative choice, I read more of Cowra's newspapers and took a closer look at older Census data. Cowra had an industrial working class. It had acquired some large secondary industries which other towns might envy, but it had almost lost its railway industry. I hypothesised that these factors, and the forthcoming celebration of the centenary of the railway to Cowra, would have created local public discussion. Noting the presence of an Aboriginal settlement, I also hypothesised that Aboriginal welfare would be a problem, and seeing that a Neighbourhood Centre was struggling to establish itself, I thought it too might contribute to local political activity. These very early 'hypotheses' had much bearing on the research.

While I knew that many people in the district were involved in a fracas in the Shire Council over planning, that the district was facing the decline of its railway and that some people were trying to establish a Neighbourhood Centre, I did not know either how or where these matters would be determined. My brief, as I explained it to Cowra people on arrival, and for a few months thereafter, was to study local organisations and the way the 'community' solved its problems. After realising that Cowra Shire Council was the arena around and through which local affairs rotated, my explanation changed to: "I'm here to study local government".
Cowra Shire Council was my first point of contact. I started attending its meetings in October, 1985, before I moved to Cowra in November. My reception was warm: senior Council staff welcomed me and assured me that all meetings were open and I need make no special arrangements to attend. One councillor suggested that I should not miss the committee meetings, because most of the important discussion occurred there. I missed only two meetings during the next twelve months, one due to illness and the other due to a higher priority engagement. I also attended four meetings during 1987. By mid-1986 councillors and staff were quite accustomed to my presence, helped no doubt by my practice of drinking with them, sometimes after meetings, but more often at casual encounters in pubs and at social functions. I was as much a part of council meetings as the press representatives, but I was less threatening because I did not repeat councillors' words in a newspaper. Council meetings were a rich source of data, unaffected by my presence. The seriousness of debate eliminated the possibility that some was performed for my benefit. A senior Council officer once said jokingly to me in the presence of another after a particularly torrid meeting: "Of course, we are only doing this for your benefit". The other replied: "Like hell we are" in a tone of annoyance.

At the first meeting I introduced myself to several councillors, as well as the editor of the local newspaper who offered me office space. A senior Council officer also offered support, but not wishing to be sponsored, I thanked them and said no more. I was received warmly from the beginning, except for one incident which proved to be revealing in itself (discussed in Chapter Ten). I was aware of the importance of 'entree', having read of the difficulties encountered by Coffield and Borrill (1983) as well as discussion in the texts mentioned above, but felt throughout the project that it had not been a significant problem. I attribute this success to my willingness to learn rather than instruct, as visiting 'experts' are often seen to do. I enjoyed the benefits, noted by Young (1979), of equal status with the locally powerful, although my background of parentage in farming and country dwelling families may have been more valuable than the often questioned status of an intellectual in a farming environment.

I was sufficiently different to make becoming a complete insider impossible. My origins in Canberra and my supposed intellectual status made me an outsider; the link with Canberra
being particularly important at a time when farmers and their organisations were attacking the Commonwealth Government. Noting the importance of self presentation, as discussed by Geer (1964), I did not accentuate my Canberra base. Being seen as a potential ear in Canberra was no doubt useful as a conversation stimulant, but it could also have been inhibiting, as people were unsure of what was wisely revealed. I did what I could to dispel this interpretation of my presence, and I believe that as people came to know me and saw some of what I was doing, the idea was dropped. My 'outsiderness' was productive because, as Richards (1981) noted, being an outsider leaves one open to teaching; intimacy may be accompanied by "the imprisonment of tight role expectations" (Stephenson and Greer 1981: 127) and failure to recognise relevant patterns and meanings (Burgess, 1984: 22).

I participated in the Railway Centenary Committee, and offered my labour to a Sydney-based railway museum organisation which kept its locomotives and rolling stock in the otherwise virtually unused Cowra Locomotive Depot. I worked in the Neighbourhood Centre as a volunteer answering the telephone and doing odd jobs. I was invited to, and did, join a 'discussion group' which undertook unexamined university extension courses. I also joined the local historical society. I almost joined the Apex Club, but when the focus of research moved onto the Shire Council, I had to forsake the Apex Club to avoid clashes of meeting times. I nevertheless maintained some contact with 'Apexians'. I also drank in the pubs and attended social functions. I entertained people in my flat and was entertained in others' homes.

My biggest participatory role was in the Neighbourhood Centre, through which I undertook the surveys with the local Home and Community Care (HACC) Committee reported in Appendixes A and B. I became identified with the Centre through that project, with assistance from radio and television interviews during pre-survey publicity. This associated me with the welfare lobby in the minds of some people, but it did not occur until ten months into the fieldwork period. I was also identified with the Railway Centenary organising committee after I appeared in a photograph of the committee in a book published at the time of the celebrations, which occurred a few days before I returned to Canberra.
I was accepted at the Neighbourhood Centre as an academic whose skills had something to offer the district. I was accepted by the railway people for my willingness and interest rather than for skills. (My attempts to 'fire' locomotives produced singed forearms and eyebrows as well as steam.) A few of the local railway employees were active members of the museum. They were welcoming and forthcoming, but I think for some I merely confirmed the uselessness of intellectuals. My friends at the discussion group were closer to the other end of the local status ladder, and showed no such scepticism. My contact with the Farmers' Association through this group enabled the survey reported in Appendix C. As Snow et al (1986) would suggest, these participatory roles had considerable effect on the range of information collected. I lived in what could loosely be described as a lower middle or working class area, known as 'Taragala' (Map 2 on page 127).

I had no formal sponsors (in the sense used by Dempsey, 1986b). Informal sponsorship was also virtually absent. The exceptions were three people who suggested others whom I might interview. It might be argued that, in so far as data collected for the HACC survey were, under an agreement between myself and the Committee, my own to use and have been used in the thesis, the HACC Committee provided sponsorship, but the data are a very small part of those used in the thesis. I consciously avoided sponsorship for fear of identification with some group or organisation which might close the door to others. It is even more difficult to identify gatekeepers. Beyond these introductions, I am not aware of any individuals whose help was essential for access to sources, other than the senior officers who made Council records available.

If, however, one takes an exchange perspective (discussed by Gray, 1980) and acknowledges the responsibilities of researchers (discussed by Barnes, 1970, 1977, 1979; and Bell and Roberts, 1984), relations between myself and informants become more complex and ethically demanding. All informants were told as much about my work as formulation of the project would allow. They knew that there would be a final product, and for some, access to that product would complete a tacit exchange. For some, notably but not only the railway employees, the prospect of communication of their plight to higher authorities was potentially
and implicitly a possible reward. Such an agreement was most clear among those who helped with the HACC surveys, an agreement fulfilled by successful use of the survey report in bids for government funding (and discussed in Gray, 1987b). For others, especially the members of the discussion group, there was no such agreement, but I maintained throughout the project an awareness of my responsibilities to these people, and at a more instrumental level, an awareness of the potential value of local feedback on my work (as noted by Barnes, 1979: 142).

Reciprocity was, however, present throughout, as people took me into their confidence, offered information which I could reasonably infer they would not want me to reproduce, or expressed opinions which they may not want to see attributed to them. Only once did an informant ask that something not be repeated, and that was a very frank comment on the informant’s feelings at a stressful moment. There has been no censorship exercised in the compilation of this thesis, except by myself in the selection of evidence so as to eliminate the risk of personal embarrassment among informants. Real names of public figures, the councillors and senior Council officers, are used throughout, and statements made by them in their public roles are quoted, but identities of other informants are disguised by generalisation, usually in terms of occupation.

Many research methods and data sources, as well as observation data, are drawn upon in the following chapters. Data sources include Commonwealth and earlier censuses and the local newspaper (The Cowra Guardian). I read every issue of the Guardian between 1947 and 1987, and many earlier issues of the Guardian and its predecessors. As mentioned above, I was fortunate to be granted access to Council documents, including minutes of meetings.

Thirty-five interviews with locally knowledgeable people were conducted, of which the first twelve were taped. The interviewees fell into three overlapping groups: long term residents, councillors and organisation leaders. As I became more adept at questioning and identifying important responses, the tape recorder became a hindrance. The interviews, of between one and four hours duration, were minimally structured by a small number of standard questions
designed to stimulate discussion as well as elicit answers. Questions about the importance and role of the Shire Council, the local status system and relations between town and country were asked of most respondents, but many of the conversations had specialised components. For example, I asked councillors about their sources of information, and people involved with organisations about their organisation's dealings with Council. Questions about the identities of influential people were put to twenty of the interviewees (the responses to be discussed in Chapter Five). Interviews were used to investigate problems in depth. I became quite friendly with many of the interviewees and spoke to them often. The interviews themselves provided revelations, but were a minor source of data overall. Spontaneous conversations, often started with an explanation of my work, were just as fruitful. The 104 pages of my fieldwork journal include notes from observations and conversations, and record my reactions to and interpretations of events, documenting the formulation of problems and the overall evolution of the project at theoretical and empirical levels.

The data presented are products of a process of development at a theoretical level during and after fieldwork. At entree I started my explorations using a plan for a stratification study, a refined version of the approach of Wild (1974a). I planned to steer it towards social process in the context of rural decline, using some ideas of Eipper (1982). My curiosity sparked by the planning, Neighbourhood Centre, railway and Aboriginal matters mentioned above, rather than any conceptual scheme, moved me towards analysis of the process of distribution in the local political system. I realised that urban sociology had been concerned with such problems, and there seemed to be no reason why similar approaches could not be applied outside major cities. The work of Pandey (1972), Wild (1974), Oxley (1978) and Oeser and Emery (1957) provided a rural starting point.

Two factors in particular moved me to sharpen the research into a study of power processes. One was observation of the depth of the political crisis I had detected before entree, a crisis apparently precipitated by the Council making a very unpopular decision on the basis of ostensibly bureaucratic requirements. Moreover, while that crisis attracted much attention and appeared to be embarrassing prominent people, other matters were either not raised or not
responded to. The other factor was the way ideas like those of the traditional whole community as object seemed to be widely adhered to and used to make sense of the social environment in one context, while in others what appeared to be real divisions were readily acknowledged.

Perhaps the most profound impression made upon me during fieldwork was the passion with which people pursued goals which had obviously unintended consequences. The most charitable people could advocate oppression when their definition of a common good appeared to be threatened. Others earnestly believed that their interests must be pursued to the possible detriment of others for some avowedly common ideal. And others who could pursue their own interests did not because they did not recognize them, they did not believe pursuit to be a proper course of action, or because they were caught unwittingly in a double bind. On occasions thinking sociologically about a respected acquaintance was horrifying, and on other occasions it was very sad. Detaching individual from structure was one of the more trying duties of data analysis, just as it is one of the most trying tasks for social theory. The following chapter constructs a theoretical framework around which empirical analysis of these inconsistencies is developed.

Notes

1 Much of this section has been adapted from Gray (1987c), which argues that the community study method retains potential for particular and valuable contributions to a critical rural sociology through study of local power relations.

2 Explanation of community ties in the purpose they serve, that is, in fulfilling some societal need for bonds among individuals, without demonstrating a causal sequence which associates place with social bonds, risks illegitimate teleology, as defined by Turner (1978). Arensberg and Kimball's (1974: 339) interpretations of community studies illustrate the teleological trap. They describe studies of community as seeking to
"establish identities, types, functions and the degree of success with which it meets the individual and collective needs of its inhabitants." Studies of community, in their emphasis on social wholes, have been tempted by a functionalist assumption that "everything is connected to [or perhaps rather supportive of] everything else" (Stacey, 1969: 138).

3 The seminal theoretical work for these developments is that of Giddens (1979, 1981). While his work has not offered immediate solutions to the empirical agency-structure problem, he has offered a theoretical approach to it. Giddens proposes a theory of structuration, with a concept of duality of structure at its centre. By duality of structure, Giddens means that "the structured properties of social systems are simultaneously the medium and outcome of social acts" (1981: 19). This is similar to the sociology of knowledge approach of Berger and Luckmann (1971), in that it seeks a course between voluntarism and determinism. But unlike Berger and Luckmann, Giddens stresses the mutuality and simultaneity of agency and structure (Smith, 1983: 3). On a continuum between determinism and voluntarism, Thrift (1983) places Giddens on the deterministic side of Berger and Luckmann.

4 The problem of empirical application of structuration remains daunting. In a recent article, Gregson (1987) recognised that empirical application of Giddens' theory had not proceeded far. Consideration of the possibilities led to a conclusion that structuration is pitched at a level of abstraction too high to permit its application to analysis of "the events or contingencies of particular periods and places which constitute the domain of empirical enquiry" (page 80). Gregson found Giddens to advocate development of theory amenable to empirical application, but to also polarise theory and empirical research. After attempting to place structuration concepts in a hierarchy of abstraction which would move between the "abstract and concrete" (page 84), Gregson concluded that "Giddens' radical denial of structure, then, sits as a brick wall between us and the use of rational abstraction in a structuration theory" (page 89).

The "duality of structure" notion is a stumbling block. It offers no indication of where agency begins and structure ends. Smith (1983) attempted to solve this problem by introducing a concept of "modality". He proposed that "modalities", described as "organism/libido, others/power, objects, instrumental and symbolic meaning/order", are embodied in the social practices, contexts and intentionality of actors. These "modalities" would allow him to analyse social context and social practice. He proceeded to analyse participant observation data. Giddens replied that he "would not seek to insert the idea of structuration as directly into a research context as he [Smith] tries to do" (1983: 75).
5 The standard questions were:

to long term residents
What kinds of people have high status around Cowra?
What kinds of people do not?
Do you feel that there are any 'exclusive' clubs or the like?
Have you ever felt that there is social differentiation between town and country people?

to organisation members
What has been your involvement with the organisation?
What progress has it made towards its goals?
How do you see its future?
What involvement has your organisation had with Council?
How important was Council's role?

to councillors
What is the history of your participation on Council?
Has your family been involved in the past?
What do you see to be Council's successes?
What is a good council?

These questions were preceded by others on the interviewees personal and family history in Cowra, sometimes a discussion about the past and future of Cowra. They were followed by discussion about current and past local political affairs, in detail among councillors, and for those who were not councillors, the question: What do you think of the Shire Council?
Chapter Three

POWER:
CONCEPTS AND APPLICATIONS

The label "community power" is often attached to empirical research which has been largely an American affair, spread between sociology and political science. Australian and British urban and rural sociologies, however, have a lot to offer. Much of the theoretical debate has been stimulated by problems of empirical application, thereby intertwining the theoretical and empirical literatures. This Chapter scans the relevant literature in search of concepts which might facilitate a review of Australian studies, before conducting such a review.

The American Community Power Literature

It is unfortunate that "community power" has been virtually synonymous with a persistent and unresolved debate carried on within the United States, because that debate has had a very narrow, and peculiarly American, focus. One side (pluralists) has sought to show that United States cities are governed by many; the other side (elitists) has sought to show that they are governed by few. As the latter conclusion is at least potentially disturbing for those who hold to democratic ideals, the debate has raged with feeling, attracting much research energy. Saunders (1979: 138) estimated that about 500 empirical studies had been carried out, despite problems which Bell and Newby (1971: 218) suggested were showing the debate to be "confused and rather silly". The debate still goes on (Waste, 1986a), although the two sides are now drawing similar conclusions. Neither side suggests that power is evenly distributed amongst all people subject to government. But, unlike the elitists, the pluralists assume that all those who seek to
influence the course of decision making have access to the political process through an organisation which represents their interests.

The principal feature that the protagonists share is that neither is as concerned to explain how its observed power structures came about, as it is to justify its assumptions. This aspect of the pluralist endeavour may be more understandable, because the tug of war notion implies a dynamic of its own. On the other side, the elitists have missed opportunities to extend and support their model by examining the processes which created elite structures. That elitism in itself describes a power structure without explaining it is a common and valid criticism (Parkin, 1985), but some of the elitist literature has suggested processes through which elites come into being and are maintained.

The elitists have sought to show that certain interest groups dominate urban government, and along the way have found that those interests are associated with property, in particular land and its development (Dye, 1986; Molotch, 1976; Domhoff, 1983, 1986). There are functionalist overtones in some of these interpretations, in so far as they attribute the existence of political elites to the needs of economic interest groups which they serve. It could be inferred that elitism would lend itself to a class analysis which may help find a way around the implied teleology. However, some of those of the elitist persuasion have sought to discount such an approach Domhoff (1983). Manley (1983: 368) observed that while elitism was second to pluralism in the popularity stakes, class analysis was "not accepted at all".

The elitist literature certainly holds more promise for explanation of power relations in terms of social antecedents than does pluralism, simply because the pluralists are firmly footed in political science where the elitists are more sociological. This feature of the debate was recognised by Anton (1963), but its implications went unheeded under a cloud of misapprehension about the significance of the methods used by the early researchers on each side. The important feature of their respective methodologies is the pursuit of explanation by both sides in terms of individuals. On a scale of determinism, elitism would rank a fraction higher, because it assumes a binding system within which actors participate. The early pluralists assumed that individual behaviour
was randomly determined, allowing no room for structural constraint (Anton, 1963).

The methodological debate has, however, had a useful extension, after the 'neo-elitists' used analysis of decisions and 'non-decisions' to arrive at elitist conclusions. Despite casting off the reputational method, neo-elitism was attacked by the pluralists on methodological grounds. This will be analysed below, for the debate does provide some useful concepts. However, it does not in itself take us to the goals of analysis of social process. The conclusion of Fasenfest (1986: 104) that "what is needed is a process-oriented model of community power which also takes into account structural elements of a society-oriented view of community decision making" is apposite.

The British Contribution

The British have been more interested in analysing the effects of power than discovering the identities of those who wield it (Newton 1975). British sociologists have claimed that the strength of local government in local polities renders the American question of who governs, inappropriate. From the perspective of community studies, Bell and Newby (1971) observed that power was assumed to cleave along class lines, and hence little would be gained from its study, given the unitary nature of local government in comparison to that of the United States. One might wonder why the assumption that local government was the province of the ruling class was not questioned, and moreover, not explained. Indeed, when the assumption was set aside, such as occurred in the work of Bell et al (1976) and Newby et al (1978) and the factors which maintain the power of the powerful explored, some useful results were obtained.

Nevertheless, these two features of the British approach might have ruled out an equivalent to the elitist-pluralist feud, were Britons ever tempted to start one. There is little that one could readily identify as a British 'community power' literature, but the Britons have done more than snipe at the Americans. The prominent feature of the British, and relevant European, literature has been application of social theory to urban problems. This has led urban sociology through a period of
'urban managerialism' (Pahl, 1975) in the 1960s, studying the impact of bureaucratisation under Weberian influences, into an inclination towards class analysis in the 1970s (Castells, 1977), under Marxist influence, and a swing back to Weber in the 1980s (Elliott and McCrone, 1982). 'Urban managerialism' and aspects of class analysis have been used in a number of local political studies. Together they raised a debate about the role of bureaucrats and bureaucratisation as a factor in power relations. This factor lacks independence in the elitist-pluralist debate, although the neo-elitists give bureaucracy a role in 'non-decision making'. (Bachrach and Baratz (1970) saw administrative interpretation as a barrier in the decision process.) The role of bureaucrats, while not prominent in the elitist-pluralist debate, has been considered in the American urban politics literature (by, for example, Mladenka, 1980).

This work is far from the community studies tradition, the structuralist class analysis being the farthest. The concepts to be developed below are, however, amenable to application of the community study method. They will be developed in a discussion about the problems likely to be encountered in the conduct of a 'community study' of power.

A Theoretical Analysis

Social theory offers a bundle of concepts which can be applied empirically to build an understanding of the processes of social relations of which the concept of power is an abstraction. A taxonomy of social power will be developed as a map might be drawn, using Lukes' (1974) three dimensional model as a grid and the conceptualised elements of power as the significant places on the map to be used as landmarks, suggesting avenues of exploration. This section discusses the "grid" which Lukes offers, before consideration of the concepts offered by recent literature.

The notion of power implies relationships among individuals and groups in which the behaviour of some has an impact on others over time. Explanation of those relationships seeks to answer the why and how questions. That is, why do some individuals or groups affect others, and how
does it come about that they are able to, and choose to act in a way that has such effect. Power, however, implies more than behavioural cause and effect in social relations. If one assumes that the powerful act rationally in pursuit of their own objective interests, and that not everybody's interests are the same, power may benefit the powerful at the expense of the powerless. This implies that the powerful may be identified as those who benefit from political relations. The neo-elitists adopted this approach to escape the constraint imposed by the necessity to focus on winners and losers in political conflict and allow them to look for winners and losers when there had been no overt conflict. The keystone of this approach to power, which is essentially that used by Lukes (1974), is that the actions of the powerful affect the powerless to the relative detriment of the latter.

The Lukes Scheme

Analysis of power will be framed by the conceptual scheme of Lukes (1974), using it as an heuristic device in the same way as it was used by Fasenfest (1986), Gaventa (1980), and Bryson and Wearing (1985) in their feminist review of Australian community studies. Lukes observed that empirical studies had three dimensions open to them for analysis of power. Those dimensions are related to levels of visibility of power relations. The study of power has moved from the first dimension toward the third, and as it has done so, levels of abstraction have risen and conceptual complexity has increased. Much of the theoretical work to be discussed attempts to obviate the problems encountered as the empirical study of power has moved toward the third dimension.

Lukes' dimensions describe the circumstances in which power can be identified. He defined the one dimensional concept of power as that in which power is only found in observable conflict and decision making. He traced this dimension through the tradition of pluralist studies which used outcomes of overt political conflict to find the loci of power. In Lukes' scheme, a second dimension is available to analysts of power when they consider that power may be exercised and identified when no overt conflict is apparent. This dimension brings non-decision making as
well as decision making into focus, but it retains an assumption that conflict must be present, either overt or covert, for power to be available and exercised. Lukes placed the work of Bachrach and Baratz (1970) as a stepping stone into the second dimension, finding them to have led the way beyond the first dimension, but like the pluralists, he found them to have been discouraged by problems related to empirical application. Bachrach and Baratz started from a criticism of the pluralist method, claiming that it "takes no account of the fact that power may be, and often is, exercised by confining the scope of decision making to relatively 'safe' issues" (1970: 6).

There are copious illustrations of these processes (as, for example, in Crenson, 1971), in which "the now familiar tactics of non-decision-making" (Dye, 1986: 42) maintain power relations. Saunders (1979: 29) suggested a three stage non-decision making filter, based on Bachrach and Baratz (1970). In the first stage, interests may be formulated into expressed problems, or not formulated under a mobilisation of bias. In the second stage issues may be articulated, or not articulated due to anticipated reactions. In the final stage issues may be resolved, or not resolved after negative decision making. Buller and Hoggart (1986) successfully used similar concepts of mobilisation of bias and anticipated reactions. Parenti (1970) made the useful point that anticipated reactions can be empirically detectable while politically invisible. Anticipated reactions are related to ideology and may be an aspect of mobilisation of bias.

There has been some debate about decisions and non-decisions and issues and non-issues, which may be significant at a theoretical level but appears semantic at an empirical level. As Polsby (1979) pointed out, non-decisions are really a type of decision and should be treated as such in political analysis. Wolfinger (1971) and Frey (1971) debated the problem of identifying and choosing non-issues, and concluded that the problem of non-issues was an extension of a perennial problem of issue selection.

Research which seeks the causal factors in power relations inevitably confronts a problem of conceptualisation of the mobilization of bias at the level of individual action when action may be unconscious or unintended (Debnam, 1975). Stone (1980: 979) also pointed out that the exercise
of power may be unintentional, noting that inherited wealth is a political asset gained more through good fortune than intended action. But inherited wealth is not power until it is implicated in a power relationship. The problem posed is one of separation of individual action and structural property and teasing out the roles of each in power relations. Lukes' second dimension brings the necessity of analysing the ideology of the powerful in order to specify the 'mobilisation of bias' as a causal factor in the exclusion of issues and non-decision making. As Saunders (1979) found empirically, 'mobilisation of bias' may not be a necessary feature of agenda control by the powerful. The possibility should be considered, however, as Newton found when he observed that prejudice, bigotry and ignorance kept race out of politics in Birmingham (1976: 217).

Ideology of the superordinate has a potential role in the second dimension, but in the third, the focus moves toward the ideologies of the subordinate. The concept of 'mobilisation of bias' introduced the possibility that a powerful group could influence or even determine the values of another, thereby eliminating the possibility of conflict, both covert and overt in a power relationship. Lukes found that Bachrach and Baratz, after introducing the "crucially important idea of the 'mobilisation of bias' into the discussion of power" (1974: 17), failed to exploit it. For they believed that conflict must be present for power relations to be empirically analysed (Lukes, 1974: 19), and so did not step into Lukes' third dimension, which their concept of 'mobilisation of bias' may have allowed them to do. The relation between 'mobilisation of bias' and non-decision making was left unclear because 'mobilisation of bias' is logically prior to non-decision making (as placed in Saunders' (1979) model) which seeks to preserve it (Falkemark, 1982: 47). Lukes' separation of a third dimension clarifies the distinction. The concept of 'mobilisation of bias' moves the focus of power research further into the realm of the process of social construction of knowledge, ideas and values, rather than leaving it at analysis of their role in power relations. The concept of power in the third dimension is close to the Gramscian concept of hegemony, variants of which have been used, for example, by Connell (1977) among many others.¹

Lukes' third dimension moves the empirical study of power into the study of social context, the
study of knowledge, meaning and ideology. Lukes, however, does not arrive at a conceptual framework for the study of the social context. As Hindess noted, power is left as a relationship between actors. As such the study of power is of little value, because without elaboration of the "social conditions of existence of power . . . empirical investigations of the distribution of power must be of little value." Lukes has given no guidance towards identification of the social conditions antecedent to the power relationship, and there can be no way of knowing whether or not the power relationship will persist (Hindess, 1976: 331-2). The literature is replete with appeals for the study of power to explore the social conditions antecedent to power, such as contained in Abell (1982: 141).

The elitists (like Dye, 1986 and Domhoff, 1986) and pluralists (including Dahl, 1986) both display an interest in ideology, which must be explored among the subordinate to move analysis of power into the third dimension. The elitists, however, anticipate how it works and what its effects will be. That elitism is not inevitable as elitists assume it to be is a common criticism (Parkin, 1985). They leave explanation inadequate, in terms of the elite's wishes to justify their policies which promote growth. The pluralists find the problems of studying ideology to be "enormously difficult" (Dahl, 1986: 192). Others have avoided these problems in their analysis of the role of ideology. For example, Gaventa (1980: 15) looked at the way "myths, language and symbols are shaped or manipulated in power processes" and went on to examine the power processes in which possible actions are seen to be inappropriate or unwise, are misdirected or are not perceived at all. Rose (1988) focused on local cultural attributes, including neighbourliness. Molotch stepped in this direction, or at least opened the door for the elitists, when he proposed that land-based interests stimulate and use concern for land values. This happens with "... the emergence of concern for an aggregate of parcels: one sees that one's future is bound to the future of the larger area, that the future enjoyment of financial benefit flowing from the general future of the proximate aggregate of parcels. When this occurs, there is that 'we feeling' which bespeaks of community" (Molotch, 1976: 311). That "we feeling" will be explored in the review of Australian studies, after concepts are developed as landmarks to guide exploration of them. The concepts emanate from six themes, being action and determination, structural resources, interests, resistance, arenas, and issues and outcomes.
Action and Determination

The lack of conceptual tools to bridge agency and structure is illustrated in the work of elitists who, in seeking causal models, acknowledged structure but analysed individuals. The poverty of the elitist approach is best illustrated when one considers the possibility that an elite need not be an identifiable group of individuals as it "disappears behind a veil of ideas that seem to come from the society as a whole, and seem to represent a consensus" (Connell and Irving, 1985: 349). This goes further than Saunders (1979: 324) finding that business and local politicians acted in a partnership in which plans and ideas moved "like osmosis". They may not have been conscious of their own level of organisation. Moreover, the elite may be created by forces over which its members have little control (Lukes, 1986: 13; Stone, 1980: 979).

Empirical exploration of the second and third dimensions of power confronts identification of structural determinants in the behaviour of individuals. Matters relating to the problem have been raised many times, such as in Barbalet (1985, 1987), Gaventa (1980), Giddens (1979), Hindess (1976) and Saunders (1979). There is no ready solution. The search for cause inevitably leads back to the individual level. There is nothing to gain from substituting a purely structural explanation for an individualistic one when we need to account for both structure and agency. Means to separate power from individuals are, however, still required. If power can be exercised without conscious intention of agents, the focus of analysis moves away from intentions and actions to enablement of actions.

Structural Resources

As Polsby (1979) required, locating the source of power demands more than location of those who benefit from social relations. It is necessary to identify some feature of their social position which enables them to exercise power. A concept of structural resources offers a means of such identification. As Barbalet (1987: 1) mentioned, the fact that action requires resources is axiomatic throughout sociology, and the role of resources in power relations has long been
recognised. However, complexity is encountered when the concept of resources is applied to the 'mobilisation of bias'; that is, when it is recognised that resources may be created in social interaction, in the construction, maintenance and change of knowledge. Resources can include financial capacity, size of organisation membership and community dependence on it, status of individuals in the eyes of the community and political ideology (Bachrach and Baratz, 1970: 55). This inventory is extended below.

The role of resources was set out by Lukes.

"The mere fact that a person or elite or class may gain when others are significantly affected is not in itself significant: that I benefit from others' interests being harmed, or from their freedom being limited or from their gaining less than they might or from the securing of benefits accruing to all is not enough to show that I have power over others. But if my resources or my social position or my actions are causally related to such outcomes that I so benefit, as compared to others, can often be the guiding reason for singling me (or my group or class) out as a powerholder." (Lukes, 1986: 14)

This again demonstrates Lukes' desire to attribute power to actors, an extension of the elitist-pluralist imperative, but it also clears a path that leads away from individualism by looking at the structural properties held by individuals. It suggests a means of satisfying Polsby's (1979) requirement that power not be equated with benefit from a social relation. Resources are a component of cause of which power is an effect. This clarifies the query raised by Debnam (1975) when he pointed out that power cannot be treated as both. That is, it cannot be equated with enabling resources or beneficial/detrimental effects.

Attention to resources should move the primary focus of the analysis of power relations away from the wishes of actors toward a structural analysis (Barbalet, 1987). As Giddens cautioned, power and resources are not identical, and resources should not, as suggested by Layder (1985: 132), become the sole object of study. "Resources are the media through which power is exercised, and structures of domination reproduced . . ." (Giddens, 1979: 91). The study of
power becomes the study of resources as the availability of the media of power relations, and the ways in which the availability, use and reproduction of resources structure social relations. This leaves a key role for the study of action, for power presupposes the making of decisions by actors, without observation of which, the products of power and its reproduction could not be observed.

The concept of resources can be applied to each of Lukes' three dimensions, but important theoretical problems arise in the second and third. In the first dimension when power is balanced, resources may also be balanced. In the second dimension, those who are able to set the political agenda possess the resources that enable them to do so. Those resources may consist of knowledge, capital or some other property. In the third dimension, resources are located in the belief system, the ideology, of subordinate actors implicated in the power relationship.

Resources can have both material and ideal elements; ownership of property and beliefs about property-related institutions being contrasting but obviously related examples. Giddens (1979) distinguished between rules and resources, rules being ideological elements while resources have a material component. Barbalet (1987) found these concepts in Giddens to merge, but at an empirical level, rules are important features of political institutions, which may be used as resources by actors in power relations. As Newton (1979) observed, lack of attention to institutional rules has plagued behavioural power studies. Rules should not be overlooked as resources when they "... generate a bias in favour of some sections of the population and against others, and the causal responsibility for this bias can be traced to those who operate the rules" (Saunders, 1979: 60).

The ideological resource bestowed by the beliefs and values of the weak be conceptualised as legitimacy. Legitimacy is a possession of superior individuals and groups in stratification systems. It is a structural feature which can be seen to be a product of social psychological processes based on material inequalities (Della Fave, 1986). While being a possession of the superior group, it is constructed in social interaction among subordinates. The concept of
legitimacy has wide application in systems of social stratification, but it offers shallow theoretical insight into ideological resources in power relations. Ideological resources can take many forms. Legitimacy is a sufficient, but may not be a necessary condition, for the maintenance of power relations. A regime may be illegitimate and still powerful when its subjects are apathetic. Ideological resources can extend beyond legitimacy.

**Interests**

Interests are the driving force of actor choice, and hence demand explanation in analysis of power relations. They are, however, highly problematic in the move out of the first dimension. Unlike resources, the interests of actors in power relations cannot be indisputably specified. They can, however, be subjected to analysis in order to build an understanding of power relations.

Inasmuch as resources are means of action, interests are ends. They may provide actors with reasons (Hindess, 1986b: 115), motivating application of resources. They are the unfettered engine of power in the first dimension. The pluralist approach assumes that interests expressed in political arenas are the only interests which actors possess, because they are the only interests which are empirically detectable (Dunleavy, 1980: 48). Interests are assumed to equal wants (Saunders, 1979: 34). Under this assumption, observable interests can explain action, but not power relations. The second dimension reveals a mechanism in which expression of some interests, although recognised by their adherents, are removed from political arenas by powerful actors. In the third dimension the assumption that interests are recognisable by their adherents is cast aside (Hindess, 1982: 500). This is illustrated by, for example, Therborn's (1980) "sense of representation", which suggests that the ruled may accept unquestioningly that the rulers represent their interests when in objective fact they do not.

The notion of power in the third dimension depends on the possibility that expressed interests are not real interests (Knights and Willmott, 1982: 578). Empirical recognition of real interests, therefore, may be a process of imputation, and can suffer under imposition of values by the
observer. This rules out rational objective analysis of power relations in the third dimension. "On Lukes' account there may be as many analyses of power relations as there are normatively specific conceptions of interests. . . the analysis of those power relations must depend on the social values of the investigator" (Hindess, 1976: 330). At the same time it rules out refutation. This problem pervades the second dimension as well, where identification of the powerful also depends on observation of conflict of interest that can only be inferred (Merelman, 1968).

There have been several heroic attempts to circumvent this problem, including those among the work of Benton (1981), Betts (1986), Dunleavy (1976) and Falkemark (1982). However, as Knights and Willmott (1982) suggested, the imposition of values will remain as an intractable problem in identification of the effects of interests in the third dimension. There are two complementary courses of action which may obviate the problem. One is to boldly state one's own values and pragmatically apply a *verstehen* approach. The other involves becoming more precise about the place of interests in the analysis of power relations.

The pragmatic approach has found favour in empirical studies. For example, Crenson (1971) felt he could assume that it would be in anybody's interests not to be poisoned by air pollution. Gaventa (1980: 26) took a similar approach, drawing on Frey's (1971: 1097) assertion that one could expect non-issues where no action is taken to ameliorate inequality in distribution of some commonly, avowedly valued good. Bell et al (1976) and Newby et al (1978) adopted the same position. Saunders (1979) tied this method to the allocative activity of local government, in terms of interests in allocation of benefits, such as community facilities and environmental amenity, and allocation of costs, such as rate payments and location of nuisances. What appears problematic in theory may not be so in empirical application.

The second approach to the problem of interests suggests that it is worth questioning what one would want to know about interests and what that knowledge might enable research to achieve. Interests may lead to starting points for research, rather than being starting points themselves. Interests are themselves products of social conditions. Adherence of actors to interests is contingent upon social conditions, objectives chosen on the basis of interests may be
incompatible, and interests of an actor as a member of one group may be incompatible with his/her interests as a member of another (Hindess, 1982: 507). Interests, perceived or real, are themselves subject to explanation in the social conditions prevailing.

The focus of research should then be moved onto the ways and means of objective selection and away from attempts to identify real interests and explain why they are ignored (Hindess, 1982: 509). Hindess offers a concept of assessment to denote the process in which actors calculate, pose objectives and locate themselves and others in relation to those objectives (1986b: 119).4 The greater importance of studying the process of assessment of interests is illustrated by Fasenfest (1986), who found a situation in which the interests pursued by local government were objectively perceived by the people of the city, but were pursued in a direction which imposed substantial costs. The problem posed lies not so much in perception of interests, but in the assessment of benefits and costs when costs may be discounted by the powerful. This serves as a reminder that even the powerful might inaccurately assess the costs and benefits of pursuit of their interests, or they may not recognise their interests at all. It also draws attention to the possibility of the double-bind, or an encounter with conflicting interests.

Resistance

Power relations are not necessarily either absolute or perennial. Subordinates are capable of independent thought and action; socialisation does not necessarily work perfectly. Rulers are dependent on the ruled (Latour, 1986), who build structural resources (Knights and Willmott, 1985), but there is no necessity for them to choose to do so. As Merelman (1968) observed, 'mobilisation of bias' is assumed to flow downwards. However, the ways in which the ruled might choose not to build resources for the rulers may be limited.

Resistance implies actors identifying interests which are not their real interests. Knights and Willmott (1982, 1985) used a concept of individual identity seeking to explain how resistance to the power of rulers fails to reach its potential because actors, in seeking self-identity, ignore or
deny the interdependence of power relations. They merely find a new identity which can be accommodated within existing power relations.

The resources of superiors can, however, be threatened and demolished. Therborn (1980: 106) suggested that this occurs when the "disorganization of legitimacy" extends to the "apparatuses of rule". Therborn refers not to the denial of the ideas of the rulers, but rather to the efficacy of those ideas in the machinery of government. I interpret this as an observation that opposition to ideas may occur without effect, but if those ideas are no longer seen to provide workable organised government, then a sense of representation, acquiescence and apathy are no longer resources of the rulers.

In a system of structured domination, effective resistance demands the use of resources which are only available outside the system (Barbalet, 1985: 541). It is axiomatic that in a structure of domination, the resources of rule are always in the hands of the rulers, for a power relationship can only work one way at a time. Barbalet (1985) pointed to the difference in resources among actors, and the social conditions in which those resources are created, as the key to understanding resistance. Resistance is not a lesser form of power resources, but is rather another phenomenon of the social system. Analysis of power relations may be focused on resistance, as suggested in the writing of Foucault (1983). This provides an escape from the determinism implied by emphasis on structural resources. But it is meaningless without first understanding construction, maintenance and use of resources, something which the community power literature, with its lack of attention to ideological resources, has not done adequately.

Arena

The concept of arena refers to the situation of power struggle in its historical and institutional contexts. Hindess (1982) proposed such a concept, referring to "the conditions of a particular struggle or set of struggles, to the modes of action specific to it (voting, argument, withdrawal of labour, etc.) and to the limitations on possible outcomes (e.g. in the case of parliamentary
struggles possible outcomes are legislation, changes in government policy or the composition of
government, etc.)" (Hindess, 1982: 501). In proposing the concept, Hindess appealed for
avoidance of oversimplification. This appeal may be frustrating for theoretical reductionists, but
for purposes of empirical application it is almost axiomatic.

Hindess's concern for arenas could be seen to parallel Giddens' concern for "locale". Consideration of relationships between "locale" and "arena" may be useful. In the context of a
community power study, locale is a much broader concept, covering the economic, social and
political settings of interaction over space and time. Arena refers to political institutions, the rules
of which may be made into resources for some at the expense of others. Arenas are produced
and reproduced in the context of power relations in locales. For example, the economic and
social history of a geographical/political entity may contribute to construction of arenas which
provide resources differentially available among actors. Choices of means of deployment of
resources are limited by the institutional arena within which political relations are enacted. Arena
and locale may be interdependent. The institutional arena may have been set up in part, in whole
or not at all by forces within the locale; the boundaries of the locale may have been influenced by
institutional change which was enacted in an arena. Arenas may be part of locale, in which
structure is produced and reproduced.

Arenas should not be seen as only institutional elements. They may have associated social
conditions in locale giving rise to their own ideological climates. In the context of this study, the
ideological climate pervading local government, similar to that identified by Dunleavy (1980), is
especially important.

Issues and Outcomes

Outcomes of issues are the intended or unintended products of choices made by actors in
relations with other actors drawing on resources and using them in arenas. All theoretical writing
on power relations implicitly or explicitly adopts a concept of outcomes. Without specification of
outcomes, power relations have no meaning. An actor may be found to possess vast resources, but without analysis of issues, actions and outcomes, the nature of the actor's power relation with others will be undefined.

The concept of issues poses several problems, the classic among them being selection of issues and non-issues for analysis. For issue selection, the problem is selection criteria (Frey, 1971; Forward, 1969); for non-issues the problem is the infinity of possibilities (Debnam, 1975; Buller and Hoggart, 1986). When the subject of power research is social process, issue selection is not such an essential problem as it is when the objective is to identify powerful individuals. Following Crenson (1971), the process of decision, or in his case, non-decision making, is critical, rather than the issue itself. Study should proceed from analysis of who benefits to analysis of causal factors, making awareness of outcomes of issues important, but not the primary focus of study (Falkemark, 1982). Following Lukes (1986), the main criterion for selection of issues becomes their ability to demonstrate the power of the powerful. As Dunleavy (1976) observed, such issues are not necessarily extraordinary in the public view. Power relations may be maintained in routine matters.

Resolution of these problems at an empirical level ultimately falls back on the same pragmatism which has obviated the difficulties posed by specification of subjective interests. Gaventa (1980) adopted such an approach, again drawing on Frey's (1971) suggestion that lack of attempts to remedy glaring inequality in something valued indicates a non-issue. The point that non-issues may become issues, made by Debnam (1975), is largely semantic, but it does indicate the need for observation over a period of time.

Dunleavy (1976) noted that outcomes of one issue may contribute to the process of resolution of the next. Outcomes may structure beliefs in such a way as to create resources, or facilitate the creation of resources for one group rather than another. This invites a dynamic analysis of issues, as was carried out by Fasenfest (1986). Participant observation promises intimate knowledge of individual actors and the social conditions in which they learn and act. In moving out of the first dimension, the taken-for-granted aspects of outcomes are crucial, and they can
only be revealed in study of the meanings of interests, issues and outcomes to actors.

A Taxonomy

The concepts of resources, interests, resistance, arenas, issues and outcomes provide landmarks which can guide the empirical analysis of power relations through Lukes' three dimensions. Resources are the means which enable power to be exercised. Interests are the ends which actors seek, or might seek, to attain. Resistance is a response to subordination without threat to power relations. Arenas are the institutions within which power struggles are enacted over issues; and outcomes of issues are the products of power relations. These concepts will enable search for and identification of the causal elements of power relations.

The concepts will help to dissect observed behaviour in such a way that when the conceptual components are analysed in relation to each other, they may be used to specify the nature and causes of power relations. In the third dimension, and to a lesser extent in the second, this means tracing the origins and effect of ideology. In the second dimension, ideology plays a more specialised role. It offers a resource to the powerful which allows them to set an agenda, but it may not be the only resource. Arenas may also contribute to the agenda setting process. The remainder of this Chapter explores the empirical literature on rural community power in Australia in search of previous experience in use of these concepts.

Some Australian Studies

The Australian community studies literature offers some experience which may help to plan further exploration of the three dimensions of power relations discussed above. Australian sociology and political science have not shown anything like the American enthusiasm for local power studies. Nor has there been much attention focused on local government within these disciplines, as there has in Britain. The Australian community power studies literature is
therefore sparse and fragmented.

The reasons for Australian inactivity may lie in erroneous but common perceptions of Australian local government as weak and uninteresting. (The errors in this belief will be demonstrated in Chapter Five.) Nevertheless, local power relations have attracted some attention in Australian community studies, and there has been a minor elitist-pluralist debate.

The relevant Australian studies fall into three groups. The first, which I call 'holistic', consists of three studies which analysed social relations in a locality or localities. Power relations are not the focus of their analysis, but some useful points are made by them in passing. The second group, which I call 'method', are, as implied, studies of the 'community as method' type. They are three in number. Power has some importance to each. The third group consists of the protagonists in Australia's elitist-pluralist debate. There are four such studies. Five of the eleven studies to be considered are unpublished theses. Four of those five constitute the 'elitist-pluralist' group.

The Holistic Studies

The 'holistic' group consists of McIntyre and McIntyre (1944), Oeser and Emery (1957) and Poiner (1982). These studies are 'holistic' in that they each took a broad focus on social relations in a locality, or in the case of the McIntyres, many localities. The McIntyres studied 180 Victorian towns having populations between 250 and 10 000, and a further thirty smaller towns. They interviewed "ordinary" and "prominent" people and found at the same time elitism in local politics and "cynicism" and "disillusionment" towards local government, which was seen to be unrepresentative, and ruled by a few, or even just one individual. This early study preceded even the beginnings of the American debates. Despite not seeking evidence for either elitism or pluralism, it has, obviously unwittingly, come down on the side of elitism.

The McIntyres found the powerful to have an ideological resource akin to Therborn's (1980)
concept of "inevitability", in that local government electors believed that "It doesn't matter who gets in, one is just as bad as another" (McIntyre and McIntyre, 1944: 116). Oxley (1978: 14), however, examined the McIntyres' findings on local organisations, and found their evidence to show that each town had a small group of leaders, "but they did not necessarily unite to form integrated ruling cliques". Unfortunately, without detailed information on the processes of politics in the McIntyres' towns, the significance of integration or non-integration of ruling cliques cannot be assessed. These small groups of leaders may or may not have been ideologically in tune with each other and acting contrary to the interests of others. Moreover, we know nothing about the processes which created and maintained this pattern of leadership. Perhaps more importantly, Oxley's interpretation serves as a warning that the place of local government as the arena for power relations has to be established.

The work of Oeser and Emery (1957) is at the same time promising and disappointing. It is promising in that it offers an insight into beliefs as well as power structures. It is disappointing in that, as Oxley (1978: 13) felt, they offer little evidence to support their view. Again, power relations were a very small component of the study.

Oeser and Emery studied one town which had a population of 500. It was similar to Cowra in that its economy was based on wheat production and its sphere of influence extended for about twenty miles. The town's political structure is depicted as thoroughly dominated by an elite of farmers. As an example of the exercise of their domination, Oeser and Emery stated that the farmers "can enforce a rigorous censorship on the public expression of political views" (1957: 32). They did so to keep political discussion out of local currency. "Politics are seen as mainly concerned with national or state issues, not local, and as mainly an activity for parliamentarians or would-be parliamentarians (except for the three-yearly intervention of the electors). Thus defined, politics have no place in the local community" (ibid).

This view of politics as being defined by a powerful group, and from the very meagre evidence offered, possibly by the less powerful as well, suggests an exercise of power in Lukes' second dimension, in that the farmers are able to set the local political agenda, and in the third dimension,
in that their ability to do so rests on the beliefs of their subordinates. Oeser and Emery imply that some political activity may be in the interests of the less powerful. They found "a widespread belief in and acceptance of the superiority of the existing political system, a belief which is strong enough to prevent any interpretation of class relations within the community in terms other than community status and personal differences, and which supports the parcelling out of their class interests to the parliamentary institutions" (ibid).

Unfortunately the discussion is conceptually imprecise and the evidence thin or non-existent. Oeser and Emery offered only one instance of expression of the belief. "During the eleven days immediately preceding the 1948 election only one political comment was heard in the public bar of the hotel - this was immediately quashed by the hotel keeper with the statement 'no politics here'" (ibid). It is not clear that this amounts to use by the dominant group of their resource. It was probably only intended to indicate its existence. One should be wary of reading too much into Oeser and Emery, but at least they offer some evidence for distaste for 'politics' in local affairs in a rural community, a distaste which could become an ideological resource for a powerful group.

Poiner (1982) is far more sophisticated, conceptually and empirically, but is little more a study of community power than either of the two studies so far described. It is, however, a valuable study of local social processes, including gender and work relations. The study of gender relations has been, as observed by Bryson and Wearing (1985), unusual in Australian rural community studies until the relatively recent work of Poiner (1982), James, (1981) and Williams (1981). Poiner had little prospect for the study of community power because her locality, a rural area centred on a town of a few hundred people in southern New South Wales, did not contain a significant local political arena, such as a shire or municipal council, in which the enactment of power relations could be observed. But like Oeser and Emery, Poiner has suggested potential insights into rural community power relations.

Poiner's work has a strong focus on ideology, particularly ideology that is distinctly rural. Ideology was central to her understanding of the local social structure. Poiner was much
concerned with hegemony as it was associated with rural class relations. She implicitly discussed power in the third dimension, but did so in a more general application than that of local politics.

Poiner placed great weight on a 'rural idyll', a system of beliefs which romanticises rural life, finding deep intrinsic value in those aspects of it which are uniquely rural. She proposed that the "rural idyll expresses the social consciousness of a land owning class and therefore constitutes an element of hegemony" (1982: 34). The rural idyll selectively downplays, ignores or reforms aspects of rural life, building an ideology which channels benefits to the propertied class, by uniting people with conflicting interests beneath it.

This process appears to rely heavily on social value universally placed on the acquisition of property and the notion that the rural life is the good life. Under the 'rural idyll' and its associated status structure, property symbolises that which is good and can be achieved by hard work and perseverance. The ideology then becomes a medium of power for the propertied. Notions of a 'rural idyll' aside, the ideology could be interpreted as localism. Commitment to the 'community' was found "even on occasion to bridge class and status differences" (1982: 37), as the rural idyll worked as a binding force. The way in which localism may be a resource available to the powerful is illustrated by the observation that "even members of the Labor Party appear to be proud of [the local conservative member of the New South Wales parliament] as a district notable" (1982: 48). Their interest in opposing a political adversary is in this respect obscured. Unfortunately we do not know that this ideology was used as a resource by a powerful group, because we know nothing of local political processes.

Together, the 'holistic' studies suggest power relations mediated by ideology, in which people who have property have at least potential ideological resources at their disposal. Those resources include a sense of inevitability about the domination of a few; a belief that politics belong elsewhere, inhibiting discussion and consequently political action; and localism, which raises the value of local attachment and clouds perception of objective interests. Evidence for the first two is, however, weak, and the relationship between the 'rural idyll' and the political dimension of
localism is not made clear. It could only be made clear by description of the process through which it is made available to and used by the powerful in local politics. The 'holistic' studies all suggest elitist structures, mediated by ideology, but they offer thin evidence and no analysis of the processes in which such ideologies and their associated structures are created, used and maintained.

The Method Studies

The relevant method studies are Oxley (1978), Wild (1974a) and Wild (1983). They post-date the most frantic period of elitist-pluralist warfare in the United States, and were therefore influenced by it. Oxley (1978) is the only one of this group to come down against an elitist interpretation, such as the American elitist school would provide.

"Local influentials of all degrees of importance are essentially autonomous; they negotiate and form alliances but are not involved in any all-embracing hierarchy of command. The united clique in ultimate control of all local affairs simply does not exist" (Oxley, 1978: 142).

Oxley based this conclusion on observation of the passage of local issues, his informants not identifying an elite, and his analysis of the resources of the local "high-stratum" people (ibid).

Oxley studied two towns in a Shire in the central tablelands of New South Wales. Two thirds of the Shire's population of about 5 000 lived in the "Two Towns", one being industrial and the other servicing the surrounding grazing district. Oxley recognised the Shire Council as an important arena of local politics, but as his study was about egalitarianism, as indicated in the operation of local organisations, the Shire Council was one among several foci of his analysis.

Nevertheless, the Shire Council was sufficiently important for Oxley to analyse power relations within it. He found it to be pluralistic, with councillors bowing to popular will, and the Council "not covertly controlled by its local bureaucrats or by any self-appointed clique" (1978: 73). Oxley attributed this to a smooth-running democratic process, in contrast to the findings of
McIntyre and McIntyre (1944) and Oeser and Emery (1957). Oxley's observed democratic process worked because the business of Council was open and offered no opportunity for the advancement of individual or group interests, electors were neither apathetic nor had a sense of inevitability, councillors were budding politicians who did not want to upset their constituents, and they did not wish to risk loss of public esteem which was the main reward of office (1978: 74).

The image of local government which is developed with Oxley's discussion of local issues enhances this interpretation, but it does leave unanswered some important questions which would be posed by the Lukes three dimensional view of power. We cannot be certain either that consensus is not aided by an ability of the Council to keep controversy under the carpet. Nor can we be certain that the definition of popular will is not in the hands of one group, and exercised by them at the expense of another. We cannot assess the possibility that power was exercised in such ways because Oxley was not setting out to refute that they were so used. Wild (1981) was dissatisfied with Oxley's evidence, but the target for criticism of Oxley might more fruitfully be his theoretical approach, just as such criticism of Dahl (1961) was used by Bachrach and Baratz (1970).

Oxley offers evidence from a local legend that the "Two Towns" were not always so pluralistic. The legend told how the Shire Council, which had been dominated by wealthy graziers who neglected the industrial town, was brought to order by a militant union and Labor Party member who, after gaining a seat on the Council, raised the industrial town's interests to the fore. The grazier elite was overthrown and the Council operated pluralistically.

Oxley's interpretation of this legend, which he assured the reader was based on fact, suggests more than resistance. Oxley noted that people from all social strata of the industrial town "tell the story with equal approval and pride." He concluded that "It is the success story of a town just as much as of a stratum. It supports an industrial (versus rural) identity which cuts across town strata; and which puts the grazing elite outside rather than above" (1978: 94). The power structure was altered and presumably not restored.
Oxley's use of "counterclaims to honour" (1978: 49) offers a comparison. In the legend the graziers were superordinate and the industrial townspeople subordinate in power relations, yet the industrial townspeople's interpretation merely separated the two sets of interests, rather than counterposing them. In the townspeople's interpretation of the legend, they found an identity with each other, across strata. This could be interpreted as localism, but in Oxley's work it is an indicator of egalitarianism, which denies, or rather, balances ideology associated with structural fact in terms of status. It is therefore a parallel to resistance, which seeks to alter a subjective aspect of power relations without challenging the structure on which those relations are based. Status inequality can survive egalitarianism, just as power inequality can survive resistance. Oxley's work offers two important reminders. One is that the place of local government in power structures is problematic, and the other is that power structures are not immutable, across either time or space.

Wild (1974a) offered a very different view. He identified a power structure in which local government was central, and which he interpreted as elitist. Wild's principal concern was with application of a Weberian model of stratification, that which uses the familiar conceptual trinity of class, status and power. It was therefore in large part a community power study, despite Wild's particular concern to explore the ways each of the three conceptual threads are woven into the stratification fabric. Its emphasis was on structure rather than process, although some insights into process were offered.

Although drawing elitist conclusions, Wild's definitional approach to power is closer to that of Dahl than that of Lukes. Drawing his definition from Weber, he approached power as the ability of some to exercise their will over others. The town (in New South Wales' southern highlands, population about 5,000) which he selected for study had a clearly hierarchical social structure.

For his exploration of power, he used an extensive analysis of reputations and positions as well as study of local political issues. He did all this in order to "isolate the major influentials in local politics" (1974a: 146). He identified 'influentials' in reputational and positional surveys, and
from observation of issues, finding that "the reputed influence or potential power assigned to them is actually wielded" (1974a: 179). Wild found that when the ultimate decisions were made on local issues, a small group revealed in the reputation and position analysis consistently had its way. Wild had prefaced his search for 'influentials' with analysis of local class and status systems. He was then able to claim that 'influentials' came from the high status groups, being local employers and a group of wealthy people who had strong extra-local connections. These he labelled "bosses" and "Grange-ites" respectively.

On his way to identification of these powerful individuals, Wild observed the exercise of power in Lukes' second and third dimensions. These observations are reported in Wild's treatment of the operation of local government, which he found to be elitist in itself, and in his analysis of local political issues which all at some stage involved local government. The Municipal Council was controlled principally by a clique of "bosses", among whom the Mayor and the Town Clerk were prominent. The tactics adopted in Council business by the Town Clerk and the Mayor offer illustrations of power processes in the second and third dimensions, as they sought to silence opposition by rendering it unlikely, rather than actually impotent. They ruled by consensus.

The 'second dimension' tactics were essentially those of the Town Clerk, although he was acting in close alliance with the Mayor. Wild observed that he had three such tactics of agenda setting: simply leaving potentially threatening or controversial matters off Council agendas, putting matters before the Council in such a way that the aldermen interpreted his wishes as the most desirable course of action, and keeping matters which might embarrass the Council off the agenda to protect his own legitimacy. If the Town Clerk and Mayor decided that matters should not get beyond Saunders' (1979) first non-decision making filter, they did not. It seems that much of the Council's business was 'non-issues'.

The second of the Town Clerk's tactics suggests power exercised in Lukes' third dimension. The Town Clerk was able to use the values of the aldermen to have matters resolved his way. Wild offered an example of a town planning decision, made as the Town Clerk wished after he had misrepresented a planning proposal as something which the aldermen would not desire. His
knowledge of their values enabled him to use those values as a resource, in order to ensure that the aldermen would make the decision he wanted.

The Mayor's power relation with the aldermen, as interpreted by Wild, appears also to be operating in the third dimension. The Mayor drew on the value which the aldermen placed on maintaining consensus within the Council. Wild found his direction of the agenda to be carried out in a "forthright" manner. When debate arose he cut it short either by asking for an alderman to frame a motion, or by stating what the motion would be, from which point the motion would be quickly put to the meeting and carried. Wild interpreted this as direction of a "voluntary consensus" (1974a: 141), implying that the Mayor used the aldermen's wish to avoid conflict to gain his will.

The Mayor clearly gained through having his way in terms of preserving his relation with the aldermen which allowed him to make decisions without the approval of the aldermen. To demonstrate an exercise of power in the third dimension by the Mayor, it would also be necessary to show that the power relation between the Mayor and the aldermen was not operating in the interests of the aldermen. Wild does not explicitly say that this was so, being more concerned to establish the nature of the Council's decision making as background to his discussion of issues, but it would seem likely that the aldermen would have been better off not to have virtually assumed the Mayor to be infallible. Wild found that the Mayor's "directing of a voluntary consensus is a common occurrence at every meeting" (1974a: 141). He was able to use the consensus ideal.

The ways in which the "Grange-ites" were able to exercise dominance in local political issues also offers an example of power in the third dimension. Wild used the concept of dominance to imply that the "Grange-ites" exerted their influence without a direct role in local politics. Their view of what "Bradstow" should be prevailed when it appeared that their interests may have been threatened. In the conclusion to his analysis of some local political issues, Wild wrote:

"Although the bosses influential clique runs local politics the Grange-ites
and gentry still have a dominating influence... More important than this however is the pervasive influence of their ideology of the sort of place Bradstow should be. The town clerk amongst others supports the Grange-ite view that it ought to remain a rural village with supposedly English traditions free from industry and manufacturing. To the present they have been successful in achieving their end." (1974a: 180)

The Grange-ites' and bosses' interests were at times opposed, usually related to matters of town development, such as the establishment of an army depot mentioned above, which the bosses wanted for the sake of business, but the Grange-ites did not want, in fear of spoiling their residential amenity. The Grange-ites won consistently, largely because their ideals were shared by the Mayor and the Town Clerk. In the case of the army depot, all the aldermen wanted it, but they sought a compromise which would not spoil 'Grange'. The Grange-ites' ideals prevailed because they defined the type of environment everybody wanted. Wild had not set out to explore the 'third dimension', but his analysis has offered useful insights into how such power relations might operate.

Wild (1983) is a power study in some of the clothing of a 'community as object' study. It is not a 'community as object' study because community was used as a conceptual tool rather than as the object of study. It is a power study because it seeks an understanding of how power relations changed. It analyses a process through which power exercised in the second dimension was threatened and eventually overcome, temporarily at least, by people who had been subordinate. This time Wild is not principally concerned with identifying the powerful. Hence it is not a power study in the elitist-pluralist mould. It was carried out in the early 1980s after some of the heat had dissipated from the elitist-pluralist debate, and Bachrach and Baratz (1970) and Lukes (1974) had helped to broaden the field of vision for community power research.

The study concentrates on one local political issue containing strong external factors which arose in a Shire with a little over two thousand people in rural Victoria. This issue arose when the State Government proposed to put a toxic waste dump in the Shire. The Shire Council agreed to the proposal, on the condition that safety precautions be taken and some financial and other concessions were offered. Some local residents became concerned and formed a committee to
protest. They gained substantial local and external support. Significantly, their support included people of high reputation in the broader state and national context and some who had considerable technical expertise. The issue raged in the Melbourne as well as the local press. The Shire Council stuck to its position, but the State Government gave way, deciding not to locate the dump where it was obviously not wanted by local people.

Wild was principally concerned to account for the strength and success of the protest group. To do so he called upon concepts developed by Schmalenbach (1961), being 'community' as relationships of tradition, 'communion' as relationships of emotion, and 'society' as relationships based on individualism. He used these concepts to analyse the process through which the protest group formed when local tradition was threatened, how it was bound into a fighting force by emotions under threat from an apparently aloof and even hostile Shire Council, and how it disintegrated when the crisis had passed. This approach moved Wild far from the more static pigeon-holing of his earlier study. The concepts of 'community' and 'communion' introduced an ideological element, this time as resources of the subordinate group. They are reminiscent of the development of localism in Poiner (1982).

The power relation which was threatened in this issue lay in Lukes' second dimension. Issues did not arise in this community because the Shire Council contained them. It operated in a consensus mode similar to that identified by Wild (1974a), and was also dominated by a small group of councillors. Non-decision making and secrecy were normal behaviour for the Council. Wild attributed this to its nature as little more than an administrative arm of the State Government and its desire to find a safe course through the minefield of potential conflict between State and local interests.

Wild also found the Council to be elitist in relation to its constituents. In doing so he applied a broader meaning to elitism than the more specialised concept he had used in his earlier study which drew on the concepts of the elitist-pluralist debate. In his analysis of the relations among councillors, he used the elitist-pluralist concept of a small clique as identified by reputations.
In his study of relations between the Council and its constituents he analysed the socio-economic characteristics of the councillors and, as McIntyre and McIntyre (1944) had done, declared them to be dissimilar, as a group, to the population of the Shire. The councillors were found to be of high status, which Wild claimed "indicates the elite nature of their social position" (1983: 41). Wild used this result to illustrate one way in which the councillors were different from their constituents, and would therefore come to be seen as opponents when it became apparent that the interests in which the councillors were acting were not the interests of their constituents. The history of this Council might show that it had not always acted in the interests of all its constituents, while it prevented issues from arising and its constituents were not aware of their interests, or, if power was exercised in the third dimension, while they believed that their interests and those of the Council were identical. As Wild only studied one issue, such ideas must remain speculation.

Through this issue, the Council followed its usual non-decision making course, and drew on the resources offered by its technical and administrative functions. "The council saw itself as going along with rational-legal procedures, not making a decision for or against and in the meantime attempting to secure the best deal possible from the [State] Government" (1983: 113). It decided to "wait and see" (1983: 128). The Council lost the issue because it could not stop it arising, and once arisen, its pursuers found resources to match those of the Council. Peace's (1985) review of the study makes this point. Peace saw it as a more important offering of the study than that made by Wild's application of the Schmalenbach concepts. I would add the perception of interests by the protesters as an important feature of, and indeed a necessary precursor to, their successful action.

The obvious outcome of the issue was victory to previously powerless people, but there is little evidence that this amounted to more than resistance, for it appears from Wild's account of the outcome that little change arose in the power structure. The only effect on the Council was replacement of one councillor by a member of the protest committee at an election. This would seem unlikely to be sufficient to alter power relations in the locality over a longer term. We are not to know, because the study examined only one issue. It is conceivable that the outcome of
The waste dump issue could have repercussions on later issues. Again we do not know. The single issue offered an opportunity for Wild to fruitfully apply his community - communion - society model, and, granting that he did not set out to do a community power study, frustrating though it be, we should accept the value of the work in its step past the elitist-pluralist debate.

The most valuable offerings of the method studies are largely coincidental by-products of the community study method with its emphasis on participant observation. Wild's studies illustrated power processes in the second and third dimensions. He identified objective resources of technical and administrative expertise, and ideological resources in terms of shared values and belief in consensus. Wild (1983) offered a reminder that resistance does not lead to change, but Oxley's legend showed that change in a power structure is possible. The method studies suggest that some communities are more elitist than others in terms of 'cliqueishness', but it would seem likely that most are elitist in terms of representativeness of local government. They have also moved the analysis of power out of Lukes' first dimension.

The Elitist-Pluralist Studies

Four Australian studies have sought, as their prime objectives, answers to the questions posed by the American elitist-pluralist debate. Like Wild (1974a), they sought to identify the powerful individuals in a locality in order to ascertain the distribution of power. The contrast between this research and that carried out by Wild (1983) is most striking, not because Wild explored power relations, but because his study focused on process rather than static structures.

McNab's (1970) study of a country town of about seven thousand people in southern Queensland concluded that the town had a pluralist power structure, although there is a note of justifiable hesitation in that conclusion. The hesitation is apparent in the interpretation of an essentially quantitative analysis. McNab used the traditional reputation and issue analysis methods to perform the same task as that undertaken by Wild (1974a). That is, they were used to provide evidence of overlap, or lack of overlap, between the powerful individuals nominated in a
reputation survey, and those who could be identified in observation of local political issues.

The pluralist conclusion came from the findings that

1. asking reputed influentials to name leaders failed to shorten the list, although eventually a fifty-eight per cent overlap was found between the two lists
2. the final list of influentials, after analysis of issues, numbered thirty-four, or 0.5 per cent of the town's population
3. comparison of the overlap in the lists of names from each source of data, when compared with results from similar American studies, looked more pluralist than elitist.

The conclusion was reinforced by the observation of local political apathy, so that McNab's conclusion almost denies a power relation, rather than positing a pluralist model of actively competing groups. Disinterest in local issues was indicated by responses to his reputation survey. When McNab asked local knowledgeables to nominate important issues, thirteen per cent said that there were none. Public meetings to discuss issues attracted small crowds, showing nothing like the fervour found by Wild (1983). McNab concluded

"... if an 'elite' rules Nambour (and discussions earlier in this chapter would suggest that this is not so), it does so by default - and, to paraphrase a knowledgeable quoted earlier, "Practically anyone who wants to, can be a leader by taking part- by participating". Second, the potential exists for mass participation to a greater extent than occurs." (1970: 189)

The dangers of taking such observations as evidence justifying pluralist conclusions are precisely those implied by Lukes (1974), following the neo-elitists. That is, a lack of issues does not necessarily imply a lack of conflict. It would seem that in Nambour few people wanted to participate, which would seem to clear the way for a group to take advantage of apathy and exercise power. We cannot be certain that apathy was not a resource used by a powerful group.
Halliwell (1966) used the reputation method to identify forty-four "leaders" who formed a pool from which community groups drew for leadership. The Mayor, a "key" figure, and the City Council (of Rockhampton) "played major roles" in community activities. Halliwell found that community groups seek support from local government, placing the Council in a very prominent position locally.

Halliwell's analysis of reputations is less sophisticated than Wild (1974a, b) and McNab (1970), but some useful observations are apparent at an ideological level. The aldermen were popularly seen to represent the whole town. There were no wards, and localities within the city were unable to pursue their interests through representative aldermen. Halliwell noted (1966: 127) that there were no union members on the Council. They were discouraged by a climate of elitism, and a conservative government's decision not to give railway employees leave to attend Council meetings. A popular idea that the Council acted in the interests of everyone is prominent in Halliwell, accompanied by an observation that while claiming to act in the interests of everyone, the Council was imposing its own values. It is unfortunate that Halliwell did not pursue this point, because it suggests power operating in the third dimension, mediated by an ideology of localism.

Soovere (1967) studied Mount Isa, a "company town" based on mining, in the traditional manner using reputations and decisions. The company so dominated local social processes that the only major issues were industrial matters. Soovere concluded that the town's power structure was elitist, because it was dominated by the company. Local government was weak in comparison, and the Chamber of Commerce did not agitate for change.

A popular avoidance of conflict was perhaps her most useful finding. The local media avoided controversial matters, so denying a voice to anyone who might wish to raise an issue. The unions had been weakened by defeat in a bitter dispute two years prior to the study, and no other organisation mediated company - community relations. Tensions were avoided by "non-debating of issues" (page 98), suggesting the exercise of power in the second dimension. This finding is similar to that of Wild (1974a), but its application is limited by the nature of the "company town"
Pandey (1972) offered direction for rural local power studies, because, although not exploring the ideological aspects of power relations, his work within the elitist-pluralist tradition suggested, and called for, an escape route from it. Pandey had the benefit of the neo-elitist literature surrounding Bachrach and Baratz (1970). His study is intentionally a good illustration of the poverty of the elitist-pluralist debate, for he concluded that future local power studies should delve further into ideology and values.

Pandey studied a town of about twenty thousand people in northern New South Wales. He used the familiar reputation and decision methods to identify "leaders". His concept of elite, identified by observation of political activity, was more like that of Wild (1974a) and Oxley (1978) than that of McIntyre and McIntyre (1944) and Wild's (1983) analysis of council-constituent relations. He carried out a social stratification analysis similar to those of Oxley (1978) and Wild (1974a). Pandey attempted to locate "economic" and "social influentials" and "political leaders". He found that there was much overlap between the social and economic influentials, and political leadership was difficult to objectively define (1972: 171). Behind-the-scenes influences were obscure but potentially important to issue resolution. Comparison of the findings of his decisional and reputational analyses revealed a forty per cent overlap among the names listed (page 206). However, Pandey found the reputation method to identify people who were thought by informants, from apparent association with a high status group, to exercise power when the decision analysis revealed that they had not done so. Pandey concluded that the methods he had used provided an incomplete picture of power structure. Overall, he tentatively concluded that he had found a structure which tended more towards elitism than pluralism, pointing out that "it is erroneous to assume that power structures have to be either pluralistic or elitistic" (page 212).

Pandey had found what he described as a "quasi-elite", being "a small number of people who do not constitute a group in the strict sociological meaning of that term, but rather an aggregate" (page 213). In doing so he opened a Pandora's box for further study, because as he acknowledged, the local political system may or may not give effective expression to all interests.
The "aggregate" may not consciously act in concert to further its own ends, but it may not always allow others to further their interests either. Pandey was constrained by what he had observed. The political system he studied was an active one in which issues arose and were resolved competitively. Local government did not suppress controversy as those found by Wild (1974a, 1983) did.

Pandey acknowledged the possibilities for two-dimensional power brought to light in the work of the neo-elitists. He found that business interests were the most active group in local politics, and, like McNab, he found a general complacency toward local politics. He also acknowledged the role of values and ideology.

"Furthermore, it appears that Barretta's value system favours particular groups and interests. These are the wealthy, those engaged in primary production, and those who support the latter's claims and ideology. These groups have an inbuilt advantage in that they are "naturally" acknowledged as having legitimate claim to exercise influence in the community. On the other hand, those who do not subscribe to the dominant ideology of the community are effectively isolated. They are not regarded as having any legitimate claim to share in community power, and any demands they might make are not likely to be sympathetically received." (page 217)

Pandey's point is not that there was a real consensus, but rather that there was a belief in the existence of such a consensus. Local political dispute was attributed to personality clash rather than conflict of interest. This suggests a parallel with Poiner's (1982) concept which I interpreted above as localism. Poiner found that rural ideology provided a mystifying force which submerged conflict under the belief in a common local interest. Pandey was not able to use participant observation methods as extensively as were, for example, Wild (1974a) and Oxley (1978). Hence ideology and values remained beyond his bailiwick.

Nevertheless, Pandey did discuss the availability and use of ideological resources. He found that acceptance in social circles bestowed political legitimacy. Status was therefore a resource, ideological in that it existed in the idea of the beholder (1972: 111). He acknowledged formal
bureaucratic authority as a resource. He also identified, reminiscent of Oeser and Emery, a belief that there was no local place for politics. This would seem to be associated with the belief in local consensus. Pandey showed how this belief was voiced by rural interests. It was widely accepted and had kept the Labor Party out of an overt role in local government. In a council apparently aligned with business interests, an active Labor group might express some conflicting interests. Pandey indicated that working class interests existed (page 226), but his primary focus on individuals as components of a power structure left no room for the study of such interests and their role or non-role in local politics. However, Pandey acknowledged the need for study of rural ideology. Analysis of individuals' locations in a power structure would lose much of any value it had as explanation of the structure beside an observation that the forces creating that structure were mediated by ideology. Pandey's work calls loudly for the study of interests and ideology rather than the identification of individuals, as the protagonists in the elitist-pluralist debate were want to do. He recognised that the next agenda for community power studies would include examination of how ideologies and values are created and maintained, and used in local politics.

Conclusion

Perhaps the most striking feature of the Australian empirical community power literature is the similarity between its development and that of theory. Both have revealed the elitist-pluralist debate to be sterile, and both seek exploration of Lukes' second and third dimensions of power. Together the problem they pose for students of community power is that of seeking evidence to indicate (or, more strictly, to refute the non-existence of) the theoretically proposed relations of power in all three of Lukes' dimensions, and if power relations are found, analysing power processes in order to define their antecedents.

The holistic and elitist-pluralist studies, as well as the method studies, have indicated varying degrees of elitism, in terms of 'cliqueishness'. They also found a common lack of representativeness in local government. At the level of overt issues, it would seem that business
interests are represented and business people are usually in a good position to exert their will, or possibly with or without conscious effort, gain from local power structures. We know little about the processes in which this may or may not occur, because the focus of study has largely been placed on individuals rather than interests and resources.

Ideology moves us into the second dimension. The Australian literature offers instances of apathy (McNab, 1970) and a sense of inevitability (McIntyre and McIntyre, 1944) contributing to a lack of political life in which issues are unlikely to arise. It also offers instances of deliberate agenda setting by powerful individuals (Soovere, 1967; Wild, 1974a), drawing on values of consensus. In the third dimension it suggests that acceptance of a status hierarchy (Wild, 1974a; Pandey, 1972), localism (Halliwell, 1966; Poiner, 1982; Oxley, 1978; Wild, 1974a) and a related belief in consensus and the a-political nature of local politics (Oeser and Emery, 1957; Pandey, 1972) may be resources available to and used by the powerful. They are adhered to by the powerless as well as by the powerful, but the political outcomes which they engender favour the powerful. They are available to the powerful to help them to secure those outcomes.

The Australian literature has offered opportunities to explore the concepts of resistance, outcomes and arenas. Oxley (1978) and Wild (1983) together illustrated the difference between resistance and change and showed that power relations are not necessarily immutable. Wild (1983) pointed by implication toward the value of regarding outcomes as components of a process, as each contributes to the next. The Australian literature has left application of the concept of arenas less clear, because although local government was found to be central to power processes in all studies which focused on power, its role in any locality will always be problematic and demand definition.

The Australian literature unfortunately does not offer simple solutions to the intractable problems of identification of objective interests and specification of the antecedents to ideological resources. Interests have not been problematic because the focus of study has largely been placed on individuals, and power has been defined following Dahl rather than Lukes. At least it is encouraging that where power processes in the third dimension have been identified,
assumptions about the objective interests of subordinate groups do not appear to warrant criticism, and have not attracted any.

Attributed resources have not been problematic either, largely because there have been no attempts to explain their ideological content outside the well established stratification approach to power and status used by Wild (1974a, b) and Pandey (1972). However, even resources which appear to be objective, such as technical expertise in Wild (1983), may have an ideological element. Those such as localism and belief in consensus may in their construction be largely ideological. Other than the work of Poiner, and some in the broader context of the study of rural ideology, such as Craig (1983) and Share (1985), Australian literature merely suggests that ideology is to become an important aspect of the study of power relations, as indeed the theoretical literature demands. All of which points to historical analysis of the construction of ideology being an important precursor to an understanding of power relations in the second and third dimensions.

Australian studies have suggested that those who wield power may do so because they can draw on material resources associated with local capital, and ideological resources of localism and status, and beliefs about local government, administration and technical expertise. There are suggestions that such resources are associated with property. Aspects of this conclusion broadly agree with British work on rural community power (Bell et al, 1976; Newby et al, 1978) which focuses on property and tradition as antecedents to power relations, but in which localism, status and belief in a-political local government play major roles. The British social and historical context is of course different to the Australian. But in both situations, the processes in which resources are constructed and applied should become the first objective in the search for social antecedents to rural local power relations.
Notes

1 It is worth noting, when associating the third dimension with a concept of hegemony, that, as Hindess (1976) pointed out, there is nothing necessarily radical in a political sense about Lukes' concept of power in the third dimension, despite his titling of the book as "A Radical View". Domhoff (1986: 69) considered Lukes to be a pluralist. Indeed there is no logical necessity for power relations in the third dimension to produce an elitist structure. There may be a balance between competing ideologies. However, as Woodward et al (1985) pointed out, Lukes is empirically more consistent with the elitist view. In any case Lukes (1974) may be seen to suggest a radical agenda for empirical community power research.

2 Before turning to structuralism and searching for evidence of hegemony, it is worth remembering that if hegemony is found, the task of seeking explanation for it remains. Gramson (1985) warned that hegemony can become a research objective in itself, substituting for explanation. Hegemony merely helps to describe a structure without accounting for it. Knights and Willmott (1985) implied a similar point by attracting attention to social psychological processes. They drew on a notion of interdependence among weak and powerful actors in their searches for social identity. The powerful are dependent on the weak to produce and maintain the ideology on which structure is based. These approaches seem only to deepen the agency-structure problem. Betts (1986) attempted to blaze a trail around the dilemma. She used Giddens' structuration approach in attempting to build a model of power in which the tension between agency and structure is absent. Unfortunately Betts' model depends on separation of tacit from discursive knowledge and identification of unintended consequences as structural products. She also acknowledged the impossibility of doing so. She has taken the issue no further than a useful reminder of the value of historical study of the context in which knowledge is obtained.

3 This leads to another seeming contradiction in Lukes. His method of application of the notion of power in the third dimension depends on subordinates' ability to recognise real interests in conditions of relative autonomy (Barbalet, 1987: 7). Barbalet took this point a step further, concluding that Lukes treatment of power is "sociologically vacuous", for if actors are free to discover their own real interests, they may not be subordinated in power relations (Barbalet, 1987: 8). Interests must be seen as structural phenomena, as products of social conditions, but not necessarily as bases for action (Hindess, 1986b).

4 This is preferable to the Betts (1986: 58) tactic of ignoring tacitly held aspirations and considering only resources. The problem with this approach is that in the third dimension the aspirations of the ruled, in terms of their perceptions of their interests, may be a resource of the rulers.
Chapter Four

A HISTORY OF COWRA

Study of the processes in which social relations are formed, maintained and changed offers an escape route from the static pigeon-holing of 'elitists' and 'pluralists', as it directs investigation towards the explanatory potential of structural analysis, while not losing sight of the actions of individuals. Each issue to be discussed in the analysis of social relations to follow will be prefaced by an account of relevant historical background and the historical processes through which each issue passed. This Chapter offers a broad picture of the history of Cowra, to establish a background against which processes specific to power relations can be analysed. Data will be drawn from newspapers, interviews, censuses and primary and secondary historical sources.

Cowra Shire's economic and political resources have, during the European period, changed from concentration in the possession of relatively few people through a process in which they were spread among many individuals, places, enterprises and institutions, and into centralisation, as resources have again become concentrated and alienated from the people of Cowra. Social relations have been constructed and reconstructed alongside these processes.

The Shire of Cowra became a political and administrative entity in 1980 upon the amalgamation of Cowra Municipality and Waugoola Shire, the latter having covered Cowra's rural hinterland. The term 'Cowra Shire' will be used to describe the area covered by these institutions. It lies between the uplands of the Great Dividing Range and the western plains which lead to the 'outback' of New South Wales and Central Australia (Map 1). Cowra is about 300 kilometres west of Sydney. The Shire has an area of 2 801 square kilometres, a journey by road across it
covering about 80 kilometres, and a population of 11,569 (1986 Census of Population and Housing). About two thirds of the population live in the township of Cowra, by far the largest population centre in the Shire. Only two others have populations much in excess of 100.

The Shire covers the area in which the Lachlan River, one of the major tributaries of the Murray-Darling system, having risen near the Great Dividing Range, breaks out of mountainous terrain and spills onto undulating countryside and plains. Over half of the Shire’s land can be considered arable, and only 17.3 per cent suitable for neither cultivation nor grazing. 32.7 per cent is "highly regarded in the statewide context" for cropping, with grain yields exceeding those of many other local government areas in the 'wheat belt' of New South Wales (Nott, 1983: 6-9). Wyangala Dam at the eastern edge of the Shire has made water available for irrigation. Primary production includes grains, oilseeds, fruit, vegetables and livestock products, some of which are processed locally. A highway route between Sydney and Adelaide passes through Cowra, and lesser roads radiate from Cowra to centres north, west and south. The railway through Cowra is subsidiary to the main routes to the south and west from Sydney, but Cowra is a significant rail node for its servicing of a branch line to the south west and another to the north. Travelling time to Sydney by road or rail is around four to five hours.

European Settlement and Establishment

European feet first trod the land of Cowra in 1815, when government surveyor Evans reached the Lachlan River a few kilometres north of the site of the present town (Steel, 1932). This was the first human sign of disruption and disaster for the Wiradjuri Aboriginal people, who may have occupied what Europeans came to describe as the south west of New South Wales for more than 40,000 years (Gammage, 1986: xiv). They were certainly present on the Lachlan (Evans' Journal quoted in Craze, 1977: 11). One European settler took an Aboriginal name for his station, 'Coura Rocks', which, after someone realised that Coura meant rocks, was abbreviated, altered and given to the township.
The early European history of the Cowra district is a story of accumulation of vast resources by a few families. Settlement of the Cowra district appears to have begun around 1830. The first settler to receive a land grant in the area was a Scot named Arthur Ranken. He arrived in Australia in 1826, already having the status of a man of property. By 1828 his brother George had established himself as "the largest and wealthiest resident stockowner in the Bathurst district". George was also a magistrate. He had arrived in New South Wales in 1821 in a ship chartered by himself and a Mr Campbell, whose daughter Arthur married in 1837. Arthur was granted 2,560 acres in 1827, but the deed was not executed until 1831, by which time he had been wrangling with officialdom over a disputed claim with a neighbour named Grant, who was an overseer to the influential and propertied ex-convict and surgeon Dr Redfern (Craze, n.d.: 3).

Arthur Ranken had brought with him an overseer named Sloan. Sloan acquired the first of many blocks in 1836. It was near Arthur Ranken’s 'Glen Logan'. Sloan named his property 'North Logan', and by 1857 he was able to buy 'Glen Logan'. Overseers were paid in stock which they could graze on the owner’s property. They could thereby develop large herds. At times he had vast areas of land, buying and selling properties of 30,000 acres and larger (Craze, n.d.: 5-7). Redfern’s overseer Grant was similarly successful. Grant’s son-in-law, William Redfern Watt, who was Redfern’s nephew, took over after Grant’s retirement, and by 1849 he had acquired leases on an additional 79,000 acres. (Craze, n.d.: 6-9) 'Coura Rocks' was the station of Henry Matthias Fulton, son of a clergyman. Fulton’s family received grants and acquired surrounding land amounting to 19,200 acres by 1849.

Many other names appear in association with large properties in this period. They include the Wentworth and Wood families, the latter being particularly successful. John Wood applied for 1,280 acres in 1834. By 1839 he held 7,350 acres in the Cowra area, and in 1847 had 81,000 acres. In 1864 he was appointed a Magistrate (Craze, n.d.: 12). Many of these people did not reside on their properties near Cowra. This is not surprising, considering the difficult living conditions, isolation, fear of Aboriginal and bushranger attack and the uncertainty of annual leases (Craze, n.d. and 1977).
Craze (1977) found little evidence of serious conflict with Wiradjuri near Cowra, except for one family, settled some distance from the present Cowra Shire, who were chased off their station about 1823. He reported that the earlier settlers tolerated Aboriginal camps near their homesteads. An Aboriginal perspective might be different, however. While they apparently offered cheap labour, they also contracted venereal disease and consumption, arising from the exchange of women for tobacco and spirits (Craze, 1977: 19). The settlers looked upon this practice as a threat to the well-being of their own men (as indicated in a report from Cowra published in the *Bathurst Free Press* of 26 November, 1853).

The families described above, plus Hope of 'Bumbaldry', Blackett of 'Mufton Park' and Neville of 'Mulyan' appear to be the only settlers up to the late 1830s (Steel, 1932: 3). Blackett of 'Cotta', Sheahan of 'Gooloogong', Reily of 'Bangaroo', Brougham of 'Taragala', and McDiarmid of 'Waugoola' appear to have settled in the 1840s, along, no doubt, with many other people, propertied and propertyless. Each property was a small settlement of its own, servicing its own people and probably others. (The *Bathurst Advocate* of 17 June, 1848 reported that 'North Logan' had gained permission to sell beer "in quantities not less than two gallons".) Most of the work was performed by convicts. Craze's (n.d.) research revealed that in 1840 Blackett's 'Mufton Park' had three convicts, Fulton's 'Coura Rocks' had two, Reily's 'Bangaroo' one and Wood's 'Brundah' five. Grazing of cattle, horses and sheep were the main activities. Wheat was grown and milled for domestic purposes, each station having its own mill.

The first activity on the site of the township-to-be was that of a pound, known to have been present in 1844 (Craze, n.d.: 16), with the poundkeeper's residence adjacent. The first hotel appeared in 1846. The first store was also opened at around that time. In 1847, McDiarmid of 'Waugoola' wrote to the Colonial Secretary "forwarding applications from inhabitants of Coura Rocks to purchase allotments at that place" (Colonial Secretary, Register of Letters Received, July-December 1847, held in the Archives Office of New South Wales). The letter was also signed by thirty-four people, described by Craze (n.d.: 17) as "mainly stockholders". The development of a township was instigated by landholders to be a focus for their activity, and they had to apply to Sydney to have the land made available for sale. The first sale did not take place
until September, 1854, as reported in the Bathurst Free Press of 14 October. It was preceded by local meetings and appeals to Sydney for a surveyor. McDiarmid and Redfern Watt gave leadership through these proceedings.

The 1856 Census indicates dominance of rural activity in the 'Carcoar Police District', an area encompassing the present Cowra (Table 4.1). The small number of people engaged in "trade and commerce", and the small population of Carcoar (364 persons) and Cowra (perhaps 150) compared to the 2,943 in the district, which would have contained no larger villages and towns, suggests that economic activity was very largely rural.

Table 4.1
Occupations of the Population of Carcoar Police District at the 1856 Census

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Persons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trade and commerce</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grazing</td>
<td>285</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horticulture</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skilled workers</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unskilled workers</td>
<td>345</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic servants</td>
<td>143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learned professions (medical)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(clerical)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other educated</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paupers</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not stated</td>
<td>1,603*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Consists of 1,015 females and 558 males.
Settlement, as it had done for John Grant, came before legal sanction. In 1850, the village had thirty-four inhabitants, and in 1852, 120 (Craze, n.d.: 17). The National Board of Education advised enquiring citizens in 1849 that part of the town would be reserved for education. A temporary school was established in 1850, and a more permanent one in 1857. The importance of education to the activity of the village is illustrated in the returns of the first census of Cowra village, that of 1861, in which twenty per cent of its inhabitants were enumerated as "scholars" (Table 4.2).

Table 4.2
Occupations of the Population of the village of Cowra at the 1861 Census

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Persons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Government service</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learned medical</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other educated professions</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scholars</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trading and commerce</td>
<td>05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providers of food, drink and accommodation</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skilled workers</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenant farmers</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hired farm servants</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shepherds, hutkeepers, etc</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hired Stockmen</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other unskilled</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestics</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
<td>08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not stated</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>193</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
During the 1850s three more hotels were built, the first policeman arrived, and a post office and court house were established. George Campbell, who had purchased 'Coura Rocks', became the first Justice of the Peace. Presbyterian and Roman Catholic churches were built. O'Shaughnessy mentioned three stores in the village in 1855. In the 1860s a flour mill and another hotel were opened. The hotels prospered on the traffic to and from the Lambing Flat and Grenfell gold fields to the south and west of Cowra. The village was developing as a district centre and a stopping point for travellers. Indeed, travellers to the gold fields had to stop to cross the Lachlan River, for there was no bridge. Bailliere's directory (Whitworth, 1866: 157) noted that the need for a bridge "is much felt", and that "the roads about Cowra are in but indifferent condition." Communication with Sydney presented many difficulties. The Bathurst Free Press of 21 October, 1854 reported complaints from Cowra about delays of weeks for the weekly mail service. In the 1850s Cowra was still very much a pioneer settlement, with all the connotations of anarchy that might be applied. The roles of representatives of the law, such as Campbell as Justice of the Peace and, later, Wood as Magistrate, would have been very important. Isolation from the institutions of justice is illustrated by a report from Cowra which appeared in the Bathurst Free Press of 26 August, 1854, protesting that neither doctor nor coroner had come to inquire into a murder, in which a drunken policeman was implicated, three weeks after the event.

There is evidence that landholders were involved in village businesses, but they did not monopolise them. McDiarmid and the later very prominent Andrew Lynch opened a large store in 1855. This was a major event, heralded by a large front page notice in the Bathurst Free Press of 17 March. Landholders certainly acquired village property, some of which remains with their descendents in the 1980s.

The growth of Cowra during the 1860s was not especially rapid. The 1871 Census counted 265 people. The distribution of occupations was similar to that recorded in 1861. By 1870 Cowra had been established, but the role of the village was small, and dominance of the landholders was profound.
Rapid Development

A period of rapid growth, which laid the foundations of the present township, came in the next twenty years, when the concentration of activity in the hands of the landed proprietors was broken down. Jack Robertson, squatter, member for a rural electorate, and Secretary for Lands, had "pledged himself to allow men to found homes in the wilderness by undertaking to unlock an agricultural paradise to legions of small selectors" (Clark, 1978: 139). Robertson's legislation had little effect during the 1860s and early 1870s. Much of the squatters' land in New South Wales was locked by leases, and selection by settlers was retarded by loopholes in the legislation until 1875 (Buxton, 1985). Being rich agricultural land, the Cowra district was attractive to settlers, and from about 1875, it boomed.

Rapid growth in agricultural activity is illustrated in Table 4.3, extracted from Sands (1878/79: 157 and 1881/82: 38).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of holdings exceeding 1 acre</th>
<th>Land in cultivation acres</th>
<th>Land enclosed acres</th>
<th>Total holdings acres</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1875</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>1 949</td>
<td>21 952</td>
<td>071 658</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1877</td>
<td>266</td>
<td>3 342</td>
<td>51 263</td>
<td>151 312</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1880</td>
<td>412</td>
<td>7 982</td>
<td>87 704</td>
<td>160 283</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Agriculture expanded rapidly, against the previous virtual monopoly of pastoralism. As the number of holdings grew fast, the area cultivated grew faster. The total area of holdings grew
relatively slowly between 1877 and 1880, while the area cultivated rather more than doubled. Such was the impact of wheat farming. *The Australian Handbook* (Gordon and Gotch, 1883) reported that the Cowra district had achieved the second highest grain yield in the Colony. The town prospered as farmers established themselves, and in the 1880s they were helped by good seasons, new agricultural machinery, and hungry markets.

The growing township offered business opportunities which were rapidly taken up. *Sands Directory* of the Cowra Land District for 1884/85 listed thirteen professional people, fifty-two people in trades, sixteen hotel keepers, twenty-three storekeepers, twenty-two in other commercial activity, such as bank managers, agents, "contractors", auctioneers and agents, and seven in government service. It had been a hectic decade, which can be summarised and compared with earlier and later decades, albeit crudely, by surveying the entries for Cowra in *The Australian Handbook* (Gordon and Gotch, 1872-1902) (Table 4.4).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total pop'n</th>
<th>Inns</th>
<th>Church attendance</th>
<th>School attendance</th>
<th>Banks/Large stores*</th>
<th>School of Arts volumes</th>
<th>Crop# acres</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1872</td>
<td>1 618</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1875</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1878</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>50</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1880</td>
<td>2 993</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>80</td>
<td>1/</td>
<td></td>
<td>5 374</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1882</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td>86</td>
<td>1/</td>
<td></td>
<td>7 328</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1883</td>
<td>5 400</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>139</td>
<td></td>
<td>1/</td>
<td></td>
<td>208</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1884</td>
<td>5 400</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td>84</td>
<td>1/</td>
<td></td>
<td>8 040</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1885</td>
<td>6 800</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>102</td>
<td></td>
<td>2/2</td>
<td></td>
<td>230</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1888</td>
<td>9 100</td>
<td>181</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1889</td>
<td>9 100</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1892</td>
<td>9 100</td>
<td>197</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1893</td>
<td>8 570</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td>250</td>
<td>257</td>
<td>3/</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1896</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>415</td>
<td>3/</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1902</td>
<td>11 000</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>700</td>
<td>3/6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes
Gaps indicate that the *Handbooks* do not contain the necessary information. The *Handbooks* do not indicate the
geographical area described. The population figures suggest an area much larger that the present Cowra Shire, while the area cropped suggests something similar to that described in Table 4.3. Table 4.4 should be taken as a rough indication only. It is unlikely that the information in the Handbooks was ever intended to form a time series.

* "Large stores" is not defined.

# Years are those of Handbook publication. Figures may refer to earlier years.

Causes and Processes of Change

The development of Cowra during the 1880s might be explained, as suggested above, by land legislation, the expansion of wheat production, and the arrival of the railway. Railway extension to Cowra, however, does not offer a good explanation. Doubt was cast by Gammage (1987: 13), who noted that growers furthest from rail transport led the expansion of wheat production in New South Wales. In the Cowra district, from the evidence cited above, large scale cultivation was well under way before the State Government announced the extension of the railway to Cowra in 1881. Despite that announcement, its passage through Cowra remained uncertain until 1884, and it did not arrive until 1886 (Ryan, 1986: 9). Ryall (1928) recollected that the railway added momentum to settlement, but its earlier progress east of Cowra may have had greater effect.

Land legislation and wheat production were linked at an ideological level by an agrarian myth, the idea that a stout and stable yeomanry would grow consequently with the grain, which was prominent in political rhetoric among the leaders of land reform. Its "essential feature ... was the yeoman as ploughman, the tiller of the soil and the producer of bread, the staff of life" (Lomas, 1987: 4). Observation of the operation of this myth has suggested it to be the motivation behind the land legislation of the late nineteenth century. It is hard to refute such a proposition. Gammage (1987: 6) found that the common view of historians is that the purpose of the legislation, as the ideals Robertson mentioned above suggest, was to implement the agrarian ideal.

The myth is unlikely to have provided motivation among the potential settlers. They were city
dwellers, many having returned disappointed from the gold fields. Unemployment was growing, living conditions were poor and agitation for reform was rising (Irving, 1985: 156). Attempts to claw a living from the inhospitable bush may not have been what the urban agitators had in mind (ibid). Security offered by acquisition of property may have been a stronger motivating force. Nevertheless, the yeoman ideal may have had some impact by way of a confidence trick (Lomas, 1987: 5). The agrarian myth was implicitly accepted by settlers (Waterson, 1968), but for many, the ideal was very elusive.

It is difficult to accept that the squatters' interests were served when the legislation was aimed at breaking their dominance, but it is unwise to assume, even with the evidence above for Cowra, that they suffered as a result of the land legislation. Gammage (1987) found that the legislation had the immediate effect of underwriting the value of land already held freehold. It contained many loopholes which allowed squatters to gain legal title to their land. Contrary to the assessment of Buxton (1985) mentioned above, Gammage's view is that the 1875 legislation aided the squatters.

There is evidence that free selection did occur in the Cowra district, such as a statement to that effect in Sands' Directory of 1878/79 (page 157). This evidence is supported by an entry in O'Shaughnessy's diary, in which he wrote: "I rode out to the scalded plain to see if there was enough vacant land there for a selection. There was some but not enough for me" (1 December, 1878, page 65). In 1879, O'Shaughnessy reported selecting two blocks of 200 acres each (15 April and 21 May, page 73). Sands Directory of Cowra Land District for 1884/85 (page 89) lists 230 farmers, 78 selectors, 23 graziers and 27 squatters.

The land legislation and the changes that followed were products of an urban image of progress. Urban business interests may have reaped the greatest gain from land reform. The gold rush period had moved the focus of economic activity toward the cities (Irving, 1985: 155). "Late last century [men in Sydney] looked on rural New South Wales as a rich resource from which metropolitan prosperity might be mined, and they accepted without question the two great ideas of colonial Australia, progress and order" (Gammage, 1986: 1). "Some [of the men in Sydney]
wanted to invest in land, some wanted the land unlocked so that every man might have his own farm, some wanted to promote agriculture, and some believed that the progress of civilization depended on towns and the amenities they fostered, that towns could not grow without people, and that people would come only if they could get land" (Gammage, 1986: 62). Urban financial institutions and the New South Wales Government profited from land sale and investment. Urban merchants profited from the growth of commerce. The dispersal of economic activity from the initial total dominance of a landed aristocracy was not driven by small local interests, so much as by large remote interests who held an idealised view of rural life.

Changing Distribution of Wealth and Influence

The late 1870s and the 1880s saw the rise to prominence of many local citizens who were successful in farming and/or business. The older landed families began to share prominence in local affairs with town business people. Storekeepers and professional people, as well as squatters, were prominent at meetings which led to establishment of the Cowra Race Club, Pastoral, Agricultural and Horticultural Association (P. A. and H.), and the Progress Association in 1878. However, squatters were still considered to be of sufficient stature to be consulted before the P. A. and H. was formed (Craze, 1979: 8).

The squatters' continuing role is exemplified by George Campbell, representative in the New South Wales Parliament and an important force in the establishment of local government and the coming of the railway. The story of incorporation, as told by Ryall (1928) 4, shows Campbell's strong presence and, at the same time, his political weakness. A petition for incorporation was signed by townspeople in 1886, and presented to the authorities in Sydney. Campbell opposed the move, but succeeded only in delaying incorporation. His status ultimately remained undamaged. After the first election, in 1888, he was elected Mayor, and according to the minutes of the meeting, he was unopposed.

The continued prominence of squatters is a vestige of their earlier paternalistic role. This role is
illustrated by McDiarmid of Waugoola, who was instrumental in the establishment of institutions, such as the Carcoar Presbyterian Church (reported in the *Bathurst Advocate* of 13 May, 1848), and was a patron of social life in the district. He sponsored local events, such as a race meeting reported in the *Bathurst Free Press* of 5 November, 1853.

Campbell was also prominent in the agitation for a railway connection to Sydney. At one stage of this movement the thought that a neighbouring town would have the railway at Cowra's expense stirred the people of Cowra, and a public meeting to be chaired by Campbell was called to form a 'railway league'. The push had come from business and farming interests, rather than squatters (Ryan, 1986). Indeed, Ryall (*Cowra Free Press*, 15 May, 1928, page 7) took a rather cynical view of the squatters' role, recollecting that the railway league received "no generous contributions by large landed proprietors who gained immensely through the enormously enhanced value of their several properties".

**Closer Settlement**

Ryall's hostile attitude to the squatters and his fervent support for closer settlement expressed both the ideals of Sydney metropolitan business, and the interests of local town business. Both the *Free Press* and the *Cowra Guardian*, which had first appeared in 1891 as the *Cowra Independent* (Martin, 1938: 10), expressed the call to unlock the land. For example, on 14 May, 1898, the latter reported "Selector, Canowindra, very properly draws attention to a grievance in that locality [on the northern boundary of the present Cowra Shire], viz. the locking up of large areas of land by means of reservations, which is manifestly a bar to settlement and the advancement of the district of Canowindra".

Closer settlement rolled on, until relatively recently, pushed by the belief that it would bring growth and prosperity to the district. It was also helped by circumstances, which included the financial strain for the squatters of defence of their holdings, and poor health and bereavement among the owning families. By the 1930's, although still passionately pursuing closer
settlement, Cowra people had learned from disaster. The *Lachlan Leader's* editorial of 1 July, 1937 called for care to be exercised with closer settlement, an "imperative if repetition of failures of the past - some have been ghastly - is to be avoided". The same editorial reported 538 applications for two blocks recently offered. On 8 August it reported that a local Closer Settlement and Development League called upon the government to "expedite development and split up the big estates" reassuring itself that there will always be markets for quality product, a brave attitude so close to the Great Depression.

The demand for closer settlement was renewed after World War II, in the name of returned soldier settlement. Government was taking an aggressive approach in resuming land by the mid 1950s, but breaking up the properties of the squatters and making them available for sale provided opportunities for others to establish new large properties. The history of a former Campbell property, 'Warrengong', as told in the *Guardian* of 25 November, 1955, shows how long it had taken for some of the old squattages to be broken up. 'Warrengong' still consisted of 24,000 acres in 1911, when it was sold for a second time. The new owner sold 6,400 acres to sharefarmers. Since World War I it had been reduced to 5,400 acres by soldier settlement. In 1955 it was about to be split into six portions.

By the mid 1960s closer settlement was winding down, but it had not been forgotten. Some at least still sought to pursue the ideals of putting families on the land. On 1 November, 1968, the *Guardian* reported the leader of the New South Wales opposition Labor Party to have said that his party would investigate "closer settlement needs" as "closer settlement had ground to a halt over the past three years". This reaffirmed the long standing support for closer settlement by the Australian Labor Party. It could go on as long as property owners were able to accumulate large holdings, but in the Cowra district, it had finished.

**The Social Consequences of Dispersal**

Selection and farming created a new social order by adding people of small property rather than
taking away those of large. A passage from the *Free Press* (6 May, 1892: Supplement page 1), entitled "All about the Cockies", offers some useful insights. It described the "boss cockies" or "picaninny squatters" who held "hundreds of acres", the "cockatoo parrot" who had a smaller holding with a "limited number of sheep and cattle" and the "ground parrot" who had a still smaller holding. The "40 acre perisher", who earned daily wages from a neighbouring squatter and was dependent on a few acres of wheat for flour and a vegetable garden, sat at the bottom of the status ladder. He had one or two horses and one or two cows, but he was also "a landed proprietor and that *rara avis* - a contented cockatoo." This passage, while espousing the nobility of those who are unpretentious and work hard, also indicates the aspirations of all to have property, preferably a lot of it. Having some property opened the possibility to acquire more, and becoming an employer rather than employee.

As Waterson (1968: 17) observed, pastoralists were still superior in the "Australian rural hierarchy", and "... all groups eventually came to subscribe to the ideals of the Pure Merinos and to imitate their way of life as far as their means would allow." The "forty acre perisher" would have had little hope of acquiring substantial means, but in some of the literature of the day, notably the *Bulletin*, he became a hero (Share, 1985: 6). He was not a hero on his own, for the battler image was drawn as the family, as depicted in the writing of Henry Lawson and Steele Rudd, and consistent with the ideal of wholesomeness in rural living expressed by the early land legislators. Women and children shared the hardship.

Perhaps the key feature of the process of dispersal of rural capital was its creation of a new class of smaller employers. A rural working class grew with settlement, and as it grew it developed a class consciousness and the means of industrial and political activity. A strike by shearsers was reported on Warrengong in 1898 (*Cowra Guardian*, 24 October). The Labor Party campaigned in Cowra, against the views of the local press. In 1898 a Labor candidate, after losing an election, complained that the press was against him. The editorial in the same issue of the *Guardian* (30 July, 1898) praised the Labor loss.

Labor support and organisation, in 1898 at least, was weak. The *Guardian* of 19 February
reported that a Labor League candidate admitted during his campaign that only the executive of the League existed locally, although he had been its president for three years. The Guardian of 21 July carried lists of names of people who had attended Federal Liberal Party and Labor League meetings. The Federal Liberal Party appeared to have attracted a relatively large number of prominent farming and business people.

The propertied and business people felt they could call on an historical legitimacy. The names of Lynch and Campbell still carried meaning, although the local representative in the New South Wales Parliament during the early 1890s had been a storekeeper who had started business in the early 1880s. While their opponents could call on prominent names for support, Labor was in disarray.

The first farmer organisation in Cowra was formed in 1905 (Cowra Guardian, 20 February, 1962). The list of office bearers included the names of town business people. The following quotation from a conversation I had with an elderly resident illustrates the opposing interests, and the farmers' perspective on labour.

"Fred . . ., he was a farmer, had several sons. He was Labor because he didn't have to pay the men. The rest of us couldn't stand a bar of him. [Chuckle] He'd put forward his ideas at Farmers and Settlers meetings, but it was all right for him. He didn't have to scrounge to pay someone like we did because we didn't have grown up sons. He had sons working for nothing. So naturally he was for Labor."

The Labor Party's intention in supporting closer settlement was to give the small people a chance. Unfortunately they often failed and those with more property, as employers, became politically conservative. By 1914, the Farmers and Settlers had entered an association with a New South Wales employer organisation (Gammage, 1986: 113). For Aboriginal people, at the other end of the status ladder, dispersal meant something very different: destruction of community and enforced placement in the white world (discussed further in Chapter Eight).
The Rise of Commerce and Services

Growth since the 1880s has been unsteady. The town's population, having more than doubled, from 628 in 1881 to 1,546 in 1891, grew only to 1,811, through economic depression, in 1901. There followed another spurt of growth, to 3,271 in 1911 (Figure 4.1).

Figure 4.1
Population growth in Cowra Shire, 1861 to 1986

Notes

Sources are New South Wales and Commonwealth Censuses. Census figures are available for the rural and village areas only after the incorporation of Waugoola Shire in 1906.

The following aberrations have altered what may have been steady trends of growth for the town and decline for the village and rural areas since the 1921 to 1933 period:

The height of the 'rural and village' peak in 1933 and its rapid growth between 1961 and 1966 can largely be attributed to growth in Wyangala Village due to construction and reconstruction work on the dam.

Much of the growth in 'rural and village' between 1947 and 1954, and much of the decline in the following period, were associated with the establishment and closure of an hostel for European migrants about three kilometres from the centre of the town.

'Full-blood' Aboriginals were not enumerated before 1966. Their enumeration in 1966 contributed about one quarter of the indicated growth in the town's population between 1961 and 1966.
By the 1900s the town had developed processing and manufacturing industry, including a dairy company, a coach factory, a brewery, a soap works, three cordial factories, two flour mills and a rabbit freezing works (Cowra Free Press, 29 April, 1892; Cowra Guardian, 24 November and 27 December, 1906 and 11 June, 1948; and Martin, 1938). In 1903 the New South Wales Government established an experimental farm (Craze, 1979). The railway branch lines were opened in 1901 and 1910 (Ryan, 1986). School facilities were expanded in 1900, again in 1907 and yet again in 1912 (Martin, 1938). In 1906 the New South Wales Government legislated to establish shire councils, in order to devolve responsibility for road construction and maintenance. Consequently Waugoola Shire came into existence in that year. The first Councillors were prominent farmers. I.J. Sloan was the first President. The Municipal Council made an agreement with a gas company for the establishment of gasworks in 1910, and in 1925 it commenced electricity reticulation. It had built its first Council Chambers in 1902 (Armstrong, 1988).

Industry had not, however, displaced agriculture. As the editor of the Guardian wrote on 3 January, 1907: "It is to the district and its primary producers that the town is indebted for its growth and prosperity, and so long as that class thrives and prospers, so long will our town forge ahead". The numbers engaged in commerce, transport, communications, manufacturing, construction and other industry together (1,278 persons) fell well short of the 1,641 engaged in agricultural and pastoral pursuits counted at the 1921 Census.

The next twelve (inter-censal) years saw considerable change without upsetting the dominance of primary industry. By 1933, the number employed in commerce had grown substantially, from 313 to 497, while the number engaged in agricultural and pastoral activity fell, from 1,641 to 1,570. The 1933 Census also recorded 848, or 19.4 per cent of the work force, unemployed. A survey of the pages of the Guardian of late 1932 suggests some of the hardship of the Depression period, including evictions of unemployed people (26 October), the Municipal Council lowering wages (also 26 October) and a man being convicted of "begging alms" and being ordered to leave town (29 December).
Recovery came, of course, and war, with major changes to the town and district and life in it. During World War II a munitions factory was set up in the showground pavilion. An army camp was established on the town's outskirts, and a prisoner of war camp was erected nearby. A power alcohol distillery was added to the district's industry. The most important industrial addition was the vegetable cannery of the Edgell company. The cannery would have been largely responsible for putting manufacturing employment, as recorded at the 1947 Census, at almost double its 1933 level.

Economic activity was in the hands of many people. In 1921 the Census counted 977 people who were "employers" or were "working on their own account", being 29.4 per cent of the workforce. The proportion had fallen to 26.2 per cent in 1933, although the number had grown to 1,143. Of those 1,143, 463 were employers. This represents a great change from the early days of settlement, and suggests a substantial measure of local autonomy.

It is worth considering, however, some ways in which that autonomy may appear to have been superficial. Certainly many commercial and industrial enterprises had been initiated locally. Some such as a cordial factory which commenced in the 1900s and the Edgell cannery were local branches of firms which had started elsewhere. But when the importance of government decisions and activity, and Cowra's commercial and financial reliance on Sydney are considered, a great deal of dependence can be inferred.

The coming of the railway is perhaps the strongest example of dependence, because local people had to influence the decision process in Sydney in order to obtain it. Their desire to obtain it is an indication of their appreciation of commercial links with Sydney. Waugoola Shire was established in order to achieve the aims of the State Government independent of local initiative, unlike Cowra Municipality which was established after local appeals. Later Government decisions, such as that to build Wyangala Dam, and establish camps and industry during World War II, had a substantial impact. Cowra's commerce developed while largely dependent on city based institutions as sources of finance. Decisions about the investment destinations of Cowra people's savings were and are made in the city. Cowra's growth is best illustrated as a product
of its relationship with the city by the city-inspired land legislation that helped to set it off. The squatters were legally and commercially dependent initially, but they enjoyed a degree of independence bestowed by their economic strength and status that was not available to small proprietors.

Post-War Change

Cowra people have seen their district's population grow very slowly. If one were to extract the aberrations caused by work on Wyangala Dam in the 1930s and the mid 1960s and the migrant camp in the early 1950s, the Shire's population growth would appear to have levelled off around the 1930s. It has only recently recovered to its 1933 level (Figure 4.2).

Figure 4.2
Growth of Village/Rural and Town Populations in Cowra Shire, 1911 to 1986

Notes (similar to those under Figure 4.1 above)
Sources are New South Wales and Commonwealth Censuses. Census figures are available for the rural and village areas only since the incorporation of Waugooloa Shire in 1906.

The following aberrations have altered what may have been a steady trend of relatively slow growth in the total population since the 1921 to 1933 period:
- The height of the peak in 1933 and the rapid growth in 'rural and village' between 1961 and 1966 can largely be
attributed to growth in Wyangala Village due to construction and reconstruction work on the dam. Much of the growth in 'rural and village' between 1947 and 1954, and much of the decline in the following period, were associated with the establishment and closure of an hostel for European migrants about three kilometres from the centre of the town.

'Full-blood' Aboriginals were not enumerated before 1966. Their enumeration in 1966 contributed about one quarter of the indicated growth in the town's population between 1961 and 1966.

The 1933 Census counted 11,394 people and the 1986 Census 11,569, but the town of Cowra has experienced steady growth, increasing its share of the Shire population. The decline in the rural/village share started after 1933, and, without the migrant camp and Wyangala Dam, would have continued. The 1986 Census revealed slight rural growth, but this may be attributable to 'hobby farms' established near the town by people whose principal work is in the town. Accelerated town growth in the 1947-54 and 1961-66 periods was associated with rural growth under the influence of the migrant camp and Wyangala Dam, rather than closer settlement. The role of the villages as population and business centres has declined substantially. In 1911 the villages contained sixty-four per cent of the village/rural population. In 1947 they contained forty-four per cent, and in 1986 they contained about fifteen per cent of the village/rural population, or about four per cent of the total Shire population.

Through the post-war period primary production has declined from occupying thirty-four per cent of the employed work force in 1947 to twenty-four per cent in 1986 (Figure 4.3). Growth has come from commerce and service industry. In 1986 forty-nine per cent of the Shire's work force was engaged in such activity. Twenty per cent had been so engaged in 1947. The largest components in this sector in 1986 were retail trade (fourteen per cent of the employed work force) and health and education (thirteen per cent of the employed work force).
Prosperity and Gloom

In the immediate post-war period, Cowra people found their district's businesses to be prospering. The Edgell cannery continued production, despite wartime fears that post-war decline in demand for canned food would enforce its closure (MacColl, 1944). On 16 December, 1949, the *Guardian* announced that town business was growing and had been, according to local business people, for the last four to five years. Work had started on conversion of the former army camp to a migrant centre. In the early 1950s the town grew rapidly, boosted by the arrival of migrants and the high natural population increase of the post-war 'baby boom'. A new power station, gasworks and motel were all local initiatives. An airline service, a new hospital, a technical college and an ambulance station were welcomed, but were products of decisions made
elsewhere.

The decision by Commonwealth authorities to use the former army camp as a migrant centre was a blessing. It might have closed altogether, as it did in 1956, and as the power alcohol distillery did in 1948. The *Guardian*, on 31 October, 1947, ran a large page one headline, "Startling Figures for Cowra District", and revealed that Waugoola Shire's population had decreased by 1,927 since 1933. On 4 March, 1949 the *Guardian* ran an article on the 1947 Census entitled the "Passing of Country Towns". On 7 June it quoted a parliamentarian who described the "drift of rural population" as a "grave problem".

Political reaction to this bad news drew on the old closer settlement formula. The local (Labor) representative in the State Parliament sought more of the same (*Cowra Guardian*, 4 December, 1951). Closer settlement did continue into the 1960s, but it could not sustain rural population growth as it had done, although decline in the rural workforce did not commence until 1954 (Figure 4.3).

The 1960s saw continued development, including road sealing, the extension of Wyangala Dam and construction of a civic centre. Growth in the town and the Shire was rapid in the first half of the 1960s, but slowed after the completion of the dam (Figures 4.1 and 4.2). The total population fell by 1,060 between the 1966 and 1971 Censuses. At this time the metropolitan cities were growing rapidly, and city planners looked to decentralisation, offering new hope for country towns. However, in September, 1970, a representative of the New South Wales Department of Decentralisation and Development visited Cowra and reminded its people that decentralisation was intended to solve the city's problems, not Cowra's (*Cowra Guardian*, 8 September, 1970).

Centralisation and Resistance

A process of centralisation operating within the Cowra district, and as part of a more general process operating through Cowra's external relations, can be observed as far back as the early
selection period as commercial activity focused on the town. At the broader level of city-country relations, it could be observed in 1883, as O'Shaughnessy noted in his diary that a local hotel had been bought by a Sydney firm (20 November, page 134). Centralisation has, however, been most obvious in the post-war period, as the district has focused on the town, and the Shire has become more closely tied to and dependent upon metropolitan Sydney.

The *Guardian* announced an early post-war indicator of change to come on 16 January, 1951 with a page one headline: "Big General Store Changes Hands, Reid Smith Pty Ltd Sells to City Firm". The store was one of the two largest in Cowra, and had always been locally owned and operated. It had been bought by Reid Smith from D.C.J. Donnelly, a prominent citizen and local parliamentary representative at around the turn of the century. The other large store, 'Squire Pepper's', was sold in 1955 to an out-of-town chain. It had three premises on or adjacent to the main street at the time, having started business in the 1880s. The Cowra flour mill was also sold around this time, by its local owners, to out-of-town interests. It was soon closed.

The later 1950s found Cowra struggling to maintain sovereignty over its water and electricity services. The *Guardian* of 28 August, 1956 announced that the Cowra power station was to close, eliminating twenty-five local jobs, as Cowra was connected to the central State grid. On 4 December, 1956 the *Guardian* declared that "Cowra will be the bunny" and that the plan would be "a terrific blow" for the district. On 15 February, 1957 the *Guardian* feared that the "Big electricity grab will cripple Cowra", and that "If the plan is adopted it will mean virtual stagnation for Cowra as a business centre". In 1958 it appeared that a similar type of administrative arrangement might divest Cowra of control of its own water reticulation. Waugoola Shire eventually became part of such an arrangement. Cowra Municipality did not, although the threat arose again in 1966 and 1974 (Armstrong, 1988). The 1958 threat caused local alarm. Cowra's mayor observed that a "stripping process" was under way, seeing such changes as removing important responsibilities, and their associated resources, from local government (*Cowra Guardian*, 2 December, 1958). In 1959 the first motel to have been built in Cowra was sold to a "national company" (*Cowra Guardian*, 27 October), and establishment of another was announced by out-of-town interests (*Cowra Guardian*, 31 July).
The 1960s and early 1970s may have provided a respite from publicised external intervention, for the pages of the Guardian were largely free from announcements like those above. The vulnerability of local commerce, however, again became apparent in 1976, when a clothing factory which had started from a local base in 1972, ceased production (Cowra Guardian, 18 June, 1976). 1978 brought particularly bad news when the department store formerly owned by Reid Smith was closed (Cowra Guardian, 7 April). This followed soon after the closure of another chain store. The Reid Smith store was sufficiently important to the town's commercial role for its loss to prompt deep concern about the town's capacity to provide for the district's inhabitants. This was capped by the announcement in the Guardian of 15 August, 1978, that the Sydney-owned Cowra Steam Laundry was about to close. In 1948 the Guardian (9 July) could boast that Cowra's steam laundry was the second biggest in New South Wales. Less than one month after announcing the Reid Smith closure, the Guardian (5 May) announced that Cowra's telephone exchange was to close. This closure was deferred, and did not eventuate until 1984 (Cowra Guardian, 11 June). The old Reid Smith store was sold to another chain in 1979 (Cowra Guardian, 3 April).

Reminders of Cowra's dependence on, and vulnerability to, external decisions have strengthened since the late 1970s. On 23 October, 1979 the Guardian announced that Cowra Hospital was to lose twenty-one of its 100 beds. 1980 brought the enforced amalgamation of Cowra Municipal and Waugoola Shire Councils, and in 1982 the Central West (electricity) County Council closed its Cowra store.

In 1984 the Guardian was acquired by a newspaper chain. For some time its local content had declined as it enclosed a regional news section produced out-of-town and circulated across a wide area of New South Wales. By this time Woolworths had opened a large supermarket. In 1982 the local bakery wrote to the Guardian (12 March) complaining that Cowra's externally owned and controlled supermarkets were not buying local bread. This practice had cost four jobs. On 16 July, 1984 the Guardian headed an article "Supermarkets Threat to Small Shops". It continued: "Cowra's small shopkeepers believe a war is being waged against them by supermarkets and there is nothing they can do to stop it".
Cowra had, however, been fighting back for many years. The possibility of the establishment of a local abattoir had been discussed at least as early as 1928 (Cowra Free Press, 22 June). In February, 1966 the Waugoola Shire President called a public meeting to discuss the matter. At a later public meeting, attended by 250 people, a decision to form a company was made (Cowra Guardian, 19 April). Fifty per cent of the capital was raised locally, with the remainder coming from a Sydney company. The abattoir commenced production in 1970. The Chamber of Commerce has been active since the 1950s, appealing for Cowra people to give custom to local shops. The Guardian editorial of 24 June, 1955 asked its readers to support local business, warning that "invading firms" offer poor service and no refunds. Local interests were able to rescue local assets which might otherwise have fallen. In 1981 one local bid to purchase the old Squire Pepper store failed, but a second succeeded, as did a bid for the Central West County Council store (Cowra Guardian, 27 July 1981 and 22 June, 1984). Both were let. A local syndicate took over the Guardian, but could not prevent its eventual sale.

New local businesses have started and prospered. The more prominent include a vineyard and a Japanese Garden, both of which were established in the mid-1970s. The latter received substantial assistance from Japanese institutions who wished to symbolise and perpetuate Cowra's relationship with Japan which emanated from World War II. All Japanese military personnel who died on Australian soil during World War II are buried in Cowra, including the many who perished while attempting to escape from a prisoner-of-war camp near Cowra. Cowra's third large secondary industry, a wool scouring plant, employing about eighty, was also established in the mid-1970s. Although local initiative had an important role in attracting this industry, it is owned and controlled elsewhere, largely in Japan by big corporations. It was assisted by State Government financial assistance to decentralising industry. Local initiatives to attract industry, and retain commerce, have been handled by Cowra's Tourist and Development Corporation, as well as local government. It was set up in 1967 with support from the Chamber of Commerce, Waugoola Shire Council and financial help from Cowra Municipal Council. Cowra has resisted change, but, not surprisingly, has failed to deflect the national and international forces that have generated centralisation.
The number of primary production establishments in Cowra Shire has declined from 603 in 1977 to 551 in 1986 (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 1977-1986). Even government policy seeks to increase farm size rather than number (Nott, 1983). Closer settlement appears to have slipped into reverse. Its reverse momentum has two directions; the second being the rise of absentee ownership and agribusiness. Cowra people have told me of three large and valuable properties which have recently been sold to absentees. The three farms include the locally well-known 'North Logan'. Cowra business people are aware that absentee owners, like the squatters did, may do their buying elsewhere.

Agribusiness is important to Cowra. Many of Cowra's vegetable growers are contracted to supply the Edgell Company. That company started as a family business in 1906, and was very successful. In 1961 it was taken over by a company large and diverse enough to be in the 'agribusiness' class. In 1982 it was swallowed by the even larger Adelaide Steamship Company (Adsteam). "By 1983 Adsteam had control of over 450 separate companies, made sales of over $3 billion and had profits of some $40 million" (Lawrence, 1987: 142). "Now virtually all that is left of the Edgell family [in the business] is the name on the cans" (Sargent, 1985: 3).

Cowra farmers' contracts with Edgells may be commercially advantageous in removing an element of risk, but they also remove an element of independence. As a Cowra farmer explained, the contracts encourage overproduction, placing a burden on the soil and threatening the long term viability of the land. This element of the farmers' independence has been given to a company which has captured ninety per cent of Australia's market for frozen vegetables (Sargent, 1985: 271). This aspect of centralisation makes the concentration of wealth among the squatters look feeble.

The history of the power alcohol distillery offers a parallel intervention by agribusiness. Being no longer required for alcohol distillation after World War II, it was sold to a locally managed, although not locally owned, stock feed company. The importance to Cowra people of its local base was illustrated by the emphasis placed on its local management in an article about the company in the 1 November, 1968 issue of the Guardian. Cowra was the firm's headquarters.
The business was acquired by a Sydney based company in the early 1970s, and has since been taken over by a large national company with interests in flour milling, baking and other food production, as well as stock feeds. The latter company captured almost two thirds of Sydney's market for bread with a 1986 take-over (Sargent, 1985: 266; Lawrence, 1987: 142). Cowra's stock feed facility is a very small component of its enterprise.

Social Concomitants of Post-War Centralisation

Dispersal created a large number of businesses, some but not all of which were big enough to support their proprietors. Some indication of the range of farm incomes in Cowra Shire was obtained in survey data collected in 1986 (reported in Gray, 1987a, Appendix A). Of the fifty-four respondents to the survey who stated that the main occupation of their household's main income earner was farming or grazing, eighteen said that their total incomes were below $10 000 in 1985-86. Four said that their incomes were above $39 999. Those whose farm does not support their families must seek work elsewhere, and although there are no relevant statistics available for Cowra Shire, it seems likely that they are doing so in large numbers. I recall one farmer telling me that no family in his vicinity derived its income solely from the farm. He was referring to about twelve families in a very fertile area.

Farm mechanisation reduced the need for labour in the 1950s, and the declining terms of trade since have made it increasingly difficult for farmers to take on employees. The number of employees in Waugoola Shire fell from 854 at the 1954 Census to 599 in 1961. The traditional farm worker who lives on the farm and receives food produced on the farm as part payment for labour is now rare. Unfortunately statistics on farm labour over time for Cowra Shire are not available, but my conversations with local farmers indicated a decline. When asked if he knew of any farmers who had a live-on-farm employee in the district, a prominent member of the Cowra Farmers' Association could think of only two.

The necessity of off-farm employment, and the loss of rural employment, indicate increasing
dependence on the town, turning around the traditional local rural-urban relationship. An increase in the proportion of the rural workforce employed in non-farm occupations has become evident in Cowra, having been thirty-six per cent at the 1976 Census, and forty-four per cent at the 1986 Census. The shift of employment to the town is best illustrated by comparing the growth of the workforces resident in town and country. While the town workforce grew by sixty-five per cent between 1947 and 1986 Censuses, that of the rural area of Cowra Shire grew by six per cent. Despite growing numbers of farmers working off-farm, the town's share of employees in Cowra Shire grew from sixty-eight to seventy-seven per cent during the same period. The town's share of the Shire's employers also grew, from thirty-six to forty-six per cent. The political labour movement has organised well in Cowra but has not enjoyed success since the late 1950s. The State electorate in which Cowra is situated had a Labor representative from 1941 to 1959.

The most dramatic change in the workforce since World War II has been the growth of its female component. The proportion of Cowra Shire's workforce which is female grew from seventeen per cent in 1947 to thirty-seven per cent in 1986. While the female workforce was growing by 200 per cent in this period, the male workforce grew by five per cent. The proportion of women in the workforce working in service activity has, however, declined only slightly, from sixty-three per cent in 1947 to sixty per cent in 1986.

Despite the entry of large organisations, the role of small business has remained strong. The ratio of employees to employers and self-employed for town residents was 4.3 to 1 in 1947, and had moved only to 3.9 to 1 in 1986. For the rural area, it moved from 1.1 to 1 to 0.9 to 1. Centralisation has brought reliance on large industries, described as "heavy reliance" by an economic consultant in 1986 (Peat, Marwick, Mitchell), but it has by no means eliminated the economic and social structures created by dispersal.
Plate 1  The main street of Cowra in 1986, looking east from the Lachlan River bridge
1986 and Beyond

The most powerful feature of the history of Cowra Shire is the importance of political decisions made in Sydney in the middle of last century, which, more than any other factor, sent Cowra on a course toward growth and prosperity. Growth was sustained by closer settlement into the 1960s, helped on two occasions by large injections of government employment on Wyangala Dam, and rescued from post-war decline by the maintenance of the cannery, the 'baby boom', and for a time at least, the migrant camp. In the 1970s it was helped by the establishment of two large manufacturing industries, one largely through local initiative.

However, one third of Cowra's 1986 workforce was employed either by government or by one of the three large manufacturing industries. The prospects for development of locally based large scale industry appear bleak, and government now seeks the opposite of closer settlement. The reality of this change was brought home to Cowra in a New South Wales Department of Agriculture report in 1983 (Nott, 1983), which claimed that average farm size in Cowra Shire was too small. The Minister for Agriculture, in his Foreword to the report, said that "over half the rural holdings in Cowra Shire are already too small for efficient utilization."

Cowra Shire is dependent on government in two ways. It employs twenty-one per cent of the local workforce (1986 Census). There are more government employees than farmers, the latter being sixteen per cent of the workforce. The only growth in government employment, however, appears to be in local government. Between 1976 and 1986 Censuses, State and Federal Government employment in Cowra declined by four people. The other form of dependence, on government decision making, is more powerful. Government decisions can affect the range and quality of the district's services, and increasingly importantly where industrial viability depends on government assistance, the extent of employment it offers. Cowra's future will depend on its ability to marshall the support of government, and local government, as will be argued in the next chapter, is the most important medium for Cowra's relations with outside government.⁶
Notes

1 The signatories were described in an article on local history in the *Cowra Free Press* of 28 August, 1939, as "graziers". Craze (ibid) quoted an item in the *Sydney Morning Herald* of 9 August, 1847 which reproduced McDiarmid's letter (without signatures) and reported that it was the product of a meeting of "the most influential settlers and graziers in the district". My search in the Archives Office of New South Wales failed to locate McDiarmid's letter, and hence I could not ascertain the identities of the thirty-four signatories.

2 The Diary of Thomas O'Shaughnessy, 1835 - 1903, copy held by Cowra and District Historical Society.

3 The expansion of wheat production and town growth should not be assumed to be effects of settlement of the land by selectors on small farms. Gammage (1987: 13) found that wheat production remained the province of squatters and the wealthier selectors. The big properties declined but slowly, and their owners were in the best position to take advantage of a market for wheat. They also had some excellent cultivable land. A passage from the *Cowra Guardian* (28 January, 1905: 2) illustrates the local impact of wheat and the persistence of large landholdings. It is a description of the township by "an outsider" who noted that "this is the centre of one of the great wheat growing districts in Australia. The largest acreage under wheat at least in New South Wales the property of one man is Brundah, the property of Mr Woods, some twenty miles south of Cowra."

4 J. C. Ryall was the founding proprietor of Cowra's first newspaper, the *Cowra Free Press*. In 1928 he published a series of articles in the paper in which he recalled the history of the town. Ryall was an active and vocal townsman. He was also a strong supporter of closer settlement, and was implicitly opposed to the squatters, as references to the *Free Press* will indicate.

5 The *Free Press* of 14 January, 1911, announced the impending sale of 3 417 acres of Cudgelo in nineteen blocks, and a few weeks later, on 1 February, 660 acres of Jerula were said to be available. The *Free Press* of 9 March, 1918, reported that a property of 11 000 acres was being offered for sale in twenty blocks, because the owner was in poor health and his brother was at the war in Europe. The *Lachlan Leader*, which had superseded the *Free Press*, asked in a prominent headline on 17 August, 1939, "Will Jerula be Subdivided for Closer Settlement?" It followed the headline with a report that the Chamber of Commerce was to press the
State Government to allocate land to settlers. On 13 November, 1939, it reported that 'Jerula' had been sold in three lots for the trustees of the estate of the late Mrs Campbell.

6 I circulated ten copies of a draft of a paper of about 25,000 words, from which this Chapter was condensed, to members of the discussion group in which I participated during fieldwork. I met with the group for a productive discussion about the paper. Their response was very favourable, although just one (older) member felt that the situation was not so bad as the paper portrayed. I was gratified that my interpretation of Cowra's history made sense to, and was welcomed by, some well-informed local people. I also received very useful feedback on the paper from a local historian, and a positive response from the Shire Clerk, who was at the time chairman of a local committee working on a publication about the district's history.
Chapter Five

ELITISM AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Examination of the structure of local government in Cowra, with consideration of the possibility of elitism, reveals the arena of local politics. The elitist or pluralist question will not lead to ultimate conclusions. It rather poses problems, providing a base for exploration of power relations. This chapter discusses some literature on local government, describes its roles, establishes it as a political arena, considers it as an institution of representative democracy, and concludes after analysis of a reputation survey and discussion of elitism in Cowra Shire. Data will be drawn from a reputation survey and other interviews, Council documents and the Cowra Guardian.

Perspectives on Local Government

The community power and local government literatures have not, unfortunately, coincided, although there is a place for them to do so. The Australian local government system was cast in a British mould, and local power studies have been largely American. British and Australian local government studies have seldom sought to analyse power relations. They have rather explored democratic and administrative aspects of local government using the tools of political science. The British have debated the conceptual and empirical problems of local government as manifestations of the role of the state in capitalist society more often than tackling the problems of local power relations.

The various approaches to the study of local government are instructive in the way that they have
defined its problems for study and formulated research agendas. These perspectives fall very roughly into three camps: Marxist and Weberian in sociology, and a political science approach. The Marxist approach sees a problem of inequitable distribution of power and wealth as a product of local government as an arm of the state, through which a ruling class maintains its dominance. Writers such as Cockburn (1977), Magnusson (1986), and in the Australian context, Mowbray (1984) see the problems of local government determined by class relations, finding the roles of local government to be necessary to the maintenance of the capitalist system (Mowbray, 1984: 75). Those working from a Weberian perspective range from, for example, Saunders (1979, 1981, 1983), and Elliott and McCrone (1982), who reacted against the determinism of the Marxist approach but continued to see the problems of local government as having a class component, to the 'urban managerialists', including Pahl (1975) and, in Australia, Jones (1981), who, from an empirical basis, found the problems of local government to lie in relations between bureaucratic institutions and people. The political science approach resembles the one-dimensional pluralist view, as it looks at political processes and the performance of local government against criteria of democratic ideals. Such work is exemplified by Bowman (n.d.), Painter (1973) and Johnson (1979) in Australia, and a host of British studies including Hampton (1970) and Dearlove (1973). The approach of this study is closest to that of Saunders, acknowledging the fruitfulness of a class perspective while accepting an important empirical place for people-institution relations.

**Why Study Local Government?**

Local government has been widely ignored in the study of Australian society, and not without reason. The reasons, however, increasingly appear mistaken. They include the belief that local government's functions are determined by State government, which is substantially correct; the belief that its functions are menial, which is partly correct; and the belief that it is of no consequence nor interest to the people it 'governs', which is manifestly incorrect. The importance of local government to the people of Cowra, and its role as a link with central government, make it the arena of local power relations.
For Cowra, the relationships between local and State and Federal governments are important, despite the power which the State government wields over local government functions. The process of centralisation in Cowra's history has made access to central decision-making increasingly important, as local demands to make the relationship serve local interests have grown. Local government is a product of State government legislation. It has been described as "ancillary" to State government functions (Bowman, 1983: 165), and closer to the materialist mould, "an extension of the state apparatus", with "somewhat tenuous autonomy" (Halligan and Paris, 1984: 65). At the extreme, it functions as an agency of State government, enforcing state regulations. As Halligan and Paris (ibid) point out, however, the relationship is not so simple, for co-operation between local and State government is necessary, and there is room for consultation and negotiation.

State and Federal government rhetoric surrounding local government sometimes emphasises the value of consultation and negotiation with the local level. The Advisory Council for Inter-Government Relations (1984: 5) included representation of local interests as well as community development, co-ordination of services and acting as local catalyst in the wider political arena, among the reasons it cited for the establishment of local government in Australia. Local government has been seen to have important roles as local "entrepreneur" (Bowman, 1983: 169) and as local community leader (Jones, 1981: 16).

The responsibilities of local government, as initially laid down by New South Wales Government legislation, were narrow, and would appear menial in these times of broad ranging government activity. They did not include local advocacy (Jones, 1981: 43), but did include 'roads, rates and rubbish', which attract no glamour. They have, however, grown substantially, and have always been fundamental to local economic activity and quality of life. The traditional road maintenance role has great importance to rural dwellers who are highly dependent on transport, a significance quite different to that which urban dwellers may attribute. Water, sewerage and public health are fundamental to town life.

State government is now nudging local government into a wider variety of roles. Kilmartin,
Thorns and Burke (1985: 167) and Mowbray (1987) associated this with a political climate of increasing conservatism. The New South Wales (Labor) Minister for Local Government, in 1986, wrote of such expansion in a positive tone, emphasising local coordination and advocacy roles (The Hon. K. Stewart, Foreword to Colebatch and Degeling, 1986: 4). The then New South Wales opposition (National Party) spokesperson on local government was quoted in 1987, with a more aggressive posture, as saying that "We believe in the principle of devolving more power to Local Government through legislation" (Local Government and Shires Associations of New South Wales, 1987: 12). The same parliamentarian (who was to become the local representative after changes of electoral boundaries and government at the March, 1988 election) stated at a meeting, which I attended in Cowra in 1987, that all State welfare programs would be handed over to local government, if his Liberal-National Party coalition was to gain power.¹

Cowra Shire Council is a large organisation, having a turnover in 1986 of about 7.7 million dollars (Cowra Shire Council, 1987 Estimates). Local organisations called on it to share some of those resources. A local bush fire brigade appealed, successfully, for the donation of a truck which was surplus to the Council's requirements. A group trying to establish a neighbourhood centre sought assistance, unsuccessfully, with accommodation. The Council had an important role in distribution of goodies from State and Federal government, as illustrated by the process of distribution of Commonwealth Bicentennial grants to local organisations. When a member of the local Bicentennial Committee put forward a proposal for a 'Bicentennial project', he said that the first step towards the project would be acquisition of the support of Council. The potential for debate over allocation of council priorities is essentially what prompted Wild (1974a: 157) to state that "most controversies in a small town that do not start in the local government council usually finish there." Some even saw the activity of the Council to be crucial to the economic prosperity of the town, or rather they see its inactivity as a threat. A local businessperson wrote of the Council, in a letter to the Guardian (23 February, 1987):

"The few foresighted, competent councillors are drowned out by the pathetic gaggle of amateurs. Until they are replaced or inspired by the drive and entrepreneurial enthusiasm of Orange and Dubbo [large regional centres] councils this town will continue to stagnate and collapse under the
weight of its own, Council driven, inertia."

The support of the Council could be crucial when local organisations sought help from State or Federal authorities, as those authorities saw the Council as a potential guarantor for the venture proposed. The committee which eventually set up the neighbourhood centre, having received State government assistance after much uncertainty and delay, felt that it had been greatly disadvantaged by the Council's unwillingness to support it. An executive member of a group involved in a proposal to have an economic plan drawn up for Cowra using State funding was pessimistic about the proposal because of an anticipated adverse reaction to a request for support from the Council. A voluntary worker who had important roles in establishing facilities for youth and the elderly found the Council's support to have been crucial in both cases from the earliest stages. "If it doesn't support you, you are doomed to failure". A member of the committee which set up a child care centre told me that the project "got nowhere" until Council offered support. It seems that State and Federal authorities saw local government as a legitimating agency for requests from local organisations. This was not a new phenomenon. In 1960 the Municipal Council found that, for the town's Old People's Welfare Committee to obtain Federal funding for an aged persons nursing service, the Council would have to offer sponsorship (Cowra Guardian, 19 January: 11). To local eyes, however, the Council had become more than a channel of communication. It was the locale for civic activity. As a 'local knowledgeable' and prospective candidate for the 1987 Council election said:

"It's something that everybody who is civic minded thinks at some time that they'll have a go at. Just about everything significant needs Council support at some stage."

While my experience with local organisations indicated that the Council was seen as a convenient place to look for support from government, it was also seen as a convenient place to express dissatisfaction with government. This could even extend to the possibility of local influence on Federal Government policy. A group of candidates, mostly business people, at the 1974 Municipal election, included in their platform a preparedness to express local needs to Canberra
At a 1986 meeting of Cowra Shire Council, a letter from a nearby district council of the Livestock and Grain Producers Association (or LGPA, which has since changed its name to the Farmers' Association) was discussed. The letter expressed a desire to have the Federal Government

"... make an attempt to transfer the current Welfare State into the Work Ethic State. Social Service recipients could work one day a week or one week per month for their pay..."

The accessibility of local government officials and elected members, and the visibility of its taxation made it a ready target for complaint. When I asked a councillor if he thought that people reacting to Council decisions were really expressing their anger at State and Federal government, he replied:

"Definitely. Because they can't get at the State government... Because there is no easy way of venting their anger they do it the easy way and take it out on local government. Say with water rates. They make a much bigger fuss about small changes in water rates than about big losses in their pensions."

As Jones (1981: 105) pointed out, rates are a very visible form of taxation compared to, for example income and sales tax. They became a target for farmer protest during the 1985-86 rural recession (The Land, 1986).

There were other significant organisations in the district, but rather than the Council entering their arenas, they entered the Council's. A Ratepayers Association was the only group set up specifically to oppose the Council. But it merely reacted to Council decisions which ratepayers perceived as a threat, like a change in water rating, as referred to by the councillor quoted above. One of its 1986 leaders confessed to me that it was not a force in local politics.

Cowra has a Chamber of Commerce and a Tourist and Development Corporation, both of which participated in the Council's political arena. They both make decisions which affect the entire
locality. The larger and more active Tourist and Development Corporation received Council funding, and its Board of Directors contained Council representatives. Its affairs tended to be issues for Council to debate rather than vice versa, through its partial dependence on Council support, and Council's interest in its investment in the Corporation. The Corporation had an indirect interest in the Council, in that the latter's policies could affect district development. The Council was the arena in which those policies were determined, largely in the context of planning and building regulation decisions. The Chamber of Commerce was smaller and had not played such a prominent role in the establishment of industry. It promoted local business and initiated and entered debate on Council affairs, debate which culminated in decisions taken in Council meetings.

The Council's network cast its influence across other public authorities. It had delegates to regional water and electricity reticulation organisations and a regional library service. It had delegates to the local sport co-ordination body, the Showground Trust, a State Recreation Area Trust and local committees responsible for a retirement village, and the annual local festival, as well as the aforementioned Bicentennial Committee and the Tourist and Development Corporation.

Political life in Cowra focused on the Shire Council as the arena of local power relations. Its functions were seen as significant, and sometimes seen as crucial. It was accessible government, which showed some possibility for accepting local influence, and even extending that influence into State and Federal arenas. While other organisations provided a specialised link with central government, no other provided a general local representation function which was looked to for support. Amid growing local perception of the detrimental effects of post-war centralisation, the resources of Cowra Shire Council had taken on greater significance.

**Participation and the Council**

The history of local government shows the creation of a peculiar kind of arena, established to
service property and enable the growth of cities and towns, while removing the burden of infrastructure costs from the colonial governments. Property issues were written into the agenda of Australian local government from its beginning. This has not changed substantially.³ "Local politics is primarily over territory: who owns it, how much it is taxed and how services are provided to it" (Chapman and Wood, 1984: 48).

The class role of local government has not been changed from below. In Australia it has certainly not been presented as a seed-plot of revolution as it has in Britain (Corrigan, 1979), although one council was controlled by Communist Party members, in a colliery district between 1944 and 1947 (Mowbray, 1986). The Labor Party, however, remains the only major party to actively and overtly endorse candidates for local office. The conservative parties have apparently been happy with local government. This need not be surprising, as local government can be seen "partly as a co-operative of landowners" (Jones, 1981: 23).

A continuing dominant property service function of local government fits easily into images of it held by both local and State government. It is really not seen to 'govern' at all, at least by State authorities and its own participants. It cannot make laws. State institutions have seen it as "mechanisms for providing infrastructure services . . ." (Chapman and Wood, 1984: 11). Its participants see it "not as a part of the governing system, but rather as a limited, functional, managerial system" (ibid: 14).

Many writers, including Bowman (n.d. and 1983), Atkins (1979), Power, Wettenhall and Halligan (1981), Chapman and Wood (1984) and Sinclair (1987) have found Australian local government elected representatives to be largely male, middle aged or older, and to be of small business, farm or professional occupation. Burdess (1984) found that there were three times as many employers and self-employed people among local government members than among the New South Wales population as a whole. The reasons for this go beyond the range of functions of local government into rules of the institution, which for example, demand substantial personal resources. Participants are required to perform a demanding task in their own time. Moreover, farmers, business people and professionals fit easily into the image of local government as
property manager. The conservative ideal of local government is elitist rather than pluralist; it is seen as an organisation rather than a political arena.

The recent history of local government membership in Cowra Shire shows signs of elitism, in that farmers, business people, professionals and men have been dominant. Women and other occupations have, however, appeared. From 1947 to 1986, forty-two of the fifty-four persons who served on Cowra Municipal and Cowra Shire Councils were in farm, business, management or professional occupations. The remainder was distributed among trades (five), railway employment (two), bandmaster, council employment, clerical, home duties and retail employment (one each). Local business proprietorship was the most prominent occupation, claiming twenty-one of those who served. Waugoola Shire's councillors were all farmers and male. The first and only women (two) in local government in Cowra were elected to the Municipal Council in 1971. One served two terms and the other served four; the latter including five consecutive annual terms as Mayor. Cowra Shire Council, at the beginning of 1986, had five councillors (including one woman) in local business, five farmers (two had retired and one also had town business interests), one tradesman and one teacher. Their ages ranged from early forties to late sixties. The presence of a small number of councillors who are not male, farmers, professionals and business people suggests that the councils have not been entirely elitist, in the manner that elitism was identified by Wild (1983) in terms of occupation and gender.

The possibility of an elite might loom, as observed by Saunders (1979: 227) if it were found that the turnover of councillors was particularly slow, indicating a climate in which conservative ideas would have time to spread among potentially radical newcomers and allow opportunities for alliances to develop. The fifty-four people who served on Cowra Municipal and Shire Councils between 1947 and 1986 occupied 134 terms of office (excluding by-elections). Waugoola Shire had particularly strong continuity. Twenty-three councillors occupied its ninety-nine terms of office, compared to forty-three occupying the ninety-nine terms of office (excluding by-elections in both councils) of the Municipal Council between 1947 and 1977. While the turnover was slow, there have virtually always been plenty of candidates for electors to choose from, at least on the Municipal and Cowra Shire Councils (Tables 5.1 to 5.3). This suggests that the process
of co-optation by incumbents of acceptable nominees made possible by a popular lack of enthusiasm for nomination (as described by Sinclair, 1987: 10) has not dominated Cowra local government.

Seats on the Municipal Council were sought after, but were difficult to wrest from incumbents. (The advantage of incumbency in local government has been identified elsewhere by Painter, 1973: 70). The same conclusion can be applied to the other councils, but enthusiasm for nomination was substantially lower in Waugoola. 119 people nominated for the ninety-nine seats contested in Waugoola's general elections, while 160 nominated for the same number of seats on the Municipal Council. Cowra Shire Council has been relatively more popular, with seventy candidates having contested thirty-five seats in its three general elections to 1987.

Table 5.1
Elections for Cowra Municipal Council, 1947 to 1977

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Nominations (for 9 seats)</th>
<th>Retiring</th>
<th>Newly elected</th>
<th>Sitting defeated</th>
<th>Returned</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>1947</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
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<td>1953</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<td>17</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>1962</td>
<td>12</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>1977</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Insufficient nominations to require an election.
Source: Cowra Guardian and records held by Cowra Shire Council.
Table 5.2
Elections for Waugoola Shire Council, 1947 to 1977

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Nominations (for 9 seats)</th>
<th>Retiring</th>
<th>Newly elected</th>
<th>Sitting defeated</th>
<th>Returned</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1947</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>1953</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1*</td>
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<tr>
<td>1956</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4#</td>
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<td>1959</td>
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<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>1977</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9+</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* The successful candidate had served previously on Waugoola Council.
# Two of the successful candidates had served previously on Waugoola Council.
** Of the three newly elected, two had served previously and the third was the son of a former Councillor.
+ Insufficient nominations to require an election.
Source: Cowra Guardian and records held by Cowra Shire Council.

Table 5.3
Elections for Cowra Shire Council, 1980 to 1987

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Candidates</th>
<th>Retiring</th>
<th>Newly elected</th>
<th>Sitting defeated</th>
<th>Returned</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>32</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4#</td>
<td>5*</td>
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<tr>
<td>1983</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3**</td>
<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Council was reduced from 12 seats to 11 prior to the 1987 election.
# Two of the successful candidates had served previously.
* The 12 seat Cowra Shire replaced the 18 seats of the Shire and Municipal Councils.
** One of the successful candidates had previously served on Cowra Municipal Council.
Source: Cowra Guardian and Cowra Shire Council records.
Once elected to local government in Cowra one's seat is reasonably secure, but I would not have expected so during fieldwork. I heard people speak of a necessity for a clean-up in the Council. While I did not take a poll, I was left with no doubt that local affairs had inflamed sometimes passionate dissatisfaction around the electorate. Expressions of dissatisfaction and even anger came as readily from, for example, wealthy landowners as from railway employees, and from women as readily as men. Throughout fieldwork I detected a desire for a fresh start, reminiscent of the despondency reported by McIntyre and McIntyre (1944) but with evidence of determination rather than fatalism. Yet, at the 1987 election, all eight sitting councillors who nominated were returned, albeit by narrow margins for some. It seemed that much of the electorate secretly wanted to maintain an elite. The conditions for elitism seem fertile in Cowra.

**Elitism and Reputations**

Pursuit of the objectives of traditional elitist-pluralist enquiry would require three further steps: reputation, position and issue analyses. The traditional search for evidence of elitism, the reputation survey, makes a minor, but useful, contribution to this thesis, as it did for Saunders (1979). Reputation surveys seek perceptions of power relations. Like many other such projects, mine used the question: "Who do you feel are the influential people around Cowra?" If that invoked a query, I added: "Who would people feel could help them to get a local project going?" Individual influence also came up in conversation about local politics; some people volunteered an opinion about the location of influence without being asked.

The data analysed consist of the statements of twenty people whom I believed to have a good knowledge of local affairs. Three of them volunteered opinions before I would have asked them. Of the twenty, seven were farmers, four had town businesses, four were skilled or semi-skilled workers and the remaining five were professionals. Six were councillors, and five were women. All had lived in Cowra for fifteen years or longer. I did not ask respondents to think of any particular number of influentials. I did encourage them to think of as many as they could. I probed where necessary, especially among those who had volunteered opinions.
caused difficulty. None could think of more than six influentials, two said emphatically that there was only one, and most could think of only two or three. One respondent said that there were none and was embarrassed by the question. There was no point trying to wring more out of them. On all but four occasions the question was asked in a pre-arranged interview situation.

The opinions expressed offered evidence of the way individuals interpret the power structure of their locality. The thinking behind their attributions of power was often more revealing than the identities of the individuals named. I explored these interpretations whenever the flow of conversation was amenable. This aspect is discussed after presentation of the quantitative results of the search for reputations, and introductions to some reputedly influential people.

A glance at the results would, in a traditional analysis, indicate an elitist structure, although as Wild (1974a: 151) pointed out, this alone means little. Nineteen names were mentioned. One name was mentioned by fourteen of the twenty respondents, another by nine and another by five. Among the remaining sixteen only three were mentioned more than once (one three times and the others twice). Among the twenty knowledgeable, just a few names came consistently to mind. Five of the six who were mentioned more than once were either Shire Councillors or Council staff. The other was a prominent local business person who took no apparent interest in local affairs in 1986, and from my reading of the Guardian and other conversations with local knowledgeable, had not overtly done so in the past.

The person mentioned fourteen times is 'Ab' (Albert) Oliver. He is well worthy of an introduction. Ab is the epitome of a prominent and respected citizen. His impressive record of work in community organisations gained him the award of an MBE in 1974. He was first elected to Cowra Municipal Council in 1954, and served continuously, except for two three year periods when he did not nominate for personal reasons, until his retirement in 1987. He was Mayor for seven years and Deputy Mayor for eight, and was the first President of Cowra Shire, serving as such from 1981 to 1985.

Ab was raised on a farm, with his eight brothers and one sister. The farm was substantial and
well known. At its sale in 1964, it was described in the *Guardian* (11 February, page 2) as "one of the choicest lots in the Lachlan Valley", having been in the Oliver family since late last century. Ab was schooled locally, and after war service, entered employment with a bank. He later, in partnership, started a farm supply business, which still prospers in Cowra, one of three substantial businesses in the main street to carry the Oliver name. His brother, Ray, was President of Waugoola Shire between 1960 and 1964, having been first elected to that Council in 1950. Their father had served on Waugoola in its early years. Ray was endorsed by the Liberal Party as their candidate for the State electorate of Young in 1955; Ab was endorsed by the then Country (now National) Party for the Federal seat of Hume in 1974. Neither won a seat, nor has any other Cowra local politician since World War II.

The 'influential' who was mentioned nine times was the Shire Clerk, Neville Armstrong. His nine nominations demand a minor qualification, because on two occasions he was mentioned only after my prompting. In both cases I asked for an opinion about Neville's influence, because I had in previous conversations heard each respondent attribute power to him. Both respondents were farmers, and both had mentioned Ab first, followed by the names of two other Councillors. The significance of their forgetting Neville will be clarified later.

As the Council's chief officer, Neville was an important actor on Cowra's political stage. Unlike many bureaucrats, but in common with his local government colleagues elsewhere (Jones and Stewart, 1985: 21), he was highly visible, his name and photograph appearing frequently in the *Guardian*. He was also known for his participation in local organisations, particularly, with Ab Oliver among others, the Rotary Club. Neville was a career local government officer, having worked for rural local government since completing high school. He came to Cowra to take up the position of Town Clerk in 1968.

Don Kibbler was mentioned five times. Don had been successful in local business. He was best known as President of the Tourist and Development Corporation, and as such a prime mover behind the project in which, with support from Japan, the Japanese Garden which symbolises Cowra's relationship with Japan was established. He was also a member of Rotary. Don had a
high public profile, from his several businesses over many years as well as his public activity. He grew up in Cowra with his three brothers who were also in local business. His parents, having migrated from England before World War II, were known for their building firm.

The person mentioned three times was Barbara Bennett. Barbara was elected to the Municipal Council in 1971, and served until her retirement in 1987, including five years as Mayor, and three years as Deputy President of Cowra Shire. Barbara has farming and business interests. Her family history goes back to the earliest settlers. Again she was a familiar personality to local residents.

The 1986 Shire President, Cyril Treasure, was mentioned twice. Cyril is a retired farmer, living in town. He was first elected to Waugoola Shire in 1950, and held the Shire Presidency from 1964 until its demise in 1980. He was elected President of Cowra Shire in 1985. Like all the above 'influentials', Cyril had an impressive record of service to local organisations, and in his Presidential capacities, had been very visible. The other person to be mentioned twice was a local businessman who was not visible. He took no active part in local politics during 1986.

The remainder, who were all mentioned once, includes two other Shire Councillors, one being Neville Pengilly, a local business proprietor, and the other Tim West, a retired farmer. Tim was best known as a prominent member of the Labor Party, having been endorsed as Labor candidate for the State seat in 1974 and 1981. Neville had been prominent in local organisations, including the Chamber of Commerce.

Three other business people and four professionals were mentioned, as was the Shire Engineer. Of those only the Shire Engineer has a public profile in local politics. Jim Finnimore was, like the Shire Clerk, a career local government officer. He also came to Cowra to take up his position with the Municipal Council, in 1971, from a larger town council. One of the female respondents mentioned three women, the only women other than Barbara Bennett to be mentioned. All three were active in local organisations.
If this study were in the traditional elitist-pluralist mould, it might now, in the manner of Wild (1974a), Pandey (1972) and McNab (1970), search for these reputed influentials around important positions. The above descriptions indicated that there was an association between having a reputation for influence and proximity to the Shire Council. All of those mentioned more than once were councillors. The town's most important local organisations were also represented among the reputed influentials, by senior members who were also councillors. Ab Oliver, Don Kibbler and Barbara Bennett were all on the Board of the Tourist and Development Corporation. Neville Pengilly had been President of the Chamber of Commerce. (Its 1986 president unsuccessfully contested the 1987 Shire general election.) The Services' Club (a social off-shoot of the Returned Servicemen's League) was also prominent, largely through prosperity derived from its role as a place of entertainment. Tim West had been its Vice-President. There is however, one confounding factor. The locally politically very active LGPA was not so closely represented, with none of its then or recent executive mentioned, and indeed no such people on the Council.

As foreshadowed above, there is at least as much value in qualitative analysis of responses to the reputation survey as there is in the accounting exercise carried out above. The notion of reputation is problematic, and worthy of specification. Taking an interactionist approach, one could see a two-way connection between reputations and influence. Individuals are perceived by others to be influential at the same time as perceptions (reputations) reinforce the legitimacy, or illegitimacy, of influence. That is, reputations sustain power as well as indicating perceptions of it. Someone who saw Ab Oliver as a person who could have helped a project was at the same time recreating as well as indicating his reputation.

Bailey (1971: 22) offered a starting point:

"A self is a set of reputations, and these reputations spring from belonging to a community. The reputations arise from the interactions in which a man engages and from the messages which these interactions signal about him. These signals, in their turn, are triggers which set off in the mind values and beliefs, which are linked to one another, not simply as aggregates but in
patterns of inclusion and exclusion.

In these terms, analysis of reputations could start by looking for "signals", "values" and "beliefs" which indicate evidence considered and ideologies applied to judgement of reputations. Conversation surrounding responses to the reputation questions contained passages which can be interpreted as such phenomena.

The analysis indicates three types of response, two of which show reaction to signals from one locale of interaction, and the other from another. The first locale of interaction drawn upon by respondents was the local political arena: the affairs of the Shire Council. The second was what could be called the status system. As Birch (1959) and Anton (1963) noted, reputation for power may be mistaken for status. Analysis will draw on conversations which developed from the reputation questions, and other conversations in which the names of reputed influentials arose.

Eight respondents to the reputations questions made their judgement by thinking about recent local political issues and the people who were prominent in the processes of resolution. This was quite direct in three cases, where the respondents thought back over their own experience, their reading of the Guardian about local affairs, and what they had heard through gossip networks, to conclude that certain people got their way. Neville Armstrong had been the victor in two and Tim West in the other, the latter on the basis of influence he was thought to have through Labor Party networks on appointments made by the State (Labor) Government to the Showground Trust, a matter discussed in, but resolved beyond, the local political arena.

The tendency to use participation in issues as criteria for nominating influentials led me to add doubt to an already dubious method for revealing the power structure, in particular its ability to reveal "concealed influentials", as Wild (1974a) believed that he had found by putting his influence questions to those individuals most often nominated. My attempt to do so merely added to the scores of the other popular nominees. The knowledge I had gained from attending Council meetings and conversations at other meetings and social functions appeared to be more thorough at times than that of the respondents. Even the councillors could be uncertain about
issues. Those outside Council could be well informed on some matters, particularly any with which they had been involved. By the later part of my fieldwork people were thinking of me as knowledgeable, and asking me questions about local politics which I would earlier have thought myself more likely to ask them. The five respondents who did not draw upon knowledge and experience of issues were stating more general expectations. They thought about recent issues because they were uncertain of Ab Oliver's position after he had suffered a defeat. They all concluded that he was still influential, although many had doubts, making a quantitative interpretation hazardous. Their consideration of issues casts a darker shadow across the reputation method as used by elitists, suggesting that it be more useful as an indicator of issues perceived to be important than an indicator of power structures.

The other signals from the political arena were sometimes given a more structural interpretation which did not focus primarily on issues and individuals, and did not draw on personal experience. Seven of the nine respondents who mentioned Neville Armstrong spoke specifically of "The Council" and his relationship to it as the source of influence, rather than the person himself. Consider the contrast between the following statements. A leader of a group which had recently sought help from Council said:

"I'm led to believe that he runs the council. Cyril Treasure agreed with [our proposal]. Neville knocked it on the head and there was no further discussion about it."

The decision was attributed to Neville Armstrong as Shire Clerk. In the following statement, made during a conversation which led to the subject of local political influence, an adverse decision was attributed to the Council first, and to Neville's influence over it later in the conversation. It is significant that a spontaneous discussion of the issue brought names to mind, rather than my question seeking names.

"[The water rates issue] is another case of the Council upsetting its constituents. They decreased the amount of water allowed free and increased the excess rate. People are getting exorbitant bills. The least that
the Council should do is explain. . . What can you do? Armstrong really runs the show. The Councillors are irrelevant."

The difference is subtle, but it does indicate that the Council was also seen in a generalised manner as a source of power, and the Shire Clerk was thought powerful because of his position in its administration. The two respondents who mentioned Neville after my prompting spoke with certainty of his power exercised through the Council, but may not have thought to nominate him as an individual. Only people who followed Council affairs closely would have been in a position to observe power struggles between the Shire Clerk and the Shire President at the individual level, as the previous informant quoted believed he had done. Signals travel by devious paths to reach those who attribute reputations. The "What can you do?" question indicates a sense of inevitability to which Neville's reputation would have contributed, and which would have accrued as a resource to him if shared by other relevant actors.

Three of those who nominated local business people not on Council were drawing on a similar perception. Their impression was that town businesses ran the Council, and they nominated people they knew to be prominent in business. One added that they were influential because they were "achievers". All three of these respondents were farmers.

Those who nominated Ab Oliver were drawing on another source of signals, emanating from the status structure. Ab was blessed with enormous prestige and esteem, the signals indicating to recipients the most valued personal characteristics. His prestige came from his family background, and he was esteemed for the extent and generosity of his work in local organisations. He was not seen to have sought status, and was not condescending. In the words of a respondent who replied to the question without hesitation:

"Ab Oliver. He is from a long standing family and he is not pushy. We need good solid citizens like Ab. He is a thorough gentleman, my favourite person, the most solid citizen. He isn't socially minded; you know, up there with the Joneses, name dropping."

Another respondent spoke of a popular impression of Ab:
"Ab is the only [influential]. He is respected and always will be. People take notice of what he says."

Two respondents spoke of Barbara Bennett in similar terms. Three had difficulty nominating Ab, because of his recent defeat and loss of what they had seen as total support, but felt that they had to nominate him. Two attributed influence, or popularly perceived influence, to the entire Oliver family. A respondent, of professional occupation, said:

"If someone said what do we do about something, everyone would say speak to someone Oliver, but really there are lots of people who work away quietly."

A tradesman respondent did not give the Oliver name legitimacy, saying "The Olivers, they run this town. They tolerate you, that's all."

Seven of the nine who mentioned Neville Armstrong added a note of illegitimacy to their assessment of his influence. This ranged from the inevitability stated above to a simple "He is powerful but he shouldn't be". He is the illegitimate wielder of the Council's generalised power. His position is one of authority rather than leadership (Oxley, 1978: 186). His lack of legitimacy had several components. Most obviously, as a bureaucrat, his power did not derive from the democratic process which bestowed a formal legitimacy upon the councillors. Nor did he possess the valued attributes of longevity of residence and the esteem associated with being a successful battler with the insecurities of business and farm careers.

His name, along with those of Ab Oliver and Barbara Bennett, would have been comfortable for people to mention in a climate of egalitarianism. As Oxley (1978: 54) said, "leadership is an essentially unegalitarian activity". Neville's position as a bureaucrat was seen as inherently unegalitarian, in its separation from the traditionally equalising forces of the physical and business environments, and its formal and impersonal bureaucratic authority.
Barbara Bennett and Ab Oliver were held in such esteem, and Don Kibbler was so obviously active in local affairs, that influence for them was, for all respondents except the one who saw the inequality implicit in the Olivers' position, quite acceptable. The willingness to mention those four, the reluctance of one person to name any and two to name more than one, and the tendency to think of 'behind-the-scenes' people initially in generalised terms suggests that respondents were either not wishing to look for 'behind-the-scenes' manipulators, or knew of none. It was easy for respondents to infer from the reputation survey questions that I was looking for an elite. Only four respondents spoke of anything that could be interpreted as 'behind-the-scenes' activity by a group of influential people. None of those four was disparaging about such activity; two were quite positive about it, one suggesting that the influential business people deserved more influence, and the other saying that there was a group of women active in local affairs who deserved more prominence and recognition.

Only the respondent who attributed great power to the Oliver family, having given his opinion spontaneously before I could ask the usual question, gave any impression of an elite operating the local political system. He was the furthest of all respondents from the Olivers in prestige terms, and in the same conversation referred to an 'establishment' in the town. I heard others of similar status position also use the general term 'establishment', without attaching individual names to it, and in the same conversation speak of Ab Oliver as a personal friend. 'Establishment' was used to describe unspecified prominent local business proprietors, of whom the Olivers as a family are the most visible. This suggests that a generalised and powerful group was seen to exist but without, for some people at least, upsetting particularistic egalitarian ideals. The reputation survey indicated that some knowledgeable people saw a small group, prominent in local government and most of the district's important organisations, as the only influentials. It has offered some preliminary indicators of ideological factors entering power relations, in the form of legitimacy and status, which while not eliminating the possibility of pluralism, offers some evidence that the ground may have been difficult for it.
Conclusion: Structure and Interests

The reputation survey, by suggesting the identities of people thought to be influential, has also focused attention on the Shire Council as the local political arena, by showing how knowledgeable people thought of some of the people close to it as influential, and drew on issues resolved in it to make their judgement. The Council was also seen in a generalised manner as a source of power, represented by the Clerk who pursued its interests. So too was the unnamed group of people which some survey respondents described as an "establishment". This thinking is structural, in that it is constructing an abstract entity which is beyond its individual members. Those entities were attributed interests of their own. They were symbolised for the Council by the person of the Shire Clerk, and for the "establishment" by the Oliver family, people who were assumed to pursue particular identifiable interests. It is similarly possible to expect other councillors to have pursued interests that they 'represented'. The model of elitism used by Wild (1983) is based on this approach, for it assumes that there is an interest for employed people, farmers, women and other such identifiable groups to each represent and pursue in local government. It implicitly proposes that people of different backgrounds, according to gender or occupation (or loosely class), bring different motivations for action to council. The existence of such structural interests, which might be represented, creates the possibility of pluralism.

In these terms an elitist council, of the type identified by Wild (1983) would be one in which a narrow range of interests was represented, rather than one merely controlled by a small group. In Cowra, councillors appeared not to represent only the interests of middle class males, thereby suggesting elimination of the elite as clique model despite the results of the reputation and position surveys. The presence of Tim West as a Labor Party member and actor in the political arena (one of two Labor Party members on Council in 1986) suggests a possible counter force, just as the presence of Barbara Bennett on the Council may have helped women to gain the greater prominence and recognition that one respondent sought for them. Barbara described her role to me as representing women. There is, however, no logical or empirical necessity for councillors to pursue sectional interests.
All town and rural dwellers had interests in local government services. Everybody in the Shire had an interest in public health. Everybody in the town had an interest in water, sewerage and drainage, and everybody in the rural area had a keen interest in road construction and maintenance. All had an interest in the Council's financial management. The Council had a public pie which had to be sliced and shared among many people, all of whom elected representatives who could collectively decide where the knife was to cut. This political role was perhaps most obvious in the planning function, in which the Council was responsible for allocation of the Shire's spatial resources. The slice which some people received could not also be received by others, implying potentially conflicting interests. The local advocate and entrepreneur roles discussed above added another dimension to the Council's pie, bringing the prospect of goodies from elsewhere, including State and Federal governments, for which local interests could compete. Bowman's (1983: 179) observation that there was little in local politics to attract attention until people saw their interests threatened needs qualification before application to Cowra in 1986, because many people had felt their interests to be threatened. There would, therefore, appear to have been a recipe for a pluralist polity, in which many interests were actively represented.

Local government, however, has been interpreted traditionally not to operate as a pluralist polity, but has rather been seen as a managerial institution: a kind of people's corporation placed in the trust of an elite. This popular interpretation rests on ideology rather than objective assessment of interests which might be expressed in a local political arena. The narrow range of local government responsibilities should not necessarily produce an elitist structure, when everybody has objective interests to pursue, facilitated in the pluralist ideal by the apparatus of democracy. The roles of councils have not prescribed the range of interests seen to be relevant to them. Rather, their image, or subjective interpretations of their role, and, more importantly, interpretations of the role of councillors, have produced an elitist pattern of representation, in association with the difficulties for wage earners and others of finding the personal resources to participate in local government.

This chapter has indicated some effects of ideology. The judgements made by respondents to the
reputation survey indicate positive value placed on leadership by business, which accords with
the status system, and negative value placed on the prominent position of bureaucratic authority.
Elitist leadership by business rested easily with the popular view of local democracy being a
managerial institution, but the place of the bureaucracy in the political system remains to be
explored. The following three chapters examine issues and non-issues in terms of the interests
which were or were not served through the processes of resolving their conflict. The next
chapter considers some aspects of political processes in which urban amenities were distributed,
by following several issues in which interests were, or were not, expressed.

Notes

1 He did not make clear how the programs would be financed, but given
the National Party's distaste for taxation, welfare and 'big government', local government
might be seen as a place to which costs as well as powers may be devolved, into oblivion. Rural
local government has not shown enthusiasm for such activity (Secretariat to the Joint Officers' Committee of the Local Government Ministers' Conference, 1980). It is quite possible for State
government to overcome reluctance by simply legislating welfare into the role of local government,
as the National Party spokesperson implied that it would do. Devolution in this situation would
mean imposition. Some writers, such as Sharpe (1979) and in Australia, Robin (1986) have seen
devolution as a process of decentralisation in which genuine power is distributed. This would
seem an inappropriate interpretation in circumstances when all that is devolved is unwanted
responsibility. In New South Wales there has been some devolution of planning powers since a
change to legislation in 1978. As evidence to be presented in Chapter Seven will imply, this
devolution is in large part illusory. Those writers who have seen decentralisation have, however,
highlighted the prospects for expansion of the roles of local government, which can only widen its
position as a political arena.

2 As this information was collected in a fieldwork situation in which I
came to know each organisation through contact with people associated with it, as well as
through newspapers and observation, there is a possibility, implied by the work of Granovetter
(1972), that I only came to know some of the relevant organisations by following the pathways
provided by connected individuals. I do not believe that this risk is significant because I learnt
something about each of a large number, perhaps hundreds, of locally relevant organisations, and
the acquaintance networks I established in Cowra cut across class, gender, political and other barriers where network bridges might be weak.

3 Cowra Shire Council has retained the property service function without significant deviation from it. In 1986 it regulated, serviced and planned the Shire, and undertook some entrepreneurial activity. These activities were supervised by its three executive staff: the Health Surveyor, the Shire Engineer and the Shire Clerk. Under a policy decision made in 1983, the Shire Clerk became the "Council’s Chief Administrative Servant and undisputed head of Council’s staff" (Cowra Shire Council Policy Register, entry A.2.02). Each of the executive staff was responsible for a department with specific responsibilities. The Health Surveyor was responsible for much of the regulatory activity, which included building inspections, licences, health and nuisance inspections, litter, and dog and stock impounding. He was also responsible for services which cover immunisation programs and maintenance of buildings including the women’s rest and baby health centres. The Shire Engineer had largely service responsibilities, which corresponded most closely to the traditional local government role. They included road construction and maintenance, water supply, sewerage and drainage, street cleaning, parks, the aerodrome and the swimming pool. He also had town planning, and the entrepreneurial activities of a gravel crusher and a caravan park. The Shire Clerk was responsible for administrative and financial matters, including annual estimates and the rate collection system, and had the entrepreneurial activity of gas supply. A 1986 organisation chart also lists co-ordination with the State local government department and "policy advice" among the Clerk’s functions.
Chapter Six

SPATIAL POLITICS

Power can only accrue to those who have sufficient resources to turn their concerns into issues, unless their concerns correspond to what is determined in the political arena to be appropriate matters for its attention. In that situation, under pluralist assumptions, competing interests are balanced. The 'people's corporation' image of local government, however, suggests contrarily that everybody's concerns are the Council's concerns; there is, therefore, no need for pluralism and no need for political action. Yet from time to time people do act. They may, however, be deflected in the second stage, or ignored in the third stage of Saunders (1979) three stage non-decision making filter. This chapter is the first of three which look at non-decision making processes.

Cowra's 'people's corporation' has organisational interests which lie in the efficient administration of its functions, and the traditional functions of local government, to which it has adhered, serve interests associated with property. Strict adherence to property services functions, however, does not alone rule out pluralism. People with property interests may compete for services, in an albeit confined pluralist-looking polity.

The problem for subordinate groups is, as Saunders (1979: 62) put it, "negotiating the rules of access as operated by local authority 'gatekeepers'". Rules of access may be available to the powerful as ideological resources, especially when they are tied to the organisational objectives of local government by the 'people's corporation' image. This chapter is the first of four which examine issues and non-issues to illustrate differential resources of access. It uses data drawn from observation of Council meetings and activities, documents, interviews, the Commonwealth
Census of Population and Housing, a survey and the *Cowra Guardian*.

**A Framework**

The analysis of issues and non-issues in this and following chapters is framed around a typology of policies developed by Peterson (1981) and used by Dye (1986). Different kinds of policy issues provide different windows on power relations (Yates, 1978: 90). The study of policy development, however, should not be equated with power analysis, for in policy development study the outcome analysed is the policy, not a power relationship. The typology, based on its specification by Dye (1986: 37), describes four types of policy:

- **Allocational**, being the distribution of costs and benefits of traditional property service functions;
- **Developmental**, being aimed at or otherwise associated with local economic development;
- **Redistributional**, which redistributes wealth from rich to poor; and
- **Organisational**, which determines membership of boards and committees.

Direct application of the typology in Australia is made fuzzy by the regulatory functions passed from State to local government, such as administration of health and building regulations and the Dog Act, which do not fit neatly into any of the four policy types. However, the issues to be discussed do, with minimal wedging, fit into one or more of the first three types. Issues will be placed in the typology according to the ways in which they were interpreted, and hence the substance of the debate, or 'non-debate', surrounding them. For this reason, organisational policy will not be discussed separately, as decisions about representation of Council on other bodies were intimately connected to the functions of those bodies, and each could be related to one of the other policy types.

This chapter discusses allocational policy, the next developmental, and the third, what was seen as redistributional policy, so covering the range of business handled by Council. The remainder of the chapter analyses incidents of allocation of costs and benefits which illustrate differential capacities to raise concerns before the Shire Council. It does so after consideration of some
literature on the problem posed by the politics of local government service delivery, a look at a pluralistic period in the history of Cowra local government, and consideration of spatial aspects of Cowra's social structure and service provision in 1986. Analysis of the Council's process of decision making will be followed by case studies which illustrate non-decision making.

The Allocation Problem

Allocational policy determines how services which local government has decided to deliver are allocated, and how costs of those services are to be apportioned. Even routine services may be delivered differentially across the social and spatial dimensions of a locality. The problem which it brings forth is one of equity in service delivery.

Allocation is seen in the 'people's corporation' image as a process of bureaucratic decision making, in which elected members play their part by exercising rational decision criteria as senior members in a partnership with professional bureaucrats, striving for equity. If elected members rationally determine which services are to be offered and the rules for their allocation, they might quite happily leave the rest to bureaucrats (Rich, 1982: 7). This image, however, rests uneasily with the previous chapter's depiction of Cowra Shire Council, around which appeared a plurality of competitors for allocation of Council largesse.

If allocation is found to be inequitable, a problem of explanation arises. It is usually seen to be a matter of ascertaining whether allocation is determined by class factors (that is, do the rich use access to local government to obtain more than the poor?), or by decisions made under bureaucratic rules. In the United States, despite obvious differences in standard of services between rich and poor areas of cities, much research (such as Vedlitz and Dyer, 1984) on the allocation problem favours the bureaucratic decision rule explanation over those which hang on the operation of class bias (Rich, 1982: 2). In parallel with the British urban managerialism approach, this discounts an appreciation of class effects on agenda-setting processes.
The allocation problem concerns institutional responses to public needs, responses dependent on institutional perception of need, or failing such perception, public expression of discontent. Rich malcontents may be more likely than poor to express their wants. The poor would be more likely to opt for "loyalty", putting their faith in elected members or "neglect", such as not voting; they may not have the resources to depart for greener pastures, "exit" (Lyons and Lowery, 1986). Giles and Dantico (1982) found that participation by the rich in matters of urban allocation was aided by their social interaction with other people of high status, and that the prospects of their needs being articulated were consequently greater. Domhoff (1986) added the observation that the poor do not have personal resources available to invest in local affairs.

Allocation is sometimes explained by the 'squeaky wheel' model of local politics, which suggests that the noisiest people 'get the oil' because they squeak the wheel loudly. Bowman (1983) saw the 'squeaky wheel' process as a product of the difficulty of policy formation in Australian local government where policy has been pre-determined from above. In apportioning responsibility to central government, this view ignores the role of the local arena, and distracts attention from two important factors: the cumulation of responses forming de facto policy through precedent, and people not being equally capable of turning the wheel to make it squeak.

**Progress Associations**

Some history will show that people have been able to raise allocation issues, under the banners of progress associations. McIntyre and McIntyre (1944: 117) found that a progress association "assumes some degree of leadership, and carries out some of the activities demanded from the council, although it has no official status". Oeser and Emery (1957) found a progress association, but an inactive one, the lack of action being attributed to poor leadership. These studies were carried out at a time of rapid growth in Cowra and great activity among its progress associations. They appeared in new and growing urban areas, as noted by Painter (1973), but like many such movements, faded after making satisfying gains (Pahl, 1975).
The residents of Mulyan, Taragala and West Cowra owe a great deal to progress associations, particularly the small bands of energetic citizens who took initiatives to establish amenities in their areas during the 1950s and 60s (Map 2). The standard of urban services in Cowra during World War II was reported by an outsider, from the Social Studies Department of Sydney University, to be very poor. Streets and footpaths were found to be in bad condition, and "only half-hearted and sporadic attempts have been made to plant trees along the sidewalks". The problem was implicitly attributed to the Municipal Council's business-like approach: "although Council has shown initiative in extending electricity and water supply, it has shown little interest in town improvement of a less revenue-producing nature" (MacColl, 1944: 35). The Cowra Guardian of 19 August, 1952 (page 1) quoted an alderman as complaining that "Cowra's streets and footpaths are in a deplorable condition" with "potholes in every street. . . . We are losing our civic pride."

The progress associations were established in both urban and rural areas to participate in their respective local government arenas. When the announcement of a Taragala Progress Association was made in 1932, its president was quoted in the Cowra Guardian (26 November, page 1) to have said

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

They appear to have been most active in the early post-war period. West Cowra's Association was particularly active, doing such things as cleaning the recreation ground (Cowra Guardian, 7 October, 1947) and asking Council to move the saleyards (Cowra Guardian, 30 September, 1947). In 1951 it purchased land for a park (Cowra Guardian, 13 February). In 1955 it agitated, at length successfully, for connection to the town sewerage system (Cowra Guardian, 11 October). The Cowra Guardian of 4 November reported that Mulyan's Association had asked Council, successfully, for a 'silent cop' (traffic dome) and a drinking fountain. In 1950 it led one of many protests, continuing into the 1970s, to Council about drainage problems (Cowra
Map 2
Cowra Township
(Not to Scale)

To Eugowra
To Canowindra

Edgell's cannery

MULYAN

BELLEVUE
Hill

CENTRAL-

COWRA

Showground

Erambie

WEST

COWRA

To Grenfell

To Young

To Young

To Boorowa

To Blayney

To Wyangala

Lachlan Industries

Railway

Lachlan River
The Cowra Guardian of 1 April, 1952 stated that Mulyan Progress Association was building "almost a civic centre" which contained a hall, park, tennis courts and a playground. In 1960 it announced that it had obtained land on which to build a bowling green (Cowra Guardian, 1 November).

Taragala Progress Association was revived in 1948. Fifty attended its first meeting (Cowra Guardian, 23 March). It built a cricket pitch in its first year, and gave the Mayor the honour of bowling the first ball (Cowra Guardian, 19 November). The following year it tussled with the West Cowra and Mulyan Associations for Council's priority. The Cowra Guardian of 8 February, 1949 reported that Taragala Progress Association "wants to know why parks in West Cowra and Mulyan are being provided with playground equipment, while equipment promised for the Taragala park has apparently been forgotten" (page 9).2

There have also been progress associations in East Cowra, a small, older part of town adjacent to the Blayney road (Map 2), and in the villages. The village associations were also active in the 1950s, lobbying Waugoola Shire. Woodstock's Association was reported to have been resuscitated in 1950 (Cowra Guardian, 30 June). The small village of Noonbinna had formed one the previous year (Cowra Guardian, 4 February, 1949). Other villages also had associations (Map 1).

During this period, both Councils appear to have been pluralistic, inasmuch as these groups actively pursued what they perceived to be the interests of their areas in the local political arenas. An alderman from the early 1950s recollected that the Council had operated like a tug of war between, on one side the Mayor, my informant and their allies, and on the other, the representatives of the progress associations, whom he described as "Labor". Prominent members of the Labor Party were actively involved in the town's progress associations, but not all their leadership was associated with that organisation. A long time local Labor Party member pointed out to me that at least one of the leaders was of conservative persuasion. The associations did, however, represent the interests of people in the poorer parts of town.
The image of Labor progress associations versus conservative Mayor and allies may have been fostered by two personalities, being Leo Lynch, a prominent and vigorous Labor Party and Mulyan Progress Association member, and Mark Whitby, the formidable and conservative Mayor. Whitby and Lynch sparred many times. For example, when Whitby did not want a pensioner rate rebate scheme applied to mortgaged properties, Lynch objected (Cowra Guardian, 5 April, 1960). When Lynch claimed that the cost of a lunch for a State Government minister should be debited to the Mayoral allowance, Whitby described the suggestion as "despicable" (Cowra Guardian, 15 February, 1957, page 2).³

With Whitby in the Mayoral robes, Lynch and his allies remained in opposition. The parliamentary metaphor is not unreasonable, but it is justified more by the strength of Whitby than cohesion among his occasional opponents. Lynch certainly had support, as indicated by the result of the Mayoral election of 1960, which Whitby won by five votes to Lynch's four (Cowra Guardian, 13 December), but to suppose that Lynch was the leader of a coordinated group intent on unseating the forces of conservatism would be stretching the evidence beyond recognition. The point is that this actively political climate was conducive to participation. If regarded only in Lukes' first dimension, the 'people's corporation' resembled a pluralist political arena.

The progress associations put up candidates at Municipal elections. In 1947 the West Cowra Association put up two candidates. Neither was elected, but they received the second and fifth highest votes from West Cowra (Cowra Guardian, 9 December). Its secretary was elected to Council in 1956. In that year the voters of Woodstock elected one of their people to Waugoola Council. The Guardian (4 December, page 11) reported that it "was evident that the township of Woodstock had organised local people to vote solidly for a townsman". However, such localism did not always win the day. In 1965 Taragala's support was not sufficient to secure re-election for its long time champion and Progress Association leader.

In 1951, the Municipal Council decided, with Mayor Whitby's support, to investigate the possibility of dividing the town into wards. The alderman who proposed the investigation believed that wards "would give such areas as Taragala and West Cowra more representation on
the Council" *(Cowra Guardian*, 23 January, page 3). Whitby observed that six of the nine aldermen lived in the same part of town. Waugoola Shire was divided into ridings (not coincident with progress associations although some villages and rural areas had them). If one accepts Wild's (1974a: 144) partial attribution of pluralism in "Marston" council to the existence of wards, then, had Cowra divided into wards as suggested in 1951, it may have continued to display its superficial pluralism into 1986. The ward system has its in-principle supporters in the literature. Chandler (1985) advocated single councillor wards in order to bring representation closer to very localised interests. (Waugoola's wards had three councillors each.)

In 1986, however, Cowra Shire Council looked very different, being much more like the 'people's corporation'. Analysis of allocation in 1986 will be prefaced by social area analysis to investigate a class dimension to Cowra's spatial divisions, followed by analysis of the results of a "Community Needs Survey" to consider a proposition that the poorer areas were relatively deprived.

**Social Areas**

Allocation obtains a spatial dimension where spatial population elements have differential access to local services. This is most likely in urban situations where distinct social areas exist along class lines. Lyons and Lowery (1986) proposed that 'voice' is likely to be more frequent where social boundaries exist and they correspond to political boundaries. In Cowra Shire social boundaries, albeit not always clear cut, do exist within the town and between town and country.

A journey across the township of Cowra would reveal a spatial dimension to social heterogeneity, and a trip through the countryside and villages would also reveal signs of wealth and poverty. The town, village, rural distinction was obviously clear cut, except for the few hobby farms on the town's outskirts, whose residents were to all intents townspeople. The natural environment and the railway gave the town its physical divisions: the Lachlan River separates West Cowra from the rest of town; the railway to Eugowra separates Taragala from
Central Cowra; Bellevue Hill separates North from Central Cowra, and the northern slopes of Bellevue Hill and the road to Canowindra separate North Cowra from Mulyan (Map 2).

Mulyan and Taragala contain much public housing. West Cowra still has a spacious, almost pioneering atmosphere. It has new and older housing, most of it post War, set among paddocks. It also contains the golf course, showground and rugby field. Central Cowra is the oldest area, through which the main street passes. The houses are larger up the slopes of Bellevue Hill north of the main street. North Cowra proceeds from the top of Bellevue Hill, with a number of grand old houses nearer the main street, along a ridge, the upper parts containing large houses which are younger to the north. Down the slope to the west the houses are smaller, and in the vicinity of Redfern Street (the Canowindra road), which I have defined as the boundary, North Cowra looks like Mulyan. Fortunately these apparent social boundaries correspond closely to Commonwealth Census Collection District boundaries.

Figures 5.1 to 5.9 describe these social areas in terms of variables for which 1986 Census data are available. Figures 5.1 to 5.4 indicate the distribution of 'poverty' or low socio-economic status indicator variables: low incomes, labouring occupations, unemployment and lack of motor vehicles. Figures 5.5 to 5.8 indicate the distribution of 'wealth' variables: high incomes, management occupations, large dwellings and dwelling purchase. These variables are similar to some used by Horvath and Tait (1986).

Figures 5.1 to 5.4 consistently show North Cowra and the rural area to have been below the Shire proportion for each low socio-economic status indicator. They also show Mulyan and Taragala to have been well above the Shire's incidence of each indicator. The villages were well above the Shire figures for all except labouring occupations, for which demand in rural areas had declined in the post-war period. West Cowra did not deviate far, except on unemployment. Its unemployment may have been associated with the relatively large proportion of Aboriginal people in West Cowra's population, fourteen per cent, due to the presence of the Erambie Aboriginal settlement in the collection district. The relatively high frequency of low incomes and lack of motor cars in Central Cowra may have been associated with the relatively aged population in the
older parts of town.

Figure 5.1
Deviations of Area Percentages from Shire Percentage of Households with Annual Incomes Less Than $9 001 (Shire = 19 per cent)

Figure 5.2
Deviations of Area Percentages from Percentage of Shire Labour Force Employed as Labourers (Shire = 17 per cent)
Figure 5.3
Deviations of Area Percentages from Shire Percentage of Labour Force Unemployed (Shire = 11 per cent)

Figure 5.4
Deviations of Area Percentages from Shire Percentage of Households without a Motor Vehicle (Shire = 11 per cent)
Analysis of high socio-economic indicators, displayed in Figures 5.5 to 5.8, shows the complementary pattern, with the exception of home purchase/ownership, in which the deviations are smaller than among some of the other variables, and do not fit the overall image of spatial social differentiation in Cowra.

Figure 5.5
Deviations of Area Percentages from Shire Percentage of Households with Annual Incomes Greater than $32,000 (Shire = 15 per cent)

Figure 5.6
Deviations of Area Percentages from Percentage of Shire Labour Force in Management or Professional Occupations (Shire = 35 per cent)
Figure 5.7
Deviations of Area Percentages from Shire Percentage of Dwellings with Four or More Bedrooms (Shire = 19 per cent)

Figure 5.8
Deviations of Area Percentages from Shire Percentage of Dwellings Owned or Being Purchased (Shire = 70 per cent)
The rural area and particularly North Cowra had relatively low proportions of low income households and high proportions of high income households. North Cowra was close to the Shire proportion of labour force in high status occupations and households in large dwellings. The rural area skewed the distribution of these attributes, due to the frequency of small, non-employing farms and large farm houses. Mulyan and Taragala show the most consistently low indicators of socio-economic status. The villages had very few high income households, but they did have some people of high status occupation, and are close to the Shire figure for large dwellings. These indicators reflect the presence of some farmers in their populations. Broadly, Mulyan and Taragala were the poorer parts of town, with the villages also showing signs of problems. North Cowra and the rural areas were relatively wealthy while West and Central Cowra are harder to classify, the former not having been a concentration of low incomes while not a concentration of high status occupations either, and the latter having had a relatively large proportion of low incomes but low unemployment and a low proportion of labouring occupations, all of which may have been related to the advancing age of its population.

Dwelling purchase/ownership reflects the distribution of public and other rental housing rather more than socio-economic status. The frequency of home purchase/ownership did not fall so dramatically like some of the other variables in the poorer areas. The lowest proportion, that of Mulyan which contained much public housing, is sixty-five per cent. Seventy per cent of Cowra Shire's households owned or were buying their dwellings. They paid rates, and had an interest in property.

Cowra's social areas are not so obvious as those of company towns, such as Whyalla (Campbell and Kriegler, 1981), where settlement grew around an organisation and its hierarchy. As one might expect of a town established on a hillside, the wealthy lived nearer the top, but there was no formal exclusion. At least, that is, during the late 1980s among white people. The situation of Aboriginal people has been different, and will be discussed in Chapter Eight.

The socio-economic differentials were more visible to the casual observer than differences in service provision. A quick glance would have suggested that all streets were sealed and in good
condition; there were parks for recreation, footpaths for walking, and water and sewerage were available. There were no areas of manifest deprivation.

Residents, nevertheless, perceived service provision differently around the social areas (Figures 5.9 to 5.12) as indicated by a 'Community Needs Survey' which I co-ordinated while working with a local committee, as reported in Gray (1987a, Appendix A). The data were collected from 509 randomly selected adults who responded to questions about the availability and quality of facilities which were of interest to the committee. The responses form a scale from one, when the facility was perceived to be unavailable in the area, to four, when the respondent felt the facility to be good. Numbers of respondents ranged from thirty-two in West Cowra to 129 in North Cowra, and were approximately proportional to the population of each area.

Figure 5.9
Deviations of Area Mean Scores from Shire Mean Score on Perceptions of Availability/Quality of Playgrounds (Shire mean = 2.43)
Figure 5.10
Deviations of Area Mean Scores from Shire Mean Score on Perceptions of Availability/Quality of Sports Fields (Shire Mean = 2.95)

Figure 5.11
Deviations of Area Mean Scores from Shire Mean Score on Perceptions of Availability/Quality of Parks (Shire Mean = 2.69)
The only consistent feature of Figures 5.9 to 5.12 is the positive response from North Cowra. Many rural dwellers felt themselves to be beyond easy reach of these town services. Mulyan and Taragala were below the mean, except for Taragala on meeting rooms and Mulyan on sports fields. Central Cowra shows small deviations on all items, in contrast to West Cowra, which on the three for which it is below the mean perception, is the lowest. When the other three services covered by the survey are considered (see Gray, 1987a, Table 8 in Appendix A), the consistent above mean response from North Cowra and below mean response from West Cowra (except on sports fields) are striking. This suggests that while North Cowra residents had little interest in attacking the status quo, West Cowra residents would have had a collective interest in political participation, and they would hypothetically have been more likely to perceive a greater stimulus for action.

They did indeed take action in the local political arena during 1986, under the auspices of the West Cowra Progress Association, the only such organisation active in the town at the time. Contact with the Council was not organised, other than spontaneously on particular issues, in the
other areas, except in the village of Gooloogong which also had an active progress association, and in farmers acting through the LGPA. Otherwise individuals contacted the Council as individuals. There was no other avenue, unless the Ratepayers' Association happened to be active. This lack of activity suggests a problem, for it indicates that people were not pursuing their interests, as one might expect them to do. An explanation for this quiescence lies in the policy apparatus of the Council. Analysis of the apparatus provides background to issues and non-issues, including an attempt by West Cowra people to 'squeak the wheel'.

The Policy Apparatus

Unfortunately for West Cowra, the Shire Council's policy apparatus allowed an efficient decision making process at the same time as it minimised interference from 'squeaky wheels'. It was intended to allocate resources according to rational criteria based on assessment of need, making the assumption that the noisiest wheel is not necessarily the neediest. This had altered the "rules of access" (Saunders, 1979) for those wishing to voice discontent. Progress associations may still have attempted to further the interests of their areas, but they would have done so without the legitimacy offered by a pluralistic-looking arena. The resources available to the 1950s progress associations were no longer available because the policy making process had been formalised, and the ideological climate was not conducive to pluralism.

The Council maintained a Policy Register, which it updated after discussion of recommendations made by its Policy and Resources Committee. This document laid down the order of priority for projects among Council's service activities. It was the instrument of allocational policy. It covered seemingly everything that the Council did, from development regulations through priority order for road sealing to the closing time at the Civic Centre bar. Items such as the first and third were reviewed when necessary; works matters such as the second were determined for three year periods, except where longer term priorities could be fixed, such as occurred with priorities for the sealing of urban lanes which covered a nine year period. This meant that policy development became largely a process of updating, and was therefore seen to be routine. Of
Council's three committees (the others being Finance and Works) Policy and Resources met least frequently: prior to each second rather than each monthly Council meeting. Its meetings were often relatively short due to brevity of discussion and attracted less attention from the press, two of its meetings being the only occasions on which no reporter from the Guardian was present at Council or committee meetings which I attended. The April 1986 meeting lasted just twenty-five minutes. On two occasions I found out at the last minute that its meeting had been cancelled due to lack of business. I found no evidence of spatial interest groups seeking to affect the policy making process at the Policy and Resources Committee stage.

Senior Council staff saw the policy machinery as smoothing the budgetary (and hence allocational) process at the same time as it facilitated the application of decision rules with due regard to precedent. The Register was instituted after the 1980 amalgamation. Previously each department of the two Councils put up budget estimates which were like shopping lists for the councillors and aldermen to peck over. A former Waugoola councillor told me that that Council effectively had three works committees, because each riding decided on and pushed for its own priorities. (Works committees deal with the engineering function, which includes roads and bridges.) He said it was administratively very inefficient. A plethora of 'squeaky wheels' within the organisation would not have been in keeping with good management of the 'people's corporation'. The formalised process eliminated this.

Some councillors expressed mixed feelings about the formalised policy process, because it had taken away some of their room to push for initiatives, but those who expressed such feeling to me also acknowledged its value in the rational decision process. Bruce Golsby, known by his fellow councillors to be a strong supporter, valued the smooth running apparatus which the system provided. (Bruce was a farmer who also found time, with his wife and family, to run a business in town as well as serve on the Council. He was first elected to the Municipal Council in 1977. His grandfather had been a Mayor in the 1920s.) Ab Oliver also valued the system. After his re-election to the Shire Presidency in 1984 he was quoted by the Guardian (26 November) to have said that Policy and Resources Committee was very important. As a councillor explained to me: "if someone approaches you and asks when such and such a bridge is
going to be replaced, you can show him its priority in the policy register". He added that Policy and Resources Committee offered an opportunity to take an overall view, rather than just listen to the 'squeaky wheels'.

Other councillors were not so happy with it, because they found all cases to be treated on their merits anyway, making policy irrelevant, or because it detracted from the councillors' ability to initiate policy. "They reflect on what is served up to them." This backhanded implication was as close as any came to a suggestion that the 'squeaky wheel' system had merit. Changes to the policy register were initiated by officers, who applied efficiency criteria. For example, when formulating the list of priorities for lane sealing, the Engineer gave priority to those lanes which were most expensive to maintain. It was up to the councillors to anticipate any inequities which might have arisen. In the event of a councillor perceiving an inequity, he or she would have had to show cause why the 'people's corporation's' efficiency should be compromised, not always an easy matter for one who placed value on efficiency, a value which all councillors espoused. Here also lay a seed of conflict between councillors and officers.

There was from time to time an undercurrent of debate at meetings about the role, and hence necessity of Policy and Resources Committee because it was seen to be unnecessary duplication of the other two committees, while it was giving councillors and officers the same management task. The former problem surfaced, as occurred at the Council Meeting of 24 March, 1986, when Bruce Golsby pointed to a recommendation from the Works Committee about road priorities, saying that priority review was a matter for Policy and Resources. His attempt to have the matter referred to that Committee failed.

Nobody suggested that the policy process was inefficient, nor that its efficiency was anything but highly desirable. A councillor who found the policy process to be irrelevant added the caveat that it did eliminate the risk of self interest. It was the view that local government makes case-by-case decisions as a bureaucrat might, rather than policy, which made Policy and Resources Committee appear superfluous. In this view local government is no more than management through rational decision process, which does not require policy development. These ideas had determined the
"rules of access". Issue-making was an encounter with an organisation rather than entry into a pluralist arena.

People from anywhere other than North Cowra who wished to request services or make complaints were unlikely to find a direct avenue to the Council via a local representative. All nine urban-dwelling councillors and all three senior Council staff in 1986 bar one (Cyril Treasure, Shire President and retired farmer, who lived in Taragala) lived in North Cowra. Only one councillor consistently raised problems in his own area. That was Jack Mallon, a farmer who lived in Woodstock. The burden of allocation of Council services fell heavily on the policy apparatus. The survey results presented above suggest that services had not been distributed evenly in the perceptions of residents, but at the same time the system appeared to work fairly well, in that there were no glaring deficiencies which Council had not considered.

Two questions remain, however. Was the uneven distribution identified a product of unwillingness or inability to raise issues? Or was it a product of issues raised being quashed on bureaucratic decision rule grounds? The answer to both questions is yes. (Any suggestion that the relative satisfaction expressed in North Cowra and the rural area was a product of councillor self-interest could not be sustained.) Decision rules rendered effective expression of interests by dissatisfied residents difficult, but those rules were laid down in an ideological climate within the Council which favoured property. Some examples of issues, or non-issues, will show how the bureaucratic apparatus discouraged the pursuit of allocation issues among those who lacked the appropriate resources.

Some Allocation Issues

There are three ways in which complaints and requests could be voiced to Council. People could approach the Council by writing to it, usually in the person of the Shire Clerk who placed the matter before Council, or by asking a councillor to raise a matter in 'general business' at the end of a Council meeting. A third, more direct approach was available when the Council or its
Works Committee convened a meeting in a village, during which it received requests. The Council conducted full meetings in villages in 1985 and 1986, but discontinued the practice after meeting at Wyangala in October, 1986, in favour of having only Works Committee meetings in villages.

All matters were indeed considered on their merits, but not before reference was made to the Policy Register if it had an appropriate entry. For example, the West Cowra Progress Association wrote to the Shire Clerk asking for attention to drainage problems. The Clerk placed the matter before the Works Committee (meeting 16 September, 1986) without a recommendation from the Engineer because the letter had been received too late for his consideration. At the meeting Ab Oliver asked if the requested work was in the list of priorities. The Engineer replied that it was not, because it would have been prohibitively expensive. The Committee decided to meet Association members at West Cowra after the next Works Committee meeting. They did so, but made no recommendation for action to the October Council meeting.

That was the end of a short saga of frustration for West Cowra Progress Association, for they had first sought to raise their drainage problem at the August Council meeting. They had asked a councillor to raise it for them, but the councillor had failed to do so, perhaps because the meeting had been particularly heated and demanding over other matters. Their conversation which I joined at the end of the meeting indicated that they saw the councillors as merely avenues for access to senior officers. They then wrote to the Shire Clerk.

Matters raised in general business were usually minor problems of maintenance or regulation which implied no difficulty for Council management. Tim West drew Council’s attention to problems in Taragala Park, and raised some difficulties in relations between village dwellers and the Health Surveyor. Barbara Bennett appealed for a pedestrian crossing in Mulyan. Jack Mallon raised drainage and other problems in Woodstock. Col Newton (a long serving alderman and councillor, motor mechanic and Labor Party member, first elected in 1953) sought improved signposting in a village. Most councillors raised minor matters on behalf of people beyond the areas of their own residence at some time. To that extent the rules of access were
easy. As West Cowra's problem with drainage illustrates, they could be complicated when the stakes were higher.

The Works Committee meetings held in villages also worked well. People raised minor issues for Council's attention, sought help in settling local disputes and in one case obtained a promise of a small subsidy for construction of a bus shelter. These meetings were very casual affairs, unlike the first village full Council meeting I attended, at Woodstock, and to a lesser extent the Wyangala meeting twelve months later. At the former, the three Woodstock people who spoke when time was made available for them at the end of the meeting did so nervously and tentatively. Their diffidence may have been increased in the more formal atmosphere of a full Council meeting, and the presence of such well known and locally important people as the councillors. This means of contacting Council demanded confidence in what could be seen as an intimidating atmosphere. A councillor told me that at the early village meetings, "they looked at us as if we came from Mars".

The policy development process appears from this evidence to have worked well. I did not, however, see major issues raised in it. There were certainly no attempts made to obtain additional or improved facilities for areas such as the earlier progress associations undertook, as one might anticipate given the differential perception of facilities recorded in the survey described above. Without the pluralistic arena there was no mechanism likely to produce expressions of such interests. There was very little room for major initiatives from councillors. The factor which enabled all this is the ideological climate of Council, in which all its participants sought to make it a smooth and efficient organisation in contrast to the 'parliamentary' style of old. In this climate councillors became distracted by questions of efficiency. Allocation became a matter of choosing an efficient solution, while still wishing for a fair solution, but nevertheless aiming at organisational rather than interest group goals. Interest groups therefore remained 'off-stage'. They had no reason to act when they saw the 'people's corporation' attending to its efficiency and so looking after everyone. Or when they did appeal, their cries may not have been heard above the clamour for efficiency. This was best illustrated by the debate which surrounded the upgrading of the water supply to West Cowra.
Getting water into West Cowra had long been a bigger problem than letting it out. In 1967 the *Guardian* (15 December) reported that West Cowra Progress Association had said that the water supply problem had deteriorated over three years to a point at which people could not flush their toilets. The problem stemmed from the height and distance of parts of West Cowra in relation to the main water works on Bellevue Hill. A reservoir and additional reticulation were provided to West Cowra in 1971. In 1980 the Municipal Council started investigations into further improvements. In 1982 more cries were heard through the *Guardian*, which, on 8 February ran a page one headline "West Cowra out of Water Again - Residents Angry". In August 1982 the Council convened a public meeting which decided to proceed with an augmentation scheme.

The later stages of the scheme in West Cowra were carried out in 1986, necessitating some final decisions by Council about the design of the reticulation system. This decision making process turned attention away from the needs of West Cowra and focused it on the technical problems associated with finding an efficient solution. This is not to say that West Cowra's needs were forgotten, but rather that the problem to be resolved became one of which possible solution was most efficient, rather than which would best solve the problem for West Cowra, as it might if equity had been the issue. The difference is that in the latter circumstance, Council may have been persuaded to solve West Cowra's problem and then face the problem of finding an efficient solution. Instead, the matter became one of finding an efficient system in the course of debate over the likelihood of each of several proposals solving the problem. It became embroiled in a struggle between some councillors and the Shire Engineer in which the interests of West Cowra were not ignored, but faded into the background.

The first debate occurred in a Works Committee meeting on 18 March. Jim Finnimore, Shire Engineer, had recommended that Council go ahead and install new pipes to take water to West Cowra across the Lachlan River bridge then under construction, while consultants drew up plans for West Cowra's new reticulation system. Tim West challenged the size of the pipes, believing them to be inadequate. He was supported by Shire President Cyril Treasure and Councillor Harold Upston, who both felt that the pipes should be as big as possible. (Harold had a service station and motor dealer business in Cowra. He had been active in the Chamber of Commerce
and, being in his early forties, was the youngest Councillor.) Others were sceptical. Ab Oliver did not see it as councillors' role to determine the size of pipes, preferring to leave such technicalities to more qualified people. Stephen Bell pointed out that the Shire Engineer believed that his recommendation would meet demand, and that the cost of bigger pipes would have to be justified. (Stephen was a high school teacher, and the only councillor to have tertiary education qualifications.) But Tim West and his allies won the day: the recommendation was altered as they sought, before being put to a full Council meeting.

This debate was an overture to a long drama. Jim Finnimore was frequently called upon to justify the recommendations of Council's consultants. At the March Council meeting Harold Upston claimed that some cost figures "shoot holes" in the consultants' recommendation. Tim West said he believed that there was a fault in the design of the bridge which was to carry the new pipes. Both sides believed that their plan would put enough water into West Cowra.

The next round occurred at a special meeting of Council, called to discuss increases in water rates and the West Cowra scheme. People had received what they felt were unreasonable water rate bills. The billing was in line with policy laid down earlier to pay for augmentation, including extensive alterations to the treatment plant which were almost complete. Complainants called a public meeting at which the Ratepayers Association was revived and some Council staff denounced. The special Council meeting was held in a tense atmosphere, with six visitors, an unusually large number, in the public gallery.

The Shire Engineer reported to the meeting that Council's consultants had offered two options, and Tim West and Cyril Treasure had designed another. His view of the West/Treasure plan was that it may not guarantee sufficient water for West Cowra, and that he could not sanction it without a proper technical analysis. Cyril Treasure spoke against sending the proposal to the consultants:

"We shouldn't go back to consultants. I can make a cheap guess. Our option has to be good and is cheap."
This was one of several occasions on which I heard councillors state as a matter of principle that Council should avoid consultants in general, believing them to be expensive and unreliable, and above all, unnecessary. Jim Finnimore was left exasperated, saying that he felt he no longer knew the ground rules, but Council decided to heed his advice and seek an analysis of the West/Treasure plan by consultants.

The matter came up again in the May Works Committee meeting. The Consultants reported that the West/Treasure plan would work but without guarantee that the highest houses in West Cowra would get adequate water supply. Council was then faced with a decision to construct an additional reservoir to guarantee supply, if the councillors accepted the consultants' doubts. Tim West and Harold Upston did not accept the consultants' doubts, leading to more friction with the Engineer. The Committee decided to put all options to the next full Council.

At that meeting councillors considered a modified West/Treasure plan, which was adopted. Bruce Golsby and Councillor George Noble spoke against the plan, because of the possibility of it not meeting West Cowra's needs, a point which Jim Finnimore repeated. (George was a farmer, first elected to Waugoola Shire in 1965. He and Cyril Treasure were, in 1986, the only former Waugoola Councillors on Cowra Shire.) The five West Cowra residents in the gallery left somewhat disappointed that the Shire Engineer's recommendation had not been adopted. So no doubt, was the Shire Engineer, because his task of finding an efficient plan to meet Council's objectives had been usurped, as the Council's agenda had become technical rather than political.

Questions about the extent of the problem in West Cowra were raised, but it was the technical aspects of the problem that were debated. There was no evidence that West Cowra people had lobbied, or if they had, whomever they lobbied failed to steer the debate towards objectives and away from means. A struggle between councillors and officers leaves little room for others, unless they, like the councillors, can muster technical arguments. Unlike the protest group in Wild's Heathcote (1983), West Cowra Progress Association did not, or could not, raise such resources. This suggests an additional mechanism to those discussed by Giles and Dantico
(1982) and Domhoff (1986) to explain class bias in allocation policy. It suggests that the technical bias in the agenda of local politics obscured the interests of the subordinate, no matter how strong the desire of the powerful to look after them.

Agenda setting can be no more deliberate than the products of an earnest interpretation of councillor responsibility. No councillor sought to do anything other than seek the best solution for West Cowra in terms of efficiency and fairness. All participants in the issue acknowledged that something should be done for West Cowra, and to that extent West Cowra had negotiated the "rules of access" and established an issue. Another controversy, over air pollution, will indicate that so much is not always achieved by area interests.

The Non-Issue of Air Pollution 5

A protracted 'non-issue', in which some residents of Taragala sought to rid themselves of an air pollution problem, offers a good example of second dimension power relations in operation. In this case, interests were pursued beyond Saunders' (1979) second filter into his third stage of non-decision making. Taragala residents were bearing costs associated with a new factory (Lachlan Industries), costs which to them were manifest as falling land values and physical discomfort. They felt that these costs were unreasonable, and so expressed their interests by protesting.6 Analysis of the matter will be based on data from the pages of the Guardian, conversations with four residents of Taragala (not all of whom were involved in the protest), conversations with Council staff and councillors, and Council minutes.

The problem became apparent soon after the Lachlan Industries wool scouring plant commenced operation in 1975. Wool scouring removes grease and dirt from wool in order to eliminate unnecessary weight before shipment. It produces an obnoxious waste. The factory's disposal system allowed it to settle in open ponds in order to break down. Evil-smelling gases were to be contained by a crust on top of the ponds, but it did not form as planned.
The first complaints were voiced in 1975, when eleven residents raised the problem with the Health Surveyor. He responded, as quoted in the *Cowra Guardian* of 30 September (page 1), by saying that there was "no way of dealing with it at the moment", and that it "could get worse before it gets better". He added that he was not certain of the source of the smell. The following month Taragala residents obtained eighty-five signatures on a petition which was presented to the Municipal Council and a Senator who happened to visit Cowra. The Senator passed it on to the State Minister for Health. In December Taragala residents formed an 'Anti-Pollution Committee', which wrote to the Town Clerk, calling on the Council to seek an injunction forcing the company to stop the smell. The State Government was doing no more than the Council, having replied that, unlike the Taragala people, it saw the Municipal Council working to rectify the problem. The Council advised the complainants in January, 1976 that it had established a special committee to handle the matter and discuss it with the company and appropriate State agencies. Such discussions occurred in February, 1976, and the company agreed to cover the pond with a kind of plastic sheet.

Unfortunately this measure did not solve the problem (*Cowra Guardian*, 28 February, 1978). By early 1978 it had become obvious to the complainants that minor changes to the disposal system would not prevent the odours. Meanwhile the Council had responded to renewed complaints by offering a form to be completed by Taragala residents so that the problem could be documented. It seemed that the councillors were skeptical. Very few people submitted forms. The form read:

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

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

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

Return the completed sheet to Health Surveyor's Office, preferably each
The sheet had spaces for recording dates, times and comments. This approach may have been the only course available to the Health Surveyor when he was called upon to advise Council on the extent of the problem. One of my informants believed that the Health Surveyor was quite sympathetic, despite saying "put up with it". The Health Surveyor could do nothing about it because so few people filled in the forms. In more than three months only three forms had been returned (Health Surveyor's report to Council, 28 March, 1978). He went to Taragala, but only at times when the smell was not bad. He raised the matter at Council, but his hands were tied without documentary evidence. My informant said that "it was worrying the life out of him". He was sufficiently concerned to go to Taragala to ask the residents. But again he found little to offer as evidence.

Council did, however, write to the company, advising it of the complaints and asking it to review its treatment methods. The company replied that it would modify the treatment. Correspondence continued through 1978, with Works Committee meeting the company in May. Again the company said it would work on the problem. Council wrote again in October and Lachlan Industries replied in December.

The modifications did not stop the odours, although Council had expressed pleasure with developments (Cowra Guardian, 22 May 1979). Complaints were again made in early 1981. The company described its efforts in an article in the Guardian (29 May). The Council defended it. The following extract from a letter from one of the complainants, published in the Guardian of 27 February (page 2), shows how the debate was warming up.

"It never fails to amaze me why Council aldermen should state that Lachlan Industries has gone to great extremes and spent $2 000 to rid us of this smell when there would be at least 200 homes in the vicinity which have depreciated by that amount each over the past three years.

Ninety-nine per cent of these homes belong to the working people who have worked all their lives to purchase their own homes. (Not many Silvertails
A letter from another complainant, published in the *Guardian* of 2 March (page 2), said:

"... We have been let down badly by the Council in that they (1) gave us an assurance at the time of the proposal to build the plant that there would be no pollution problems and (2) they are either not interested in complaints from the residents of Taragala or they have no power over the company. . ."

The Council had conducted a public meeting when the factory was in the planning stages. Taragala people were not only calling on it for help, they were blaming it for their problem. They did so with reason, for Council had approved the siting of the factory. On 9 March (page 5) the *Guardian* reported on a survey it had conducted among Taragala residents:

"The response by residents was overwhelming with 100 percent of the people surveyed on a random basis, complaining of an unpleasant odour from the plant which is situated very close to the residential area of Taragala...

In describing the odour a variety of comments were received ranging from "like a sewer", "the treatment works", "decaying sheep carcasses", "the foulest smell you could ever imagine" and so on the list continued.

Some real estate agents commented that the values of homes in Taragala had suffered as a result of the smell which is quickly being associated with the area....

However, many of the people felt that the plant was very worthwhile in many facets of its operation. These aspects included the bringing of industry to the town and increased employment for local people.

Even so, they felt that something should, and could be done about the stench..."

The leading complainants began to aim more energy at the State Government, but had not yet given up on the Council. Council’s decision to refer the matter back to Works Committee at its
Central Cowra and Taragala from Bellevue Hill; Lachlan Industries and the Locomotive Depot are in the centre background.
March meeting would not have encouraged them. At that meeting Tim West defended the complainants, suggesting that strong action against the company was warranted. He said that the smell was so bad that "one day the odour had made it impossible for athletes to train at River Park because the smell took their breath away", and that "the company was on shaky ground". One alderman was quoted in reply: "Lachlan Industries have carried out every request Council has made to eliminate the odour". Another alderman was quoted to have said that "he didn't find the smell particularly offensive" (Cowra Guardian, 23 March, 1981, page 1). The last statement prompted a letter to the Guardian pointing out that the councillor who said it lived four miles away. A letter published (on 24 April) after the April Council meeting expressed disgust that the Council had again referred the matter back to Works Committee. The State National Country Party leader entered the debate, quoted in the Guardian (27 July, page 1) as saying that "Lachlan Industries was an extremely important industry to Cowra and District and had co-operated totally with authorities to eliminate any environmental problems". Yet the problems persisted.

The threat of loss of jobs was prominent in the minds of the councillors and others, although one of my informants believed that the company had made no such threats. The inferred threat moved sixty-eight employees of the company (from a workforce of about eighty) to write to the Guardian (letter published 21 August, 1981) asking the complainants to desist. By this time there were only two remaining active, other support having melted away. Employment by the company was not a reason for many Taragala people failing to support the complainants. A resident estimated that about ten employees had lived in Taragala at the time. Among those who signed the letter only three were Taragala dwellers. It seems that Taragala had learned to live with the pollution.

Council continued to correspond with Lachlan Industries. It also sought assistance from the State Pollution Control Commission, asking it to recommend a solution. After receiving the recommendation, Council sought confirmation from Lachlan Industries that it had taken the recommended measures. Nevertheless, the problem continued. Complaints to the State authorities continued into 1983 and 1984 from the solitary person who was willing to carry on the fight. By the end of 1985, the problem had all but disappeared. One resident told me in 1986
that an occasional whiff could still be detected, but ten years after the plant commenced operation, the problem had been pretty well solved. There was still local conjecture in 1986 about the effectiveness of the measures taken, suggesting that over the ten year period the problem would have solved itself anyway. It seems likely that eventually Council’s efforts had some effects, but they certainly did not have the prompt and positive effects that Taragala residents sought.

The complainants had lacked the resources to enforce decisive action. Without such action, as Parenti (1970) pointed out, protest groups are unlikely to succeed. Time was a resource of the Council. Moreover, the value placed by councillors on the presence of the industry in Cowra put the onus on the complainants to convince the councillors that Taragala was bearing an undue cost, not outweighed by the general economic good which they saw the town obtaining at a time in its history when it appeared to be confronting economic decline. The Council’s ‘rules of access’, demanded precise and documented evidence. When confronted with such a response to their complaints, the complainants could do little as they watched their support wane.

The company played a minor role. As Blowers (1983) noted in a study of an air pollution issue, companies are strongest politically when they are weakest economically, or in this case, the locality is seen to be weak. The company had no need to act while the Council was effectively defending it by not finding sufficient reason to attack it decisively. It obtained the benefit of the doubt. In 1986 two councillors who had been involved in the matter told me that the smell really was not bad enough to warrant the fuss. The councillors had to be convinced and the complainants failed to convince them, other than Tim West, that they should speak out against the company. Air pollution in Taragala, although it was raised in Council, shows the characteristics of a non-issue from the perspective of Taragala people, in that debate was dominated by questions about the existence of a problem, rather than action which would immediately and certainly stop the pollution. To that extent, Taragala people were unable to ‘squeak the wheel’. This ‘non-issue’ offers a good illustration of how a spatial interest group could have its interests submerged beneath what those who benefited saw as an interest common to the whole district.
Urban and Rural

Consideration of the urban-rural dimension of spatial politics will show how one interest group, the farmers, was better able to raise issues. Discussion of spatial politics has so far focused on matters internal to the town. The urban-rural dimension was added when the Municipal and Shire Councils were amalgamated in 1980, although the affairs of the two councils had been intertwined through common interest in town facilities, such as the saleyards, and at times in more personal ways in the presence of Mark Whitby's son being Waugoola's Shire Clerk (he retired in 1985 as Cowra Shire's Deputy Clerk after 48 years in Cowra local government) and Ab Oliver's brother being Waugoola's President. The amalgamation eliminated the relationship by combining the budgets, organisations and electorates of each. It did so amid vociferous protest from Waugoola, protest which arose from fears that rural interests would be forsaken. Urban-rural relations were on the agenda from the inauguration of Cowra Shire. This provides a contrast with the relationship between the interests of Taragala people and the local political agenda as described above. The amalgamation provides background to an issue which arose in 1986 over rating policy, the most important aspect of allocational policy in which costs are distributed.

Waugoola Shire and Cowra Municipal Councils had long lived at close quarters, but when it appeared that enforced amalgamation was imminent, Waugoola screamed. It had heard murmurs about amalgamation long before 1980. The Boundaries Commission, a State agency established to examine possible amalgamation of local government areas, raised the prospect in 1974. A Guardian editorial (2 July) reported that the Town Clerk saw advantages in amalgamation, but Waugoola was opposed. The matter hovered about during the late 1970s as new councils were created elsewhere in rural New South Wales, with Waugoola's attitude standing firm. When the State Government announced amalgamation in 1980, Waugoola attacked. The Guardian page one headline of 2 July, 1980 read "Council Disgusted over Government Methods". Two days later it reported that the Shire President, Cyril Treasure, was "totally opposed", demanding a riding system to ensure representation for rural interests. Rural dwellers also feared that they may not receive value for their rates, seeing town services as a potential sponge. This was
expressed in a letter (to one implication of which town residents may have taken exception!) about the water augmentation scheme from a rural ratepayer published in the *Guardian* on 14 December, 1984 (page 2):

"... I became worried that it will be rural ratepayers paying for the convenience of town residents having water running out of their taps whenever needed, a situation I hope doesn't arise, and that the people using the water pay the majority of the cost of such water."

The amalgamation proceeded without establishment of ridings. Nevertheless, such overt friction had placed rural-urban relations on the agenda of the new Council.

Both the representation and rating issues were raised during 1986. The representation matter arose after a councillor (Harold Upston) resigned. This raised the possibility of reducing the number of councillors from twelve (an unwieldy number because the Shire President's casting vote could give him two votes). At a Council meeting (25 August) an urban-resident councillor suggested that application be made to the State Local Government Minister to have the number reduced to nine, but after argument from rural councillors that such a change might eliminate rural representation, application was made to have an eleven seat council. The application was approved with effect from the 1987 election.

The rating issue emerged at annual estimates time, when a relative increase in rural rates was proposed to bring rural, urban resident and business rating into line with an arrangement made at amalgamation. The arrangement was that the relative revenue contributions from the three sources should be maintained, with adjustments for those facilities which had been and would continue to be used by rural people, but paid for by town people. The drought of the early 1980s intervened and the adjustment had been deferred. Indeed the rural contribution had been allowed to decline relatively. The 1987 budget process raised the prospect of moving back to the post-amalgamation arrangement.

The Shire Clerk drew the attention of councillors to the arrangement when presenting the 1987
Budget Strategy, referring to an entry in the Policy Register. He added that under this policy rural rate revenue in 1987 "would increase from 49% to 50%" (Shire Clerk's Report to Finance Committee, 15 September). On 6 October the Guardian reported on page one that

"This year ratepayers living in residential areas can expect to pay one per cent less than they did last year for their rates while rural rates will increase by one per cent and commercial rates will remain the same."

The farmers reacted. The President of the Livestock and Grain Producers' [Farmers'] Association wrote to the Shire Clerk, stating that the Cowra Branch of the Association was "concerned at Council's decision to raise rural rates for 1987, when rural industry's capacity to pay is at the lowest level for many years." Some pert questions about Council's operations and efficiency followed. The farmers had assumed that an increase in the rural share of rates implied an increase in the rural rate. This was a reasonable interpretation of the Clerk's intentions, as he had indicated them in his report to the September Finance Committee with the words "I had proposed that the increase in rural rate in 1987 could be avoided through" [action under Section 118, meaning] a change in hobby farm rating, but that had been rejected by Council.

The strength of Council's reserves allowed the Clerk to budget for a decrease in general rate revenue, so avoiding raising the rural rate by lowering the residential rate in order to raise the rural share. That is how he presented the estimates to the 17 November meeting of Finance Committee. Regardless of any effect or otherwise of the farmers' letter on the Clerk's decision, it was reflected in his presentation of the estimates to Council. His emphasis appeared in the statement that: "The General Rate Revenue is DECREASED by 2% with the decrease being entirely on residential properties where rates will fall by 5.5% but with NO RURAL RATE INCREASE . . .". The farmers had been heard. Council decided to offer to meet with them, and it discussed the terms of its reply to the questions in their letter. The reply told the farmers that they had not understood the way the rate burden was shared, but they got their zero rate increase.
The amalgamation virtually guaranteed that rural interests would be represented in the arena. Even if no farmers were elected, it is unlikely that access to Council would have become as difficult as it was for Taragala. Rural-urban friction post-amalgamation is not unique to Cowra. Gammage (1986) indicated similar problems in Narrandera. Separation of rural and urban interests was readily perceived on both sides, unlike spatial interests within the town.

The amalgamation alone cannot simply explain the farmers' ready and effective access to the arena, when in terms of senior staff the Municipal Council virtually took over Waugoola and rural area resident representatives have been a minority on Council. Of the twelve Cowra Shire Councillors in 1986, two were farmers, two had active farm interests and another two were retired farmers. But the Council did not divide into opposing rural and urban forces along those lines. No councillor jumped to defend the farmers' position on the rates issue; they did not need to. Farmers were more powerful than their numbers on Council. Their ability to maintain effective expression in the arena is what demands explanation. That explanation partly lies in the ideology of councillors and the climate in which deference to rural interests is legitimated. Rural people assumed a right of access, which they were accorded.

Conclusion: Councillors and Ideologies

The ideologies of local government councillors are, as argued by Dearlove (1973), just as important to local politics and policy making as those of parliamentarians in their arenas. Ideology has a very important role in determining what is and is not legitimate for the agenda of local government. In the issues and non-issues discussed above the councillors applied their values and beliefs, showing particular value placed on organisation management.

The policy apparatus was aimed at efficiency of management while hoping for equitable allocation of resources. That hope rested on the assumption that needs could and would be communicated by those in need, an assumption which appears dubious in the light of the 'Needs Survey' results, the history of Taragala's air pollution problem, and the clouding effect which
management and technical concerns could have, as illustrated by the West Cowra water supply issue. The assumption appears to have stronger foundation in the rural context, where concerns could be expressed with confidence that they would be heard and responded to, if not acted upon.

While the value placed on organisational efficiency rested happily with a 'people's corporation' image of local government, it inhibited or even cancelled the prospects for pluralism. The 'peoples corporation' image projected a model of consensus, but that consensus was more constraining for some than others. The councillors strove for efficiency, but so did the senior officers. Both made for the same objective, and collided along the way. The collisions distracted attention from some of those interests which were expressed, and left little prospect for latent interests to be recognised. Unless, that is, they were illuminated by the values of councillors or officers, as the interests of Lachlan Industries were, or were accepted as valid matters for the agenda, as were rural protests. The following Chapter remains at the level of the political arena, showing how the legitimacy of urban-rural conflict, among other factors, heightened tension between councillors and officers, and so further clouded other issues and potential issues.

Notes

1 In December of 1947 West Cowra Progress Association reported a prosperous year, having held a "number of dances and street stalls" (Cowra Guardian, 5 December, page 7). On 9 December (page 8) the Cowra Guardian reported that the Mayor had attended a West Cowra Progress Association meeting, and had said that the Council appreciated its efforts: "had it not been for this association we'd have had very little correspondence to put on the table at a number of our council meetings".

2 In 1949 Taragala Progress Association sought a new bridge over the Eugowra railway. It lobbied for park improvements again in 1953. In 1954 it announced that it was to build a hall and tennis courts at its own expense (Cowra Guardian, 16 March).
Council agreed to let the Association use Council land. It again agitated for park improvements in 1960 (Cowra Guardian, 19 January). It reported a good year in 1959. "Completed projects were lighting improvements to the tennis courts, installation of sewer ed toilets to replace the existing buildings, modern facilities for the kitchen and repair to the kitchen ceiling. . ." (Cowra Guardian, 19 February, page 3).

3 Battles between these two aldermen largely dominated the Municipal arena from Lynch's election in 1953 until his death in 1962. Whitby was first elected in 1925. He served for 40 years, including 27 as Mayor, his last year as Mayor being 1963 (Armstrong, 1988). He had a substantial impact on Cowra's local government. A 1986 (non-Labor) councillor told me that he felt that the Council was still climbing out of the detrimental effects of Whitby's conservatism, attributing to it the town's lack of services, as identified by MacColl (1944), as disputed by the progress associations, and as seen by this Councillor as still a problem to be overcome. He was thinking in terms of parks and recreation facilities. Whitby held tight to the traditional ideological reins of local government: fiscal and political conservatism. At his retirement, a fellow alderman was quoted in the Guardian (13 December, 1963, page 1) as saying that "Cowra Council was one of the best financed councils in the State and this was due to Alderman Whitby's conservative approach". He made no secret of his conservatism. At the inauguration of electric lighting in a part of the main street in 1932, Whitby said: "It has been said that Cowra is a conservative town - well maybe it is, and it is better that it should be that way than the opposite, and I have no objection in saying that your town should be second to none in the State" (Cowra Guardian, 2 November, page 1). When asked to comment on a debate in the Central West (regional electricity) County Council about a proposal to give an employee time off work to enable him to attend meeting of a council on which he was an alderman, Whitby said, as quoted in the Cowra Guardian (7 May, 1953, page 1):

"We all suffer a loss through attending council meetings at times. But when we enter local government we are prepared to give our time and lose a certain amount of income. . . Everyone should realise that they are expected to give their time and portion of their income in the interests of local government. . . I definitely oppose this motion. I think it is dangerous to local government."

4 The village category includes the villages of Gooloogong and Woodstock which were large enough to form Census Collection Districts. The others ranged in population from a handful which was hard to discern from the rural population to something over 100. Gooloogong and Woodstock constituted perhaps two thirds of the total village population. I formed the impression that they were the wealthiest villages. The boundaries in the town were all clear cut, except for the North Cowra-Mulyan division, which followed the topography rather than the Census map. The Collection Districts which I have included in North Cowra covered some of the poorer parts of Mulyan, but as North Cowra was by far the largest area (1 274 households
compared to 972 in the rural area, 504 in Central Cowra, 408 in Taragala, 381 in Mulyan, 282 in West Cowra and 167 in the villages), it did not significantly alter the result.

5 With apologies to Crenson (1971).

6 Taragala’s problem was not the first pollution matter to raise controversy in Cowra. The Municipal Council confronted opposition when it gave permission for a shearing shed to be built in West Cowra in 1954 (Cowra Guardian, 19 January). Aldermen Col Newton and Leo Lynch protested in vain. West Cowra Progress Association attracted 100 people to a protest meeting (Cowra Guardian, 29 January), all to no avail. Three years later the Municipal Council allowed a mushroom farm to be operated in Mulyan, again followed by unsuccessful protest from Leo Lynch among others.

7 Cowra’s amalgamation formed one of seventeen new country councils under the New South Wales Local Government Areas Amalgamation Act of 1980. Nineteen new councils had been created by amalgamation between 1975 and 1980 (The Law Book Company, 1985).
Chapter Seven

THE POLITICS OF DEVELOPMENT

The numerical dominance of farming and business people on Cowra Shire Council and its predecessors, and the looming possibility of economic decline in the district might lead one to expect that matters relating to economic development would have accounted for much of the energy expended in Cowra's local political arena. One might also expect, given the 'people's corporation' image, that the Council would take the form of an elitist club whose members were united in the struggle for growth and development against the tide of urban capital accumulation. The latter expectation, however, is not justified. Controversy did arise over development matters, injecting a superficial note of pluralism into the arena.

In development politics, as in spatial politics, benefits can only be realised by those who are able to raise issues and pursue them to a satisfying outcome. Issues arose over the Shire Council's role in development matters, and they were raised by people putting forth both business and other, opposing, interests. Development politics offer further evidence of resources being available to farmers to create issues and achieve desired outcomes. The issues which were created clouded the interests of the non-farm sector, and not all the development related issues which town employers and employees could be expected to pursue found their way to the surface. This Chapter considers ways in which interests were voiced: two areas in which business and farm people were heard loudly, and another in which expression of local interests was faint until farmers felt that they were under fire. The association between the presence of issues and Council's ideological climate is explored in conclusion. Data are offered from interviews, observation, documents, the pages of the Cowra Guardian and Commonwealth Censuses.
The Issue of the Tourist and Development Corporation

Political relations between the Shire Council and the Tourist and Development Corporation had what could loosely be described as a class dimension, arising because the Council used rate revenue to help fund the Corporation which was established to assist business. Non-business ratepayers questioned the probability of their interests being served by furthering those of business. Problems with development organisations had a long history. Cowra and Waugoola Councils were both involved with the 'Lachlan Valley Regional Development Committee' after World War II. This Committee of neighbouring councils appears to have had a difficult history. In 1949 the Guardian reported (16 September) that Waugoola was hesitating to take part in the Committee's revival after a two year lapse, and Cowra had decided not to join. In 1952 Cowra was again reluctant but a public meeting resolved to join, contrary to the wishes of Mayor Whitby (Cowra Guardian, 22 April). Waugoola withdrew from the Committee in 1953 (Cowra Guardian, 17 March). A report on re-constitution of the Committee, and Cowra's membership, appeared in the Guardian of 15 April, 1958. Reluctance to participate in the Committee appears to have been caused by a desire to avoid a cost burden to ratepayers.

The Cowra Tourist and Development Corporation emanated from a Trust formed in 1967 with financial support from Cowra Municipal Council. This support had been recurring, and was therefore open to debate each year at Council's estimates time. Increases in that support had drawn controversy. In 1970 and 1971 Council's contribution was increased despite objections from some councillors. On the latter occasion the Mayor had to use his casting vote to secure the increase (Cowra Guardian, 25 September, and 19 October, respectively). On the former occasion the Guardian quoted Col Newton objecting to the increase because of the cost to ratepayers. By 1975 the Japanese Garden project had brought the Council and the Corporation closer together, as the Corporation had leased the Garden land from the Council. In that year a letter explaining that no Council money was being spent on the Garden was published on page one of the Guardian (14 February). In 1976 the Guardian reported that the Ratepayers' Association was concerned that the demand for water for the gardens would deplete the supply.
available to town residents.

Ratepayers' concern was again expressed in 1986 when the Corporation's five year lease on the Japanese Garden site became due for renewal. The Council split into two camps, one which wanted to increase the Corporation's independence while not losing Council's support, and another which wanted greater control by Council. This dispute was complicated by the presence on Council of five Corporation Board members, three of whom were appointed by Council to represent it (Barbara Bennett, Ab Oliver and Stephen Bell) and the others being Board members before election to Council (Don Kibbler and Harold Upston). The voting rights of the two latter councillors were in continuing dispute, after the Shire Clerk had recommended in 1985 that they not be allowed to vote on matters relating to the Corporation for fear that the Corporation may be able some day to gain a majority of seats on the Council and effectively take it over. Legal advice that they could not be prevented from voting had been obtained, but an informal agreement had been reached that they not vote when a conflict of interest might be construed. That agreement was still subject to dispute, exacerbating the tension between Corporation supporters and others on Council.

The controversy over the lease to the Japanese Garden site started with a Finance Committee recommendation in March 1986 that certain clauses of the lease be altered and some added upon renewal. The changes would have greatly increased Council's influence over the Corporation by stipulating that surplus revenue generated by trading at the Garden be used for purposes other than administration and maintenance of the Garden only with the consent of Council. Further, the proposed lease added clauses which would have obliged the Corporation to obtain consent from Council before raising loans or advancing funds to other projects.

This was unacceptable to the Corporation. Ab Oliver presented the Corporation's case at Council, moving that Council agree to the Corporation by-passing Council and dealing directly with the New South Wales Lands Department, which had ultimate responsibility for the land as a recreation reserve. He pointed out that, although the Corporation had financial trouble early in
the Garden project, the situation had stabilised and the Corporation had obtained substantial support from Sydney and Japan. He acknowledged that the Council may be liable for losses, but believed that the Corporation's reserves eliminated the risk. He felt that dealing directly with the Lands Department would overcome past friction and may obviate accusations that the Garden was a burden on ratepayers. Ab also praised Don Kibbler for his work on the Garden project as Corporation Director, pointing out that his efforts had been a powerful force in the establishment of the Garden.

Cyril Treasure asked: "what is wrong with the recommendation?" Ab replied that the problem lay in the consent requirement. Cyril expressed uncertainty that the Lands Department would be an easier landlord. Col Newton was the first to speak against the motion, saying that the intention of the new clauses was to ensure that Council was aware of the affairs of the Corporation. Don Kibbler discounted this concern, saying that he believed that public doubts arose through fear that the Gardens may become a drain on rate revenue, but he assured Council that the New South Wales Government would help in an emergency. Bruce Golsby said that as the Council supported the Corporation financially it should retain control. Neville Pengilly expressed disagreement with that point, believing that the Council should not interfere. Stephen Bell went further, questioning the motives of those who wanted the Council to have a hand in running a proven successful venture. Tim West repeated the doubts expressed by Bruce Golsby, saying that he was uneasy about the Garden accounts. Ultimately the motion to allow the Corporation to deal directly with the Lands Department was carried. So ended the first round.

The Lands Department responded with a plan to establish a Trust from which the Corporation would lease the Garden site. The plan provided for the Shire President to be a member of the Trust, retaining Council involvement but eliminating the prospect of control which some councillors sought. The same scepticism about the destination of ratepayers' money was raised. Bruce Golsby repeated his view, saying that Council was "saddled with a monster". Col Newton did likewise, saying that Council would only be going along to pick up the tab while the Corporation milked the profits. He called for public nominations to the Trust. But the
Corporation side won the day.

Unfortunately for the Corporation, negotiations with the Lands Department revealed that a lease from the Trust, which would be appointed by that Department, would also require consultation with the lessor on financial matters. The issue was discussed at the June Council meeting, after the Shire Clerk had recommended a modified version of the original proposal, which he believed satisfied some Corporation demands. The Corporation asked that the matter be discussed 'in committee'. This request raised debate. That it should do so is not surprising, given that the councillors who sought to increase Council control of Corporation affairs did so because they wanted assurances that ratepayers' money was used in ratepayers' interests, and having related matters discussed 'in committee' was not compatible with their goal of opening Corporation affairs to ratepayer scrutiny. Nevertheless, Council resolved to close the meeting to the press and the public. Col Newton was particularly concerned, saying "I have done everything to divorce myself from this."

The final lease agreement closely resembled the Finance Committee's original recommendation, with an additional clause providing for arbitration of disputes between Council and the Corporation by the Lands Department. The Corporation had won the local battles but lost the war, because, like the Finance Committee, the State Government sought safeguards. While Corporation representatives could raise the necessary numbers on Council to have Council release its control, the Corporation could not find a more accommodating landlord.

The persistence of this issue indicates resources in the possession of people who saw themselves as ratepayers in confrontation with business. Businesses, however, also paid rates. The councillors who had businesses might have seen themselves in a double bind. (One (Bruce Golsby), chose to oppose the business interest.) But it was a financial rather than political double bind. Business people could feel that they were expressing a general local interest whichever side they supported. The Corporation representatives could see a general benefit from tourist development which they did not want hampered by political debate that may convey an
undesirable impression to supporters of the Garden project. This view was especially apparent in the debate over 'in committee' discussion. Ab Oliver summed up the Corporation view, as quoted in the *Cowra Guardian* (25 June):

"... matters should be discussed in committee when publicity of the proceedings would be prejudicial to the public interest, by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted" [my emphasis].

The Corporation's opponents in this matter saw a different public interest, that of protecting the ratepayers' investment.

The desire of some councillors to see the Corporation's affairs open to scrutiny was expressed over several matters. When the Corporation submitted plans to the Health Surveyor for approval of a building in the Japanese Garden, the Health Surveyor felt that he could not approve them without Council's consideration. (The normal procedure was for any development or building applications which did not unambiguously meet the regulations laid down by the State Government, and which the officer concerned therefore did not feel could be approved, to be referred to Works Committee.) The ambiguity lay in the purpose of the building. The Corporation proposed a building which could have served as both exhibition space and a flat. The regulations required different standards of fire protection, a flat requiring the higher standard. The Health Surveyor recommended it be classified as such, but the Corporation members on Works Committee (Ab Oliver and Harold Upston) disagreed. The recommendation went to Council in favour of the lower standard, amid disagreement from Tim West and Cyril Treasure. Again the Corporation had the numbers.

At Council Col Newton raised a query about the matter, with support from Bruce Golsby. The point of contention was the possibility that the Corporation would be seen to be receiving favoured treatment. Col Newton sought clarification of the change made by Works Committee to the Health Surveyor's recommendation. Cyril Treasure supported this request, expressing concern that the matter might be seen as irregular because of the change made by Works
Committee. Full Council accepted the Works Committee recommendation, but again the 'opponents' of the Corporation had raised a contentious issue.

They did so again when the Corporation sought Council's blessing for its application for Government assistance with restoration of an old mill building as a tourist attraction, and on this occasion a personal dimension which had earlier been obscure became clearer, while still remaining largely below the surface of Council debate. The Corporation proposed to seek a grant to purchase the mill from Don Kibbler's wife. The Shire Clerk recommended to the Council's February, 1986 meeting that it not support the project, on the grounds that the stated purchase price was excessive and that the project was not viable. Col Newton spoke for the recommendation. He believed that the project was not viable and that if the Council became involved, it would be "propping up the Tourist and Development Corporation". Harold Upston indicated his opposite perspective, replying that support for the Corporation was irrelevant, and that support for the "local community" was the issue. Despite some support, from Bruce Golsby, the supporters of the Clerk's recommendation did not have the numbers. (Ultimately, technical and other problems stopped the project before the mill was purchased.)

Don Kibbler took no part in this debate, but his presence as Corporation Director had some significance for Council-Corporation relations. While Ab Oliver praised Don's skills and perseverance, he could not alter a popular perception of him as a "tall poppy", an outstandingly successful local businessman. To the Corporation members, Don was almost a hero, but he had achieved success without the credentials associated with traditional leadership in rural communities. This lack of legitimacy did not overtly accrue as a resource to his opponents in Council debate, because they did not steer debate onto a personal level. Its significance lies in the legitimacy that it added to the issue.
Conflict surrounding the Tourist and Development Corporation was only one feature of the politics of development in the local arena, and when compared to issues which were raised about the Council's more direct role in development, it was perhaps a minor issue. As one might expect, the Council had assisted development, but some councillors sought to have it do more, or at least refrain from what they felt to be the placing of obstacles before development. This precipitated conflict similar to that between councillors and officers over technical matters related to water reticulation (Chapter Six).

Council helped business during 1986 by its annual donation to the Tourist and Development Corporation, by helping the Cowra Golf Club establish an industrial subdivision, by helping the Corporation fund an economic survey of the district, and by subsidising the water supply of the three large manufacturing industries. Business interests clearly benefited from these activities and policies. Yet councillors saw opportunities to question the actions of the Council, and even accuse it of hindering development. These opportunities arose largely from the Council's regulatory role.

The most dramatic of such issues offered a parallel to the Japanese Garden building matter. Two issues arose over the imposition of fire regulations when alterations were planned to shops in the main street. As with the Garden building, the Health Surveyor confronted irregular matters which he deemed to require consideration by Council. To that extent it was the Health Surveyor who raised the issues, but some councillors saw them not just as a technical problem, but as a case of regulation hindering development. The alleged ability of Council to do so became an issue.

In the first case, the Health Surveyor (Robert Myles) was confronted with a sensitive problem. The owner of a building containing three shops had applied to make alterations to just one of them. The alterations would have to be made in compliance with fire regulations. That much
was easy. The matter was, however, made difficult by all three shops in their pre-alteration state failing to comply with then current fire regulations. Council policy provided for enforcement of regulations when old buildings were modified. Robert observed that all three shops had a common roof, so making one comply and not the others made little sense, but alterations to all three would be a substantial imposition. He decided to recommend that the owner be required to draw up plans to upgrade all three shops, but only require alteration to achieve compliance on the one to be altered. Harold Upston, Tim West and Stephen Bell expressed reservations about the recommendation, but it was accepted at Works Committee. Harold was particularly concerned that the call for plans would hold up work, and that imposition of regulations on old buildings would open a "pandora's box" of further requirements that would be difficult to meet.

That issue was easy compared to another which Robert raised at the same Works Committee meeting. Another shop owner in the main street wanted to make alterations to a shop in an old building which was also shared with other shops. This owner had already started to make alterations before applying for Council approval, and, making the situation still more sensitive, the shop already had an illegally installed ceiling, and another shop owner in the building had made alterations without approval. The alterations necessary to bring the shop into line with a strict interpretation of the regulations appeared to Robert to be unreasonable demands, so again he compromised. He recommended to Works Committee that sufficient conditions be applied to ensure what he judged to be a reasonable degree of fire protection. Adherence to those conditions would, nevertheless, have been expensive.

Harold Upston emphasised his view that even Robert's compromise would be an unreasonable demand. As Stephen Bell explained, the problem lay in imposition of regulations on one shop owner while letting the others off the hook. The meeting discussed a move to make the other shops in the building comply with the conditions to be imposed on the one which planned alterations. Both Tim West and Harold Upston opposed such a move, but it was accepted and passed to Council for consideration.
Discussion at the July Council meeting further revealed the concerns of councillors over the matter. To Don Kibbler the problem was one of deciding how far Council could go in applying regulations before it would start to hinder development. He asked:

"When someone wants a new door must they fire rate the whole building?  
... Rents will go so high people will not be able to afford to pay."

Jack Mallon and Neville Pengilly both expressed concern about effects on the business. Harold Upston turned his attention to what he felt was unfair treatment of this shop owner, in the light of the changes that had already been made without approval. He had, at the Works Committee meeting, threatened to resign if Robert's recommendation was accepted at Council. It was accepted, and Harold resigned, amid a flurry of statements which indicated his belief that Council officers were engaged in a vendetta against business. (His resignation precipitated the by-election mentioned in Chapter Six.) The vote on this occasion was close. With Ab Oliver absent, Cyril Treasure's casting vote carried the motion to accept the recommendation after Col Newton, Tim West, Bruce Golsby, Barbara Bennett and George Noble had voted for it, probably having accepted the point made by Tim and Bruce that neglect of the regulations could leave Council responsible, and the ratepayers liable to great cost of damages. The matter later got bogged down in the necessity to obtain co-operation among the shop owners and ultimately the Council had to take stronger action, but not before Cyril Treasure, as Shire President, had sent a circular to all businesses explaining Council's action.

Planning matters, more than any other form of regulation, obtained response from those who expressed the business interest. This willingness may have been influenced by success in the major planning issue to be discussed below. Some discussion of minor issues which arose in the wake of that major issue will provide an overture to the latter.

The Shire Clerk's report to the August Policy and Resources Committee recommended that the wording of the requirement that developers meet the full cost of street sealing be altered for the sake of clarity. Don Kibbler objected on the grounds that developers may be discouraged. He
Looking across Mulyan to the vegetable growing area beside the Lachlan River; a similar view is available from the Japanese Garden which is beyond the photograph on the hillside to the right, about 100 metres from where the photograph was taken.
moved accordingly but his motion lapsed for want of a seconder. The recommendation proceeded safely through Council. The October Council meeting considered a Works Committee recommendation that a 'parking code' be adopted in the form of a plan which would require developers to provide a specified standard of parking space around buildings. Don Kibbler and Jack Mallon spoke against the recommendation; Jack Mallon on the grounds that having a plan could potentially remove discretionary powers from Council, and Don Kibbler on the grounds that merely having policies can discourage developers: "people see policies and go somewhere else". Council accepted the recommendation.

These regulation and planning issues gave little joy to those pursuing the business interest in that their wishes were not met, but their potential to raise issues had at least made the Council officers aware that they could seek compromise and so avoid unnecessary damage to business interests. There was no indication that the Council served the whims of business, but the issues did show that business interests were effectively raised for debate, and account was taken of them.

The Local Environmental Plan

The formulation of a planning document for Cowra Shire brought about a major wrangle, in which farmers raised their voices and were heard so clearly that although partly inconclusive, their performance in local politics could give them much satisfaction. This issue occupied in total far more of the time and energy of councillors, Council staff and active citizens than any other. It was the only issue in which a large number of people outside the Council participated. The local representative in State Parliament was quoted (in the Forbes Advocate of 23 May, 1985, page 1) to believe that "the controversy over the plan for Cowra was the greatest to grip that area since World War II".

The issue brought about a "disorganization of legitimacy" (Therborn, 1980: 106). Legitimacy was not lost, but the apparatus of the 'people's corporation' was aggressively threatened, and
under such threat the old pillars of local government began to crack. The 'people's corporation' temporarily lost its image as a guardian of all interests. It had pursued a policy which was, most charitably, popularly seen to be aligned with an interest of its own, and most deprecatingly, seen as an alien interest which it could not defend. Hence it wilted before what it saw as popular demand. This does not mean, however, that it turned pluralist, for not all interests surfaced in the debate. The Local Environmental Plan (LEP) issue demonstrated more than any other the ability of farmers to raise issues which cloud all others.

By clouding other interests it resembled the West Cowra water supply issue in two ways: in that other interests were catered for but not as a product of pluralistic bargaining in the political arena, and in that it became a field of conflict between Council officers and councillors. It established popular rationale and informal precedents for, and hence helped to legitimate, opposition by business. The LEP contributed more to the legitimacy of action aimed at the influence of Council officers than any other issue.

The issue followed implementation of the New South Wales Environmental Planning and Assessment Act (1979), which gave local government power to initiate and develop planning policy, and at the same time, required that councils adopt a process of public consultation (Toon, 1984). A formal procedure was laid down. It includes preparation of an environmental study, the exhibition of that study, an invitation for public submissions on the study, preparation of a draft plan with due regard to be given to public submissions on the study and consultations with other government agencies, public exhibition of the draft plan with an invitation for submissions, public hearings if and as requested by a person or persons making a submission, and preparation of a final plan to be forwarded to the Minister for his consideration and ultimate gazettal (Nott, 1982). For Cowra, the process ran aground after the draft plan exhibition stage.

The Act sought a broad approach to planning in which social, economic and environmental factors are considered and plans are subject to a wide range of technical and popular critical input (New South Wales Department of Environment and Planning, 1981). A government statement
on the Act concluded: "For it to fulfil its potential, those responsible for its administration must accept the challenge, and the community must take advantage of the opportunities provided for its involvement" (ibid: 38). The last sentence begs that venerable question: what is the community? It will become evident that in Cowra 'the community' as it operated for this issue consisted largely of farmers. There is a vast literature showing that higher status groups tend to be the participators (Buller and Hoggart, 1986: 143), or that response tends to come from an articulate minority (Newby et al, 1978) so that participation can put power into the hands of "a gaggle of small groups of committed activists", thereby reinforcing the power of the middle class which is best able to organise (Sandercock, 1978: 125). So it happened in Cowra, but commitment from some people swept many others along, to the extent that a farmer could, not altogether unreasonably, say to me in 1986: "the whole community stood up and said no!"

The notion of public participation presents a problem to those who wish to retain the 'people's corporation' image. Councillors may believe that they have been elected to make decisions in the interests of the whole community. The proposition that formulation of a plan should be done in consultation with the public denies that belief. If the community which councillors serve is a singular interest, there is no need for the pluralistic planning process which the new Act sought; and if the councillors were trusted by the electors to look after everybody's interests, then why would there be need for further input into decision making? The Act asked councillors to step down from their 'representative' role as it introduced an element of participatory government, which, in Cowra at least, was quite foreign, and as Painter (1973) found elsewhere, was not wanted. Veteran councillors, who had in their careers considered many demands made on Council and had often decided upon whom to favour, could have found it tempting to look upon participators as just more 'squeaky wheels', especially as one group led the squeaking. Circumstances arose in the course of the participatory planning process in which such a view made sense to councillors, while others, like the farmer quoted above, looked upon their own participation as action resembling revolution.

The issue had a long gestation, prior to its explosion into a political crisis in 1985. At the time of
the amalgamation, the Municipality was making its development decisions under an Interim Development Order, but Waugoola had avoided planning and planners. The *Guardian* of 19 September, 1969 (page 1) reported that Waugoola Council had rejected a request by the State Planning Authority for its representative to address the Council. Cyril Treasure, as Shire President, was quoted: "Council is not ready for such a move at this stage". Another councillor was reported to have said: "Council has enough control now without adding to their worries", but the Shire Engineer appears to have been more positive: he "could not see why Council did not want the officer to address Council". The State Planning Authority drew up an Interim Development Order and forwarded it to Waugoola for its consideration in 1974, but the Council told the Authority in 1976 that it did not wish to proceed, and hence no planning instrument was available to it at the time of the amalgamation (Armstrong, 1988).

Waugoola Council was directed by the Minister in 1980 to prepare a Draft Local Environmental Plan. After amalgamation consultants prepared an environmental study (Jackson, Teece, Chesterman, Willis and Partners, 1982) for the new Shire of Cowra. It was made available to the public, and after receipt of only seven submissions, the consultants produced a draft plan. Jim Finnimore later (in his Shire Engineer's report to Council of 26 March, 1984) expressed regret that there had been so little public input at the study stage.

The draft plan struck one particularly sensitive nerve. It included a provision that subdivisions in rural areas be no smaller than forty hectares, in order to preserve commercial viability in agricultural industry which was expected to be be lost if many small 'hobby' farms developed in place of larger units. During the process of consultation with government authorities, however, this figure was increased to 400 hectares, about twice the average size of existing farms in Cowra Shire. The change was promoted by the Department of Agriculture, which, as mentioned in Chapter Four, sought to encourage farm consolidation. The Department of Environment and Planning agreed, but Cowra Shire Council did not. Negotiation brought the minimum rural subdivision down to 200 hectares, close to the Shire average. The draft plan included provision for the Council to permit smaller subdivision if it believed that it was intended for a reasonable
purpose, such as a dwelling to be occupied by someone connected with the farm or for a viable small-scale agricultural undertaking. It was not so draconian as to altogether prohibit small subdivision, but it did impose the necessity of obtaining Council's consent.

The necessity for Council's consent became the point of contention, being another situation, like the Tourist and Development Corporation Garden lease, in which objections were raised against Council having such power, despite the apparent alternative being a weakening of local power in favour of authorities in Sydney. The draft LEP would, as a planning instrument, transfer power to approve development from Sydney authorities to Cowra Shire Council, but business and farming people chose to oppose the plan, perceiving the power it would vest in Council to be a threat to rights to alienate their land.

Opposition became apparent soon after Council decided in October, 1984 to exhibit the draft plan. Council decided to convene three public meetings early in 1985 as means, additional to the submission process, for obtaining public input. The decision to exhibit the draft plan was contentious. Some councillors had reservations about it, feeling that the public would interpret the draft plan as Council's wishes. The *Guardian* of 29 October, 1984 reported that Don Kibbler had said that

"the plan isn't final and it could well be put on us if it is displayed publicly... Once we've had it on display I don't think it will matter what we do; I think we will be stuck with it".

Ab Oliver sought to proceed with exhibition, but also to have an addendum to the plan to explain that it did not entirely reflect Council's views. Bruce Golsby, Col Newton and Neville Pengilly were reported by the *Guardian* to favour proceeding with exhibition, Neville Pengilly saying

"... the main contentious issue seems to be the subdivision of land. I don't think we can put it in a better form than what we've got until the people of Cowra and district have their say."
Events were to indicate value in both standpoints; the public response put weight behind the Council's opposition to the minimum subdivision size at the same time as it indicated an assumption that the plan was final and immutable, a reaction also found by Goldsmith and Saunders (1976). Don Kibbler's view, which was shared by Harold Upston (and judging by later events, other councillors also, including Jack Mallon and Stephen Bell) indicated that the farmers' wishes were anticipated by some, and may at least have been considered favourably to some extent by all on Council.

The first shots were fired even before Ab Oliver announced exhibition of the draft plan on 3 December. A local real estate agent spotted the minimum subdivision clause and alerted other town businesses which had an interest in land development. The Guardian ran a page one headline on 12 November: "Disaster for Rural Areas". The article continued:

"The spokesman [for a group described as "concerned residents"] said the plan would have a dramatic effect on residents' lifestyles especially in the rural areas of the shire. "Council would have almost complete control over land and its usage. We are concerned that this plan will be a vehicle for further environmental retentions on farming. It would almost stop dead development in the rural zone in the shire. The plan gives complete power to a few council officers who have never had to make a profit and manage their own business . . . These clauses give council staff and bureaucrats the right to make decisions affecting our lifestyles without any consultation or regard for our personal preferences or tastes. The LEP puts concentrated power in the hands of academics.""

This article and a response from Bruce Golsby indicate the agenda of the debate. Bruce's response appeared in the Guardian of 14 November:

"The spokesman of the residents said "We will be beholden to two or three officers of Council and where control is centralised it could create an atmosphere conducive to graft and corruption in years to come". Who do they think makes the decisions now? If any ratepayer is unhappy with the treatment they receive then all they have
to do is contact one of the councillors. . ."

The 'people's corporation' image had been blown away as the rhetoric focused on a threat from within: the autocracy of bureaucrats. The threat was not the minimum subdivision provision in the plan as much as anticipation of how it would be applied. This is consistent with, but not so apparent in, opposition to planning expressed by farmer organisations, seeking reduction of government intervention in land use decision-making (Dick, 1986a; Livestock and Grain Producers Association (LGPA), n.d.). In Cowra it appeared that some people at least were lacking faith in their elected representatives to look after their interests, against what they saw as a flowing tide of government intervention, personified by local government officials. Some people saw local officials under the thumb of State Government. A letter published in the Guardian of 15 February reminded electors that they had "elected the councillors to protect [their] interests in this area and they need support to avoid a 'takeover' by some city based department", in apparent ignorance of the devolution aspect of the planning legislation which would operate after the plan was established. Power of officials became the issue.

A group consisting of a solicitor, a real estate agent and a surveyor, having been alerted to the undesired plan, pre-empted Council's programme of public consultation by calling a public meeting. The meeting was to be held on 4 February, 1985. The Guardian of 1 February reported that some farmers had been delegated to contact others in order to urge attendance at the meeting. On the day of the meeting the Guardian published a letter from the local representative in the New South Wales Parliament, also urging attendance.

The meeting was a great success. On 6 February the Guardian reported on page one that more than 500 people attended and "overwhelmingly showed their support to dramatically change" the plan. "Although there was huge support to have the plan thrown out altogether it was explained that the only avenue open to the meeting was for individual submissions to be made to have the plan changed." The Guardian described the crowd as "largely hostile to the Council." The meeting elected a committee which opened an office on Saturday mornings in an empty shop in
the main street to help people make submissions.

Meanwhile the Council arranged the first of three public meetings. Jim Finnimore was quoted in the *Guardian* of 15 February (page 1): "the more people that participate at the meeting the better". He need not have worried, for it attracted 600 people, and was a stormy affair. On 22 February the *Guardian's* page one headline read: "Angry LEP Opponents Face Councillors at Fiery Meeting". The Council (on 27 February) debated withdrawal of the plan before the second public meeting had occurred, but despite opposition from Don Kibbler, Stephen Bell, George Noble, Jack Mallon and Harold Upston, resolved to continue, and formed a committee to guide the progress of the plan. The Council's public meetings continued the earlier success of the protest leaders, reminiscent of the observed tendency of public meetings to be dominated by one noisy group (Melotte, 1983), and in doing so made the farmers' interests, and their professed association with development very prominent.

Other groups commenced agitation. The Chamber of Commerce discussed the plan and called its own public meeting (*Cowra Guardian*, 18 March). It sought more industrial land in the town. A meeting was convened in the village of Woodstock, attracting eighty-four people, and was addressed by members of the original protest group (ibid). Concern arose about the plan's placing what they felt to be the precincts of the village in a rural zone, thereby constraining development. Committees were also formed in West Cowra and the villages of Gooloogong and Billimari to express similar concern.

In terms of submissions received, some 819, the public consultation process was also a great success. It was undoubtedly helped by the 'Concerned Citizens Committee' office in the main street where many people took its submission forms, and the similar activities of the Woodstock group. The sources of submissions indicate the areas in the Shire where interest in the issue was high, or at least those in which the protest organisers were able to muster support (Table 7.1). The villages and the rural areas were most demonstrative, the rural areas accounting for almost half the submissions from individuals. Mulyan and Taragala made least submissions. That is
somewhat ironic, given that the air pollution problem in Taragala, which had not at that time been solved, was a product of a planning decision, and that the Chamber of Commerce was pushing for industrial zoning in part of Mulyan. Only one submission complained about industrial pollution nuisance in Taragala. (It was not made by any of my Taragala informants whose information was used in Chapter Six.) Of the fourteen submissions from Mulyan and Taragala, five protested about the plan placing excessive power in the hands of bureaucrats, three complained about lack of consultation (indicating the 'fait accompli' assumption), two feared that the plan would restrict town development, two found the plan to have been inaccurately drawn, two felt that it did not provide sufficient land for industry (including the air pollution protester), one believed it would stifle small farmers trying to grow and the remaining one felt that it should not constrict market forces.

Table 7.1
Sources of Submissions to the LEP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Submissions as % of total population³</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Taragala/Mulyan⁵</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West⁶</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other town⁷</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Villages⁸</td>
<td>24.9⁹</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>13.7⁹</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>6.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes

1. Where an individual made more than one submission, the submissions were counted, as far as possible, as one
Using the same counting rule, I estimate that the ratio of submissions to surnames is 2.2 to 1. That is, the 78 submissions contain approximately 353 family names. The ratio is due to couples making separate submissions and incidence of relatively common surnames.

2. 'Petition' describes submissions consisting wholly or largely of the phrases suggested by the Cowra or Woodstock Concerned Citizens Committees. The Cowra Committee recommended seven points: hobby farms are not necessarily unproductive, too much power to bureaucrats, plan drawn by city consultants, plan would stifle young farmers, plan would restrict home building, the plan is inaccurate, owners are best judges of land use. Those which made similar points with different words were not counted as 'petitions'.


4. Percentages of submissions which were 'petitions'.

5. One submission was about industrial nuisance and another was about inaccurate zoning. The remainder was on rural matters or principle.

6. Thirty-two of the forty submissions protested at constraint on development.

7. Includes nine submissions from East Cowra protesting about the tip and/or industrial nuisance.

8. Includes 178 'petition' submissions from Woodstock. When Woodstock is extracted, the figures are 'petitions' fifteen, (thirty-five per cent of total), twenty-eight not 'petition's': total forty three (five per cent of individual submissions).

9. Village and Rural percentages use an estimate of total village population, excluding Gooloogong and Woodstock for which Census figures are available, of 300.

Among all submissions from individuals (except those from Woodstock and Billimari which were 'petitions' about zoning only), the fear of power in the hands of bureaucrats was the most popular point, being made by twenty per cent. Another nineteen per cent were concerned about constraints on development. The third most popular point was lack of consultation, made by fourteen per cent.

Many submissions showed fear of power in the hands of people who were not thought competent to wield it, based on an assumption that power would be placed in officers' hands, in apparent ignorance or disregard of Council's procedure of not allowing officers to reject development applications before consideration by Council.

"I believe that Council officers are too inexperienced on matters of farm management to decide what farmers should do."
"Council officers have no knowledge of agriculture and therefore should have no power in directing the operations thereof."

"Please don't put more power into the hands of those who do not have the ability to use that power wisely."

And a letter to the *Guardian*, published on 25 January, 1985 (page 2), asserted that "history shows that the vast majority of demands by bureaucrats to control agriculture have been costly failures."

The issue aroused moral indignation at the prospect of growing bureaucratic power. The public submissions made such assertions drawing on property rights, and expressed the belief that the councillors were irrelevant. They included:

"I do not think a council officer should have the right to tell me what I can do on my freehold land".

"Why should a farmer have to get permission to build a sheep or cattle yard or a shed from Council? And who is council? A paid officer or the elected councillors?"

"I feel that the plan is nothing more than a bureaucratic power provider in which so called experts (who by the way have no consideration for others and their opinions) seek to provide themselves with a controlling status over the rest of the community."

One submission pointed out that senior Council officers "may not have any long term involvement in the future of the Shire". Another recorded grave displeasure at the prospect of "handing to bureaucrats the freehold title to land which in my particular case the family have (sic) owned in excess of 130 years." The possibility of unfair tactics by officers was anticipated in a submission:

"... I submit that any ratepayer who wished to question or take issue with a [Council] employee's decision or interpretation of the plan would be put to
a great deal of expense, inconvenience and delay . . . he may even be subjected to subtle and not so subtle reprisal tactics in his future dealings with council and its employees."

Another suggested that vested interests were being pursued:

"Is there someone on the council with a vested interest regarding this plan. It would appear so."

This aspect should not be overstated because no specific accusations were made, nor to my knowledge were there any grounds for making such allegations. The point is that some people anticipated the possibility of such grounds arising.

Other submissions depicted the plan as part of a broader socialist conspiracy into which their council, what might have been the 'peoples' corporation' of their image, seemed to have been swallowed. This threat was perhaps suggested to them by the plan's apparent regulation of the private alienation of land.

"I object strongly to this subtle communist takeover. I intend to fight to keep this country free. A place where I can live where I choose. Do the things I want to do without any restrictions. I know society has to have rules, laws and moral codes to live by but when Council and governments start telling us how and where to live then its time every freedom loving Australian stood up and was counted."

"A situation that has arisen from this series of LEP meetings has most certainly undermined our trust in elected members of Council and brings home to me the fact that we are slipping further into the grip of socialism which will control everything we may wish to do."

"The plan is at once hilarious, stupid, crafty and dangerous . . . It is a sad and unbelievable awakening to realise that a body of people elected by its own friends, neighbours, townspeople and countrymen could wish to turn this community into a mini-dictatorship with the threat of greater things to follow."
One submission to the LEP process put a view which resembled some expressed in the course of the building regulations debates:

"I believe that this plan would impinge on our freedom of enterprise in life and business. I believe this plan leaves no room for market force development and has been ill prepared without consultation of the community members it affects."

The desire to maintain freedom of market forces was expressed as the basis of the farmers' case in the LEP issue at a meeting of the LGPA which I attended in October, 1985. All of the LEP submissions quoted above were made by rural residents.¹

At its meeting of 1 April, Council accepted its LEP Committee's recommendations to defer consideration of the plan for rural areas until it had been revised in the light of consultation with interested parties, including the protest committee and the LGPA. The _Guardian_ editorial of 24 April implied the poor condition of the 'people's corporation' image:

"It appears that Cowra's draft LEP has taken the prize as the most divisive issue in this town's history. . . councillors had faced residents at an open meeting at which debate was permitted . . . [It was] a salutary lesson to councillors that they were not universally liked."

For some of the councillors, the authority which the 'people's corporation' bestowed was hard to relinquish, and their attempts to retain it were seen to exacerbate the conflict. After a public meeting in June, 1985, the _Guardian_ (14 June, page 1) reported that a councillor had not helped discussion by saying to participants:

"you have been pretty lucky really . . . the councillors and the committee did not have to justify themselves to anyone".

It implied that such a comment may have further concentrated attention on the councillors and their appearance of collusion with bureaucrats.
A clash between Councillor Harold Upston and Shire Clerk Neville Armstrong at the April Council meeting served to focus attention on the councillor and officer dimension of the issue.

Ab Oliver, as President, had threatened Harold with suspension from the Chamber. The *Guardian* editorial of 24 April continued:

"It seems difficult to believe that [Ab's] incredible patience was tried to such an extent that he threatened a councillor with dismissal from the meeting. Again the incident arose from the draft LEP. Are some Council officers out of favour with the community? . . . Are some Council officers out of favour with some of the councillors? . . . Are voters disappointed by the performance of any of the Councillors or the council as a whole?"

The editorial went on to suggest that an unrealistic view of Council powers, implicitly with respect to State authorities, was abroad, and that this may help to explain the failure of Council as a 'people's corporation'.

Its failure did not, however, release a flourish of pluralism. The sources of submissions, and the increasing concentration on the councillor-officer conflict further narrowed the issue around pursuit of the interests of business and farming by effectively smothering a potential point in the public participation process in which the issue may have widened to include, for example, the Taragala air pollution problem or social planning matters and related local aspirations. Virtually all planning matters other than minimum size of rural subdivisions, zoning for residential growth in West Cowra and the villages, and provision of industrial zones in the town, were non-issues. The Chamber of Commerce's bid for industrial zoning in Mulyan was rejected by Council, on the grounds of effect on residential amenity, without the residents who would have been affected taking any part in discussion. (Their quiescence was confirmed by a senior Council officer.) The farmers had formed the body of the protest movement and their concerns attracted much sympathy. Although the originators of the protest were not farmers, their success was largely a product of the passionate support of the farmers. The farmers may not have started the issue, but they made it significant and they made it largely their own. The other players were minor, and largely obscured.
The urban component of the plan was adopted by Council in June, 1985 (Cowra Guardian, 26 June), but the rural plan made no further progress, and even regressed, in continuing negotiations among the Council, the LGPA, the protest committee and the Departments of Agriculture and Environment and Planning through 1985 and 1986. Council failed to gain the permission of the Department of Environment and Planning to exhibit a revised draft of the rural plan. The local victory had been won, but subdivision and development consent remained a sticking point, because of the power it was thought to give to bureaucrats.

The farmers gained complete removal of the minimum subdivision provision from the Council's draft, and it was accepted by the Department of Environment and Planning. This was a substantial achievement, but it was not all they sought. As I learnt at the meeting of the local branch of the LGPA in October, 1985, (referred to above) it sought deletion of the consent requirement altogether. This view, which indicated a desire to remove from the plan a provision which would increase Council's development control powers, was put at Council most forcefully by Harold Upston with strong support from Jack Mallon, and a sympathetic opinion voiced by Don Kibbler. Council rejected it, and forwarded a revised draft to the Department of Environment and Planning. Council also rejected a move by the same councillors to refer the issue back to the LEP Committee. That issue was raised (at the June, 1986 meeting) after the Department declined to approve the draft. This time it was raised by Jack Mallon and Stephen Bell with support from Harold Upston and Don Kibbler. The same councillors raised the consultation issue again at the July meeting after a compromise had been reached with the Department of Environment and Planning (later to be rejected by the Department of Agriculture). The councillors' move was a response to a request for consultation from the LGPA.

The point of contention in Council turned to Council's role, focusing on both its functions as leader in the 'people's corporation' image and as regulator. Council was divided between those who denied both, that is, believing that Council should defer to opinions expressed elsewhere and should not regulate (Jack Mallon and others), and those who felt that Council had a responsibility to lead and exercise powers to regulate beneficently. The latter views were
expressed by Tim West at the June meeting when he suggested that Council may be seen to be "abrogating its responsibilities" and by Cyril Treasure at the July meeting when he said:

"in my long experience I never saw a Council attempt to obstruct that which a person wanted in rural development. . . All you have to do is get Council's consent and so-help-me-Bob no council will refuse subdivision for a family."

The farmers had brought the 'people's corporation' into doubt and even disrepute. The LEP had furthered the development of a particular ground of conflict, that between councillors and officers, as the councillors who supported the 'people's corporation' were seen to be supporting the officers. The farmers had the resources not only to win a substantial local victory, but also to threaten the apparatus of domination when they felt it threatened to dominate them. At the time of writing production of a plan was still stuck fast, because the plan as drafted in Cowra was not acceptable to the Minister's delegates.

The Decline of the Railway

Like the early stages of the LEP process, the decline of the railway industry in Cowra did not become an issue to the extent that one could expect until farmers and the 'people's corporation' found their mutual interests threatened. After recognising that the decline of the railway service may indirectly place a cost burden on the Council, some councillors attempted to defend it. At the same time some farmers found the service withdrawal plans of the State Rail Authority (SRA) to threaten their interests also. Like the LEP, this put the Council with the farmers in opposition to the State Government, but unlike the LEP, the Council had an independent view to push in its 'people's corporation' role. It was pushing the farmers' interests because it was agreeing with the farmers, and could look after itself at the same time. The issue arose during a long period of decline in rail service and consequent decline in rail employment with loss of income to the town.
That, however, has not gained such prominence as an issue.

The issue which did arise, to become known as the 'Option Three' debate, was first mentioned in Cowra Shire Council at the meeting of 22 September, 1986. Neville Pengilly, referring to press reports (such as Dick, 1986b which anticipated opposition from local government) about SRA plans, asked the President (Cyril Treasure) if any of the railway lines in the Shire were to close. Cyril replied that Council had not been notified, and Council resolved without debate to ask the SRA about its intentions. The SRA replied, indicating that branch lines may close, but decisions to do so would only be made "after detailed consideration and discussion with all parties involved in the storage, handling and transport of grain" (letter SRA to Cowra Shire on Council Agenda for 24 November meeting).

At the 24 November Council meeting, Ab Oliver commented on the SRA reply, pointing out that cost savings to farmers would be admirable, but cost burdens incurred by Council due to increased road damage by grain-carrying trucks would be undesirable. Bruce Golsby felt that rail had served well for a long time and there was no reason why it should not continue to do so. Don Kibbler spoke as Council representative on the Lachlan Regional Transport Committee (a committee of local government, private transport firms and rail unionists set up initially to counter elimination of rural passenger services and coordinate such services in the Lachlan Valley). He said that Committee was very concerned about potential damage to roads and intended to speak to the Transport Minister. Council resolved to reply to the SRA indicating concern, and asked Engineer Jim Finnimore to report to Works Committee on implications for Cowra Shire. Jim reported that the SRA had added the 'third option' to its range of plans, which unlike its predecessors, indicated the roads to be affected. For Cowra the traffic growth was to occur on the main highway through the Shire, so most of the additional maintenance cost would have been incurred by the State Main Roads Department.

The SRA convened a meeting in Cowra on 20 January, 1987 to consult local opinion, and found that farmers were opposed to the plan because it threatened to raise costs for some of them. It
included closure of parts of the branch lines to Eugowra and Grenfell and all of the line from Cowra to Blayney (Crutchett, 1987). The last mentioned had been the main route to Sydney until the little remaining traffic on it had been diverted through Harden from mid-1986. This would have made Cowra a railway backwater. Cyril Treasure, as Shire President, called a meeting with the Chamber of Commerce. The *Cowra Guardian* of 2 February (page 1) reported that he was campaigning to encourage use of rail transport by business, and that Council was using rail exclusively.

"He would continue to have private discussions with Cowra firms and the SRA Executive in an effort to make the rail line more profitable. The loss of the rail line to Cowra would mean more traffic on the roads and loss of jobs to the district".

Opposition from farmers and local government may have been effective, for at the time of writing, the only closure had been that of the Cowra to Blayney line which had been virtually out of use anyway.

Cyril's raising of the implied loss of jobs and associated economic damage to the town was the first mention of this factor in local political circles for thirty years, despite steady decline in railway employment in Cowra over that period (Figure 7.1). This was confirmed by my reading of the *Guardian* and conversations with a long serving councillor, a senior railway employee and a long time member of the Chamber of Commerce. With 205 employees in 1954, the railway's permanent labour force was about the size of that of the Edgell vegetable cannery, those two being the town's biggest employers. By 1986 the railway had declined to about one third of that level of employment.²

The period of steepest decline in railway employment, 1954 to 1961, was also a period of local political agitation in support of the railway. By 1956 awareness of change was abroad in Cowra. The *Guardian* of 19 June (page 7) reported that a councillor had suggested a role for Council in maintaining Cowra's railway industry. He was quoted:
"I ask that question [whether Council is to act against railway decline] in the firm belief that this Council has a definite role to play if it is going to preserve the progress of the town and not allow it to be forced into some secondary role of a branch line backwater."

Leo Lynch supported this view. The *Guardian* of 3 August (page 14) reported a debate between Lynch and Mayor Whitby, in which Whitby said that the railway service was declining due to loss of patronage because its trains were "feebly slow". Nevertheless, he and the Waugoola Shire President made a joint appeal to the Railway Department for a better passenger service.
(Cowra Guardian, 21 September, 1956). This activity proceeded the following year. Whitby wrote another appeal to the Railway Department, following a request from Lynch (Cowra Guardian, 27 August 1957). The matter was raised again in Council in December 1957, by Lynch with further support from the alderman quoted above. Whitby was reported to have agreed, saying "they should go out and look for business" (Cowra Guardian, 6 December, page 10). It seems unlikely that these appeals had a substantial long term impact, but the issue of declining railway employment had been raised in the local political arena as an issue of general local concern, as a valid matter for the agenda of the 'people's corporation'.

The local quiescence of the issue for thirty years cannot be attributed to local ignorance. Plans to replace steam locomotives were reported on at least five occasion between 1959 and 1967. The Guardian of 12 December, 1969 announced that five sidings on the lines radiating from Cowra were to close, twelve having been closed in the previous two years. On 21 August, 1970 it reported that fourteen platforms on these lines were to close. Between 1970 and 1975 ten stations within Cowra Shire were closed (Ryan, 1986). Rail passenger services to Grenfell and Eugowra ceased in 1974 (ibid). On 20 September, 1974 the Guardian's page one headline read "Rail Cuts Hit Cowra Hardest". The article went on to say that Cowra could lose one million dollars of annual revenue. When the overnight passenger service to Sydney was eliminated the Municipal Council "expressed concern" at the loss to the Minister for Transport (Cowra Guardian, 11 March, 1975, page 1). As Jones (1987) reported, concern about loss of public employment, including rail, is widespread in country New South Wales, and some councils are reacting, as Cowra's did over threats to the telephone exchange and abattoir plans (see Chapter Four).

The railway staff tried to tell the people of their locality that it was losing an industry. On 14 January, 1969 the Guardian quoted a statement from a union leader that another town had lost business to the value of $100 000 per year as railway employment had declined. A meeting of rail unions with the Cowra Chamber of Commerce was held in 1974. A union representative at the meeting was reported by the Guardian (16 August, page 1) to have said that "the meeting decided to make the people of Cowra aware of the amount of money to be lost by the town
through closure of the branch lines". Similar pleas were heard in 1985 when closure of the Cowra Freight Centre was rumoured. The *Guardian* page one headline of 29 March read "Town Will Lose Millions". The editorial was supportive, finding rail cuts to have "staggering effects" on towns. The rail unions were trying very hard to make people aware of the loss, but other than an unsuccessful 1980 Shire election candidate stating that he wished to encourage use of rail services, the issue did not arise in the local political arena until 1986-87.

As in the LEP issue, farmers then demonstrated a capacity to raise an issue, which in the case of the railway decline was helped by Council seeking to defend its corporate interests. The 1986-87 railway decline issue did not need prompting from the railway employees. The railway unions' attempts to create awareness of railway decline in recent years may have indirectly helped to motivate those who stimulated the issue, but they did not precipitate it. The issue was not raised by railway employees defending their interests.

**Conclusion: Councillors, Officers and Ideologies**

Two features are prominent among the issues related above. One is the conflict between Council officers and councillors, as found in 'Spatial Politics' (Chapter Six), and the other is the quiescence of non-business and non-farm people, except when their interests were expressed as ratepayers' interests. In the 'people's corporation' the only legitimate interests are those which are seen to be congruent with those of the entire locality. Councillors found it easy to relate farm, business and ratepayer interests to those of the entire population, but did not so readily make this connection for railway employees, and they set local interests far apart from what they perceived to be a malevolent bureaucracy.

The perception of a conflict between bureaucratic and local interests structured development politics. This was evident in development regulation matters, and most obvious in the LEP issue where opposition to bureaucracy swept other issues aside. Bureaucratisation provided the main
point of discussion about the relation between planning and development. The participation apparatus required by planning law was designed to obviate the potential unfairness produced by bureaucratic procedures, of the kind observed to defuse actual or potential spatial political issues (Chapter Six). Farmers were so strong that they were able to quash the procedures without help from the legislation. When they saw the bureaucratic procedure going awry, farmers were able to commandeer the apparatus. Their 'coup' had wide, although not unlimited, public support. Moreover, the identification of the farming interest with the locality interest was not questioned, other than implicitly by those councillors who sought to defend the 'people's corporation'. The issue split the Council into two ideological camps: those councillors who retained the 'people's corporation' image and those who believed that the image had been, or may have been about to be, corrupted by bureaucratic power.

The railway employees could barely manage what came easily to the farmers: raising their interests to the level of a general local concern. They could not call on the ratepayer principle, as non-business and non-farm people had done in the Tourist and Development Corporation matters. No belief system like those which associated farming and business interests with a general local interest was available to them. The onus was on them, as it was for the people of Taragala in the air pollution non-issue, to provide evidence, which they attempted to do. Unlike the Taragala people they could reasonably claim to be defending a unitary local interest: income to the town. Their argument, however, failed to arouse concern among those who had direct access to the political arena for a long period, during which much damage was done to their cause and their material and personnel resources depleted. When railway employee interests were raised they were mentioned as a question of declining status for the town, as in the statement quoted above by the alderman who supported Leo Lynch, or were mentioned defensively as in a Guardian report of 2 February, 1987 (page 7):

"Councillor Treasure said the SRA employees would of course be looking after their own interests as it meant their jobs and homes if the rail lines closed. He said they would be stupid not to protest."
This presents a contrast with the words of those councillors who opposed development and building regulation without feeling a need to justify the actions or complaints of those whose interests they were defending. Development issues offer evidence of substantial ideological resources available to farmers, but meagre resources other than the ratepayer principle available to non-farm and non-business groups. Chapter Eight discusses some non-issues which demonstrate successful use of the ratepayer principle by farm and business people.

Notes

1    The bureaucracy was also seen to be attacking the personal connection between farmers and their land. As Rose et al (1976) showed, this personal connection and its 'natural' rightfulness are emphasised among farmers, while the productive function of land is downplayed. Many farmers not only anticipated that they were to be told what to do by people who were not qualified to do so, but also feared that their personal property was to be appropriated and their rights infringed.

2    Cowra's Locomotive Depot was the largest source of employment among the branches of the railway service. My conversations with two retired Cowra railway employees indicated that they felt that the Depot's decline had started during the 1930s. It had its largest number of staff (125) in 1924, but in the late 1940s was still busy. The Cowra Guardian of 23 December, 1949 (page 3) reported that the railway was the busiest it had been "for years" with heavy traffic in coal, and passengers for the migrant camp. The coal traffic originated at Lithgow and went to Victoria to fuel that State's locomotives. It was significant enough for the Guardian (19 September, 1952, page 1) to report its decline, and an anticipated associated loss of jobs at the Cowra Locomotive Depot which serviced the locomotives on the coal trains. That was the first post-war sign of change.

Decline in rail services and the replacement of steam with diesel locomotives loomed in the early 1950s, and these factors together eventually brought substantial loss of railway employment. Diesel locomotives were described as "wife starvers" in the Guardian of 16 January, 1953 (page 14) because of the threat they posed to jobs. But it was the diesel locomotives of Victorian rather than New South Wales railways which first threatened the Cowra Depot by reducing demand for
the coal that moved through Cowra. Diesel locomotives were not used around Cowra until the mid 1960s, when the depot had about ten steam locomotives. In 1967 it had just one locomotive and two rail motors, all of which had been lost by 1982, along with need for servicing facilities and staff (Ryan, 1986). From the mid 1950s until the present, passenger as well as goods train traffic declined steadily (ibid). It was this decline, rather than a sudden impact of introduction of diesel locomotives to Cowra, which brought down the level of railway employment.
Chapter Eight

GENDER, RACE AND HUMAN SERVICES

Human services provide empirical support for the point made by Rich (1982: 7), as he reminds us of Lukes' second dimension of power:

"The most significant decisions about public services are made before any services ever reach "the street", and any study that examines only the distribution of those services cities actually decide to deliver can provide only a highly limited basis for judging the equity of service distribution or understanding the politics of public services."

Restricting political analysis to issues surrounding property and development services would ignore the interests of women and Aboriginal people, as they may potentially be served by local government, and as they may occasionally be pursued in the local political arena. Serving such interests implies an element of redistribution of local resources along a social dimension.

Moves to broaden local government's functions into human services necessitate action to challenge tradition and property interests at the same time. Such challenge would have to, implicitly if not explicitly, raise the functions of local government as an issue. People expressing non-property interests may face a substantial task in raising an issue, when the 'people's corporation' sees its corporate interest best served by staying clear of non-traditional functions. Non-decision, within the property services tradition, is a decision to confine services to the property kind. This Chapter analyses some non-issues to illustrate the power processes through which the narrow range of functions is maintained, and in which the interests of women and Aborigines are not served by the 'people's corporation'.
There are two basic questions to be asked of Cowra's distributional politics:

1. whose interests might human services serve? and

2. are human services admitted to the local political arena as a matter for consideration?

The first question is answered by discussion about the nature and status of human services in local government, leading toward specification of women and Aborigines as the people who might most benefit from human services. A negative answer is offered to the second question, based on analysis of non-decision making about human services issues in 1986 and earlier, drawing on evidence of non-issues acquired in observation of Council meetings, interviews with councillors and others, current and historical documents and material gathered from the pages of the *Cowra Guardian*.

**Human Services in Local Government**

Human services provide contrast with property services but do not imply an economic redistribution role. Local government is unlikely to take on income or wealth redistributional objectives on its own as long as its revenue is derived from rates, for, as Jones (1977: 10) explained, a council which rated the rich so heavily as to enable significant redistribution to the poor would encourage the rich to move elsewhere. Rating, being based on property values rather than income, can be regressive taxation (Mowbray, 1984), especially among the elderly whose homes and land have appreciated while their incomes declined post-retirement. Local government may, however, take on administration of redistributive functions of other levels of government, and therefore acquire policies which are seen to be redistributive. Moreover, the popular labelling of human services as welfare, and their image in the perspective provided by a conservative ideology, imbues redistributinal connotations. Those connotations are implicitly prominent in the rhetoric of councillors.

Cowra Shire is one of many rural councils which have been reluctant to offer human services (Joint Officers' Committee of the Local Government Ministers' Conference (1980), see also Chapter Five above). Some metropolitan councils embarked on human services programmes of
their own around the time of World War II, pushed by a very small number of female councillors (Sinclair, 1987: 15). However, local government in Australia showed little enthusiasm for human services until the 1970s (Office of Local Government, 1987: 13). Councils are free to decide, or not decide to provide them (Elliffe, 1987).

As entry into human services implies an expansion of the organisation, it may seem curious that the 'people's corporation' does not seek to do so. Colebatch and Degeling (1986) pointed out that council executive officers may not want expansion into areas that they might not find easy to control. In addition, some may see deviation from traditional functions as a potential drain on council resources, and consequently a threat to the resources of their existing departments.

Councils' reluctance to take on a human service role cannot, however, be attributed to organisational inertia. Such inertia may be important, given the influence which council officers can have over council affairs through their control of information flows, but the ability of councillors to raise and successfully push the human service provision issue has been evident in the work of Sinclair (1987) and Wills (1985). As Camasso and Moore (1985) found in the United States, rural people tend to favour minimising government intervention in what is seen as welfare activity. Nevertheless, even in rural areas, if a powerful group wants human services, it can get them. Without such a group, and as long as human services remain an 'optional extra' for local government, they will be avoided.

**Women, Interests and Human Services**

The gender dimension has often been neglected in community studies, an omission recognised in Britain by Frankenberg (1976), and in Australia by Bryson and Wearing (1985) who lamented a lost opportunity to explore the relationship between women and welfare activity (ibid: 353). This omission can only be rectified by research which identifies women's interests, assesses response or non-response to those interests in the political arena, and explains outcomes in the arena. This section considers gender roles in the rural context and some factors which lead toward an active
interest by women in local politics.

The interests of women may be served by local government taking on a human service role. The human services provided by local government are largely of the caring kind: child care and help for the elderly such as 'meals on wheels'. Such services reduce the caring burden which falls heavily on women. The ideology which gives domestic caring responsibilities to women is strong in rural Australia, and it is associated with the reluctance among rural local government to adopt human services which many of its male members would see as women's responsibility to their families.

The association between these phenomena, by suggesting that women are ideologically placed in the home, and kept there in small part at least by local government non-decision making, suggests local government to be an instrument of oppression. It was a source of frustration for some Cowra women, because while the ideological climate is conducive to maintenance of women's domestic caring role, the caring tradition turns the attention of some women keen on civic service towards the possibility of such a role for local government, only to be turned back by a different ideology which is just as firmly set in the rural ideological climate.

The literature on gender roles in the rural context focuses sharply on relations based on family farm agriculture, and reveals several contradictions. Poiner (1979) describes the historical origins of rural women's pervasive domestic role model, but as she implies, it is an incomplete picture of the role of women in family farming, because although the ideal place for women is in the home, they are often to be found contradicting the domestic image by working with machinery and animals around the farm. Demands on women for such work may be increasing as economic conditions for farming decline (Austin and Marshall, 1985). Even where women perform the same tasks as men, however, role differentiation is still seen, as identified by Masson (1986: 13):

"Women are employed in intensive livestock enterprises, such as piggeries, poultry farms, and dairies; many farmers say they prefer them because 'they
are more caring and considerate of the animals'."

The ideological allocation of caring responsibilities to women has a real counterpart in Cowra Shire. Women in Cowra are more likely than men to anticipate an obligation to care for an aged parent or relative, and family members, who are likely to be women, take a substantial share of caring responsibilities (Gray, 1987a, Appendix A). There are demographic grounds for suggesting that the caring burden on women will increase disproportionately, due to gender differentials in morbidity and life expectancy, and the effects of population ageing in terms of numbers of people involved in caring are likely to be greater in rural areas and small country towns than in large urban centres (ibid).

The ideology of the domestic, caring role for women, and the demands placed upon them, combine in a climate in which female employment and acquisition of skills and responsibilities have become commonplace. The change which has occurred in female labour force participation since World War II (see Chapter Four) along with the continuation of concentration of female employment in commerce and service industries may have had two effects: strengthening awareness among women of their potential beyond domesticity, and with the persistence of the domestic ideal, creation of tension when expectations of domestic service and income generation outside home and farm collide. The concern of some rural women for social problems among farm families hit by economic difficulties was illustrated by one who sought to organise a conference on social support for families (Austin, 1986). Women are showing their interest in family problems outside their own homes, and a willingness to speak on social issues, making caring a public issue.

Given the power relations between men and women in rural situations (as discussed by James, 1982; Poiner, 1982 and Dempsey, 1986a), the undervaluation of women's farm work (Reimer, 1986), and their financial dependency (Dempsey, 1987), it would seem unlikely that many women are relieved of caring tasks by their menfolk. In this situation it would be reasonable to expect women to seek to help with essential caring tasks, and to seek careers in which the caring
role is maintained. Relief from some of the caring burden, and their socialisation and expanding labour force role in service industry, place human services by government among the political interests of women.

Women on Council

While women in local government have steered its functions towards human service activity, the issue of furthering women's interests through local government is broader than concern about numbers of women representatives. Indeed, the ideologies of councillors regardless of sex may be a more important factor, as there is no necessity for men to follow the traditional property service path exclusively, nor will all women always pursue human services. Nevertheless, women's interests are more likely to be represented by women.

This point should not direct research back to the individualistic emphasis of the elitist-pluralist debate. That could lead to circularity, as implied by Bokemeier and Tait (1980) who explained increasing local political presence of women in terms of institutional movement into areas of traditional concern to women, in which female leadership is acceptable. Certainly women elected as representatives are in a better position than others to move local government into human services, and a human service role for local government would be likely to attract attention from women who are likely to use the service, but explanation of gender power relations at the local political level is best approached by treating the matter of representation separately, and as background to the more fundamental problem of realisation of interests.

Women councillors in Australia have grown steadily in numbers since the early 1970s, having been very few prior to the 1970s, although the first was elected in 1919 (Sinclair, 1987: 2). They are, however, still a minority, and many councils have no women members. All-male councils are more common in rural areas. Burdess (1981) reported that eighty-two per cent of metropolitan councils and sixty-two per cent of medium size town councils had women members.
The status position of women and its associated processes help to explain this situation. Dempsey (1986a) analysed a process of social closure in which men successfully excluded women from community decision making, greatly assisted by a prevailing belief that men are better suited to leadership than women. This accords with the picture of Australian rural communities developed through Wild (1974a), Rew (1978) and Poiner (1982) in which women and their local organisations and activities are placed in an inferior, back-stage position.

Other factors must, however, be added to this picture. Women do operate the status system, and as shown by James (1979) can do so more effectively than men. Many women hold managerial and professional positions which command respect, even around the male bastions of agriculture such as farms and research establishments. In Cowra several successful main street businesses were run by women. I recollect a farmer telling me that his wife's business was making more money than his farm. The Cowra Chamber of Commerce elected a woman to its presidency for the first time in 1985 (Cowra Guardian, 12 June). The important point is not that women are in an inferior status position, but that when they enter local government they are entering an institution constructed by men which was not designed to serve the interests of women, and which operates in an ideological climate more conducive to the interests of men.

Cowra Shire Council in 1986 had one woman councillor, being Barbara Bennett. As mentioned in Chapter Five, Barbara was first elected to the Municipal Council in 1971, and served until her retirement in 1987, including five years as Mayor and three years as Deputy President of Cowra Shire. Barbara was one of two women elected to the Municipal Council in 1971. The other served two terms before standing down at the 1977 election. Both women espoused women's interests, and they were instrumental in the establishment of a women's rest centre offering short term child care in the main street.

Nomination of two women for council in 1971 created headlines in the Guardian of 27 August (page 1), which went on to illustrate a male perspective on women's service in local government:

"Both women are mothers and housewives who admit to being in their
forties. They say it is only at this time of their lives with the children less of a full time problem, that they can spare the hours necessary to become involved in council work. While confessing to being tyros as far as that is concerned, they say it is time that the woman's point of view was represented in what is after all the town's biggest and most vital industry. The fact of being the first women in history to nominate for the Cowra Council is not important, they say, since women are now involved in the highest levels of government."

I found Barbara to be a caring person who was keen to return something of value to the locality in which her family had prospered for many generations. She and her family had a long history of participation in local service organisations. To that extent, and to the extent that she had become free of child-raising responsibilities, she resembled Sinclair's (1987: 55) most common female rural shire councillor, but unlike that type, Barbara did not nominate to substitute for her husband or another male. She saw it as an extension of her own service career.

Barbara brought substantial resources to Council, helped by her business activities and her consequent association with business people. She was well in touch with local affairs, helped in the past by part-ownership of the *Guardian* as well as her period as Mayor. She was also prominent in the Tourist and Development Corporation. During 1986, Cowra Shire Council did not operate as the exclusivist male elitist club, so often typified as local government, which would find it very easy to exclude women. Barbara had sufficient resources to resist exclusion, and moreover, the conflict atmosphere described in the previous two Chapters was not conducive to unitary male exclusivist tactics. She was able to play a role in local politics, without such heavy constraints on information and interaction found by Rew (1978) and Sinclair (1987) to be placed on women councillors. This does not, however, mean that women's interests were put to the fore, and it certainly does not imply fertile ground for acceptance of human services, as Barbara was part of a Council and a locality which operated in a rural ideological climate.
Human Services in Cowra Shire

Human services were provided in Cowra Shire, but Cowra Shire Council had very little to do with their provision. They came from State and Federal government and local voluntary agencies. Council made money available by way of grants and loans to local projects, such as facilities for the care of children and the elderly, but it had avoided any on-going commitment. This means that human services were a non-issue in two senses: in that there was no manifest lack of them such as one would expect to precipitate howling demands, and in that Council had largely kept any such demands off the local political agenda. Bureaucratic apparatus (this time that of the State and Federal governments) had produced a reasonable level of service, so minimising discontent, but at the same time not realising maximum potential local benefit.

The history of child care facilities in Cowra, as related by Williams (1986), provides a good illustration of the roles Council has, and has not, taken on. The first child care centre was conducted in the Salvation Army Hall, which was used by a group of mothers who co-operated to care for each other's children during the early 1950s. The group grew, and in 1956 decided to borrow money to establish its own centre. It did so, and the Municipal Council donated land for the building. The first trained teacher was employed in the late 1960s, financed by service charges and State Government subsidies. Around this time the building was becoming inadequate. In 1970 a block of land was set aside by the State Lands Department for a new centre. In 1975 the committee applied unsuccessfully to the State and Federal governments for funding for the new building. By 1976 the space needed was seen to have grown, so a larger block of land was sought and obtained from the State Government. In 1978 the Municipal Council's Health Surveyor drew up plans for a building, but again grant applications to government were rejected.

After a public meeting in August 1978, the Municipal and Shire Councils decided to offer grants, and in doing so changed the course of events. One of the leaders of the committee told me that this support had a powerful effect on the prospects for obtaining State grants. In 1980, the project received a grant of $80 000 from the State Government to add to $35 000 from the Shire
and Municipal Councils and $25 000 raised by volunteers. Cowra obtained a child care centre, which in 1986 was still run as a co-operative caring for about 275 children each week. Local government had made a substantial contribution, but had not made any continuing commitment. The commitment it did make confirms the point made in Chapter Five, that council support can be very important to local organisations, and it suggests that if substantial support from local government had been on-going from the beginning, or if a council had taken on responsibility for child care, the larger centre may have been established earlier. That, however, is speculation. But it does reinforce the point that it was in the interests of women to obtain council support and the observation that the Councils did not provide on-going support.

Two matters arose in Council in 1986 which illustrate resistance to human services among councillors, and the means of subduing related issues. One concerned a proposal for a vacation play centre for school children, and the other arose over accommodation for the Cowra Neighbourhood and Information Centre.

The former matter surfaced when thirty-eight residents asked Council to set up a vacation play centre in conjunction with the State Department of Sport and Recreation. Finance Committee adopted Clerk Neville Armstrong’s recommendation "that Council not conduct vacation play centres and the petitioners be advised that Council does not consider such to be its function nor does it consider funds are available for conduct of such centres" (Cowra Shire Council agenda, 24 February, 1986). This position was confirmed by the full Council without debate.

The Guardian reacted with a page one headline: "No Discussion on Play Centres, not council’s function - Clerk" (28 February, 1986), and an editorial (its editor being female) which began:

"It is becoming very difficult to determine those issues which will be considered by Cowra Shire Council as important or worthy of discussion. In a democracy it could be said that those matters brought before government by the people have a certain priority . . ." (page 2)

The page one article directed its wrath at the Clerk. It reported that he had told Finance
Committee that a vacation play centre had been held by the Municipal Council fifteen years previously, and that it had been terminated due to lack of patronage. The Guardian further quoted Neville:

"In other areas where the council employs a Social Worker, Youth Worker or some similarly titled person, the organisation of such a centre is possible . . . No such officer is employed by this council. No financial provision has been made for the conduct of such a centre . . . Mr Armstrong said should the committee be interested in pursuing this matter, inquiries could be made. He asked if that was the case then which department of the council would be responsible for further investigation and conduct."

Neville sought a decision which could have had substantial long term policy implications. The last paragraph could reasonably have been inferred by the councillors to mean that a suitable officer, like those listed, would have had to be employed. Discussion might therefore have raised a major issue which would have been difficult to push, and could have opened a 'can of worms'. Neville opened the door to the issue, and left the councillors to decide, or not decide, to walk through it.

They chose not to. The editorial turned its attention to the councillors:

"Not one councillor questioned the fact that current information [on assistance from the Department of Sport and Recreation] was not provided [by the Clerk to Finance Committee]. Not one councillor asked that the matter be further investigated. Not one councillor felt that 38 local people who had taken the trouble to prepare a petition were entitled to better treatment. . . The people have a right to a reasonable hearing and a result, even if negative, which is at least researched and discussed."

The petitioners eventually obtained their play centre, with funding from the State Department of Sport and Recreation through Council, but, importantly, without discussion in Council. (Barbara Bennett was on Finance Committee and attended the Council meeting which accepted
that Committee's negative recommendation.) The funding employed the necessary staff. Arrangements were made in discussions among Neville Armstrong, Cyril Treasure and representatives of the petitioners. The resulting play centre was a great success. The matter did not again surface on Council's agendas, and was not raised by a councillor. So another 'human service' had been provided, despite Council's reluctance to initiate and carry it, and human services stayed off Cowra Shire Council's agenda.

The Guardian of 28 February also reported another human services non-issue. On page 3 it commenced an article:

"Cowra Shire Council will again tell the Cowra Community Information and Neighbourhood Centre Committee that at the present time council has no space available for them."

The Community Information and Neighbourhood Centre (or just Neighbourhood Centre) was established at a public meeting in June 1984 to provide a joint facility for voluntary and government welfare agencies and a 'drop-in' information centre. The public meeting, which attracted about seventy representatives of such organisations, elected a committee and resolved to apply for funding. Women were a majority at the inaugural meeting, and have maintained a majority on the Centre's committee. Indeed, in 1986 there was only one male on the executive, being the local hospital Social Worker, and only one male among the ten volunteers who staffed the Centre. The Centre offered attractive, although unpaid, activities for women in a town in which employment opportunities were few. Some of the women were professionals, such as community nurses, and most of the men, like the social worker, also became involved through professional interest. They came from a range of occupational backgrounds, from farming to factory employment.

The Committee's first tasks were to obtain funding and accommodation. It obtained $500 from the State Government, and approached the Council for help with accommodation. Their first rejection by Council came in August 1984. Council adopted a Finance Committee recommendation that more information be sought from the Centre about "the operation of similar
centres in other areas before giving final consideration” to the request (Minutes of Council Meeting 27 August, 1984). Fortunately the committee obtained use of an old rectory in the main street in mid 1985 for six months, and the Centre was able to open (Centre President's and Co-ordinator's Annual Reports, 1986).

Late in the year the Centre Committee approached Council again. When the matter came up at the October Council meeting there was some discussion, but it did not proceed beyond Harold Upston’s statement that the request looked like the ‘thin end of the wedge’. Council again resolved to seek more information. The Centre Committee made its third attempt, as reported in the Guardian above, in February 1986. Its letter arrived too late for the Clerk to cover it with a recommendation in his report. He reported verbally that a prospective tenant had appeared to show interest in the empty space in the Council building which the Centre sought. Harold Upston moved and Col Newton seconded a successful motion to reject the request.

The Centre Committee again obtained free accommodation, this time from a shop owner who had vacant space next door to his shop. That was also a temporary situation, and when the shop owner suggested that it might be more permanent if an arrangement could be made in which Council waived his rates, the Committee approached Council. Again Council’s response was negative, reached after no discussion of the motion from Harold Upston to reject the request. The Centre’s tenuous situation was later stabilised by an offer of a house by the State Department of Housing. The Centre prospered after occupying that house.

In all three of these human services non-issues it would appear very likely that Council support would have launched what proved to be very successful projects into operation much earlier, with much less expenditure of money and energy by local people. (All three of these non-issues reinforce the point made in Chapter Five about the importance of Council support for local projects.) Had Council had on its staff a person with human services responsibilities, these issues may have surfaced and been considered in the way that the Guardian editor wanted the play centre discussed. Such an officer would have assessed the Neighbourhood Centre request, having the kind of information that Council repeatedly requested, and presented a
Taragala streetscape; the Neighbourhood Centre occupied a house similar to these.
recommendation to Council. Employment of such an officer would of course imply that a
decision to enter the human service field had been taken, and as Neville's report to Finance
Committee about the play centre illustrates, that was the contentious issue that Council was
avoiding.

The Councillor Perspective

Application of Dye's (1986: 42) belief that "community elites have an interest in keeping
redistributional questions out of local politics since their resolution may jeopardise members'
wealth and income" cannot be directly applied to Cowra Shire because human service provision
by local government is unlikely to bring about, or even be intended to bring about, intentional
redistribution of wealth or income. Dye's proposition does, however, have some application,
because the possibility of redistribution was on the minds of councillors. It was expressed in
terms of potential cost to ratepayers, as implied in Harold Upston's reference to 'the thin end of
the wedge' in the Neighbourhood Centre non-issue. It was expressed in Council only by Ab
Oliver, in terms of local self defence against imposed costs, in his valedictory speech before
standing down at the 1987 election, as reported by the Guardian (23 September, page 1):

"His departing advice for the new Council was to keep away from the field
of social service to the community. He said a number of councils had
endeavoured to provide community services and had found the Government
had been all too willing to foist a large part of social services on to them."

He had earlier expressed the view to me that human services are undesirable because of the drain
they would place under ratepayers' resources. This view was also expressed, but less directly, at
an earlier meeting of Council by Jack Mallon in calling for a return from other activities to the
'three Rs' (roads, rates and rubbish). Jack's speech was a reaction to a letter to Council from a
ratepayer criticising Council for spending on what the ratepayer felt to be five unnecessary items,
none of which were human services, and three of which were road maintenance. Jack also called
for invocation of the 'user pays' principle. A need to minimise expenditure was raised many times, most notably by Bruce Golsby in a successful motion that Council aim at a zero rate increase in 1986.

In my conversations with councillors only one expressed any interest in raising the issue, but the cost factor had dissuaded him. He had taken the idea only as far as discussing it privately. (Barbara Bennett, like Ab feared a potential cost burden.) He felt that

"Council should have a social conscience. But I can see the difficulties involved, because it is very hard to define the parameters of social conscience because they are ever expanding. As the Clerk pointed out in discussions, we haven't a person on the staff who is into those sorts of issues so we would have to find someone, and then you would have to give them a car so they can get out and about. And then they'll need an office. So I had to pull the curtain down on that one... The fear of a lot of councillors is that once you let one through the door you'll have them all lined up. It's a big field out there."

Other councillors expressed fear that human services might be imposed. When Neville presented a particularly healthy financial report to Finance Committee during the estimates process, Don Kibbler asked if Council might "have to clean out some hollow logs" in order to maintain levels of Commonwealth grants. Neville replied that there was no such threat. Another councillor expressed the view to me that there was too much duplication of human services and Council's involvement would only exacerbate the situation. Yet another believed that Cowra was a "self help town" and that Council should not interfere with successful organisations.

The councillors were not uncharitable people. They looked sympathetically upon individual cases of hardship in matters of revenue collection and administration. Their resistance was aimed at institutionalisation of 'welfare'. Their rationalisation drew on a range of ideologies, the most prominent of which were the ratepayer principle and the localist ideal.

A distaste for the welfare state in general was evident in Cowra. A local welfare professional,
who had also worked in city situations, told me of a stigma attached to seeking help. The survey reported in Gray (1987a, Appendix A), and discussed in Gray (1987b) also encountered resistance. These ideas are resources women had to confront.

In the 1986 non-issues described above, women had the *Guardian*, which was undoubtedly an important force on their side in the matter of the vacation play centre. A larger number of women on Council would help to secure such outcomes, as the *Guardian* did. This assumes, however, that women who successfully seek election recognise and pursue the objective interests of women, a bold assumption in a climate conducive to maintenance of patriarchal role relations at the ideal level at least. The *Guardian* note on Barbara Bennett’s nomination suggests that women councillors may still have been judged by the electorate in terms of their traditional roles, rather than as representatives of women. This implies no pluralistic threat to the ‘people’s corporation’ image. Women councillors, moreover, would after election still have confronted the same resources, as they sought to preserve their legitimacy as councillors who do not accept demands for welfare.

**The Aboriginal Non-Issue**

Aboriginal welfare was not just off the agenda of Cowra Shire Council, it was for historical reasons bound to state government policy, far removed from the agenda. There have been recent signs, however, that in the more enlightened policy climate of the late 1980’s, Aboriginal people are taking more interest in local affairs, and exerting their rights to participate in local politics. This was manifest in the nomination of an Aboriginal for the first time in the Council election of 1987. This beginning of local political activity has shown no immediate signs of putting Aboriginal welfare on the local political agenda, but it was a step towards bringing Aboriginal interests to local attention in the political arena. This section looks at those interests in terms of current needs, after discussion of the history in which Aboriginal interests were detached from local concern.
The historical background which follows is drawn almost entirely from the work of Read (1983, 1984, 1988), supplemented by information collected in conversations with Aboriginal people at Erambie (Aboriginal settlement on the outskirts of Cowra, see Map 2 in Chapter Six) and elsewhere in Cowra, and my reading of the *Guardian*. The conversations added little to the information provided by Read's work, but they contributed greatly to my understanding of the Aboriginal perspective.

State Government policy from 1909 to 1968 separated the Aborigines from the town and the concerns of the townspeople. It intended the opposite. Government attempted to force Aborigines to assimilate into white society, something which both Aboriginal people and the white people of Cowra did not want and resisted. White resistance in Cowra was one of the factors which hampered implementation of State policy, thereby helping the Aboriginal resistance. The Aborigines were, however caught in the middle.

By 1909 many Aborigines who had survived the white invasion lived on reserved lands which were entirely the responsibility of the Aborigines Protection Board. The Board retained that responsibility until 1969, so that although their settlements would have been subject to local government regulation, the Aborigines under the 'protection' of the Board were substantially insulated from local affairs. In practice under the Board they were alienated rather than insulated. Cowra local government could easily afford to exhibit the disinterest in Aboriginal people observed among local councils by Rowley (1971) and Sanders (1984).

Legislation enacted in 1909 aimed in the short term to increase control over the people on the reserves, and in the long term to "reduce their populations and in the end close them altogether" (Read, 1984: 2). The legislation gave the Board vast powers, which enabled destruction of some reserves, but failed to destroy Erambie. Read (1984: 4) attributes the failure to the absence of a manager, and the lack of interest shown by local police who were delegated responsibility for enforcement of the Board's regulations. Erambie's population grew quietly until around 1920, but by the early 1920s the Cowra whites had become disgruntled with the lack of management at Erambie. The Board relented under local complaints, and put in a manager (Read, 1984: 6).
That decision saved Erambie, for although the manager "set about ejecting as many residents as he could" (Read, 1988: 71), the effects of economic depression in the 1930s, which made conditions difficult for moving people, and Aboriginal resistance from the 1940s, which made people difficult to move, preserved the settlement.

Erambie survived, but its management created tension and suffering. Read (1988) placed fault with the Board's employment policies. Complaints about managers were heard and apparently responded to among the white people of Cowra. The *Cowra Guardian* of 16 September, 1949 (page 13) reported that three members of the local Labor League (one of whom was Leo Lynch) were to investigate allegations by Aborigines that the manager had withheld rations. Later in the same year, the *Guardian* (8 November, page 3) reported that the local State Parliament representative (Labor) had called for an inquiry into Erambie management and that a new manager was to be appointed.

It is not surprising that in this troubled climate, racism aside, attempts by the Board to move Aboriginal people into town were resisted by the whites. Read (1988: 111) found that rumours of such plans brought a response from the manager of the Edgell Cannery, perhaps because the rumoured houses were to be built in Mulyan. He wrote "to his State M.P., asking if Chief Secretary Evatt (to whom the Board was responsible) would like Aborigines living in his home: why then should Cowra people have 'this nuisance' inflicted on them?" Mayor Whitby joined in.

"We should object . . . The Council should protest against this move to bring these people to live among the white people . . . The Government should take these people down the river where there is plenty of land and water and give them areas where they can produce for themselves. But to bring them into the town would be like putting oil in water. . ." (Cowra Guardian, 9 January, 1953, page 3)

The Municipal Council made further difficulties for the Board by ordering the destruction of two river camps in 1953, inhabitants of which the Board had to accommodate, and eventually only four houses were built in Mulyan. After the tumult in 1951 the Board again relented and
announced that it would build twenty-one houses at Erambie (Read, 1988: 111). The whites of Cowra had unwittingly helped the Aborigines secure what they wanted: the survival of Erambie, their place.

After the Board's demise in 1969, responsibility for Erambie fell upon the State housing and welfare departments. By then, however, a referendum had passed responsibility for Aboriginal affairs to the Commonwealth Government, and after election of the Whitlam Labor Government in 1972, significant changes occurred. In 1973 Erambie people formed the Koori Housing Company, and with Commonwealth assistance, started to improve living conditions after incorporation in 1975. Around that time houses were built in the town for Aborigines and made available to those who wanted to live there.

There was much work to be done at Erambie. Many domestic facilities, including water supply, had had to be improvised, and there were health problems. The changes of the mid 1970s brought the situation of Cowra's Aborigines to the attention of its white people through the pages of the Guardian in a revealing manner. Government had abandoned the assimilation ideal but the Guardian had not, despite all the clamour and resistance that assimilationist housing policy had created among the white people of Cowra. When the Erambie housing programme was announced in 1975, the Guardian said in an editorial that the plan "turns its back on the slow but sure process of assimilation" in building at Erambie rather than in town. While not expressly opposing the plan, the editorial went on to affirm that the Aborigines could not expect anything for nothing from the white townspeople.

"It is up to the white population to support this project and it is equally up to the Aboriginal population to support it. Because, let there be no mistake, the community does not, by itself, support the concept of wholesale handouts. . ." (Cowra Guardian, 16 September, 1975, page 3)

The connection of sewerage to Erambie raised another storm in the pages of the Guardian, providing the closest point that Aboriginal welfare has come to an issue before local government
in Cowra. The issue was not so much the Aborigines' living conditions but "bureaucratic bungling" by the Commonwealth Department of Construction over the sewerage work (Cowra Guardian, 22 July, 1977, page 1). The Guardian of 1 July (page 1) had reported that the Municipal Council had invited the Commonwealth Aboriginal Affairs Minister to see for himself "the large pools of sullage lying under homes" because of delays in the work.

Recent legislative changes have created an issue for Cowra Shire Council, which although related to Aboriginal Welfare, was not related to need for human services. State land rights legislation allows Aboriginal groups to claim any public land which is not required for a public purpose, placing the onus on government to show that it needs the land.

When such a claim was made in Cowra, some councillors took exception to it, feeling that it was discrimination against white people. One councillor was reported in the Guardian (27 March, 1985, page 1) to have said that "he did not see how they had the hide to do it", and, wishing to reject the Council's apparent weakness before the legislation,

"what they basically said is we want this land, well, I want to know what for. . . They may have a real reason for wanting it, which may not be as important as ours."

A letter to the Guardian (5 April, 1985) from an Aboriginal representative accused the Council of stirring racial tension and reminded it that the Aborigines were not obliged to state their plans for the land. It was not within the power of Council to make the issue a local one, for the matter would have been resolved in Sydney in administrative or legal process over which Cowra Shire Council would not have presided.

The interest of Cowra's Aboriginal people in having a human services function in the Council was not so apparent as the similar interest of women. A human service role for Council would have been beneficial for women not because it would have redistributed local resources toward them on a large scale, but rather because it would have allowed greater access to local resources,
and more importantly, facilitated access to State Government resources. The continuing history of specialised administration of Aboriginal affairs through the Board and now the Commonwealth Department of Aboriginal Affairs left local government separated from this chain of responsibility. Nevertheless, Aborigines had problems which could be addressed at the local level, and local government involvement for liaison purposes may have been beneficial to them.

While the living conditions of Cowra's Aboriginal people had improved greatly during the previous ten years, and the worst days of racial tension and victimisation (as depicted in Merritt, 1983) by local authorities had passed, enormous social problems remained. (Some of these are analysed in Gray, 1988a, Appendix B.) Alcohol consumption, a problem among children as well as adult Aborigines, was probably the worst.  

Given the long history of detachment of Aboriginal people from local government, and the hostility between their so-called protectors and Cowra Municipal Council, it is not surprising that Aboriginal welfare had not become an issue. There had been no need to keep it off the local political agenda, because there had never been any suggestion that it might be put on the agenda. Aborigines were therefore a long way from furthering their interests through the local political arena. They had, however, since the demise of assimilationism, begun to accumulate resources. But as Read (1988) points out, the wounds suffered in what he describes as one hundred of years of warfare over assertion of the right to exist will take a long time to heal. And when they do heal, and Aborigines eventually acquire substantial local political resources, they may confront the same ideological obstacles encountered by women, as illustrated in the Guardian's 'you don't get something for nothing' editorial quoted above.

Conclusion

Human services had barely touched Cowra Shire Council's agenda, leaving property concerns superior, and those in whose interests property services lie in a powerful position. Their superordination had not been questioned in the local political arena. This point needs some
qualification, because many people, including women and Aborigines, who had property however small, had an interest in property services, and everybody in the Shire had some interest in local government services. The point is that women and Aborigines may have reaped greater benefit from a Council which also provided human services.

They were, however in a double bind, for a human service role for local government would inevitably have involved some cost to ratepayers, if the Council was not to be merely another administrative arm of the State by spending specific purpose grants under State regulation. Even if all revenue to be spent on human services was obtained through untied grants, the decision to spend it would have involved forgoing some property service activity, and given the nature of local government priorities in general and particularly those of Cowra Shire Council, property service activity would not have been forgone lightly. Entry into human services was likely to call for some popularly unwanted addition to rate collection, which may have worsened an already regressive taxation regime. The double bind was built-in. That is a problem which women and Aborigines, and any other people who seek human services from local government, inevitably face. It is not surprising, therefore, that councillors were unwilling to face it. Their ability not to face it was reinforced by their ideological resources which gave it a particular interpretation, and which legitimated an anti-welfare and patriarchal stand.5

Reference to Saunders (1979) non-decision making filter aids comparison between the gender and Aboriginal non-issues. The gender non-issue was formulated by women who were aware of their interests, and so passed the first of the three stages; was articulated by women who were not dissuaded by anticipated reactions; but was not resolved due to negative decision-making, a process which Saunders (1979: 29) depicts as "situations where dogs may bark themselves hoarse in the night but nobody listens". It was similar in this regard to the West Cowra water supply, Taragala air pollution and the railway decline non-issues (Chapters Six and Seven).

The Aboriginal issue was different because, although I heard some dissatisfaction with Council's property services expressed by Aboriginal people just as I heard it from whites, the non-issue of human services appeared not to have been formulated. When welfare services had for so long
been provided by State and more recently Commonwealth authorities, it is not surprising that Aborigines did not look to local government, especially when Commonwealth funds had recently helped great improvements in living conditions, and State legislation had enabled acquisition of what they wanted most of all: the return of some land. (One of Read's (1984: 134) interviewees described the lack of land as "our biggest problem"). The need for human services among Aborigines was probably greater than that among any other people in Cowra, but nomination by an Aborigine at the 1987 Council election was not aimed specifically at obtaining human services. (Her election manifesto printed in the *Guardian* (18 September, 1987, page 10) said that she would represent the interests of other people as well as Aborigines.)

In distributional, as in allocational and developmental policy areas, the range of issues which gained currency was constrained to those which impinged on either the operational efficiency of the 'peoples' corporation', or the financial interests of ratepayers. The issues which did gain currency were those which were seen to impinge on property interests, in particular farming and business. Farming and business people reaped the greatest value, or sought the greatest value from local government services, thereby structuring local politics around their interests. Chapter Nine looks at the issues that this structure produces before Chapter Ten considers explanations for the resources which enabled exclusion of issues like human services.

Notes

1 The ideological aspect of this resistance was illustrated by an anonymous note returned with a questionnaire, and quoted in Gray (1987b: 20) as follows:

"I would like to make the comment that this survey would have cost a deal of money. Most of this information would be available from census figures.

I believe more encouragement should be given to enable people to help themselves. Too many people are being taught to sit back and wait for the government or society to do it for them."
You cannot build character and courage by taking away man's initiative and independence. You cannot help man permanently by doing for him that which he can and should do for himself.

I am totally opposed to Council paid Community Co-ordinators. Most communities especially in the country have caring people who will organise help for those who really need it.

Most people who have lived a useful caring life have family and friends willing to accept some responsibility for them in their [old] age.

I think it is about time governments at all levels started saying no to the never ending demands of some of the people."

2 Read (1988: 89) wrote:

"No training in psychology, anthropology or human management was sought in applicants [for management positions]; instead, the Board demanded firmness, an even temper, practicality, honesty and a head for paperwork and figures. Former prison warders, colonial administrators, engineers, regimental sergeant-majors and policemen found a welcome in the Board's employ."

Read (1988: 90) related some evidence of the effects of the management system.

"One [manager] is said to have removed a woman's four foster children because she beat him in a court action. The same man threatened to have three-year old Stephen Doolan sent to the Boys Home unless he wore pants. He charged Colin Glass with vagrancy on the day he turned sixteen. He repeatedly dumped Dadda Williams fifteen kilometres out in the bush in an effort to get rid of him and finally committed him for vagrancy for three months. In 1954 another manager charged fifteen people with drunkenness and four for vagrancy in a single month. Police harassment of Aborigines at Cowra was at times as bad as anywhere in the state. In 1957, fifty-seven Aborigines were convicted for minor crimes out of a total population of 197; almost one in three, while the figure for the 7 000 whites was one in seventy. In 1960 two Erambie boys were convicted of stealing four empty soft drink bottles and sent to the Mount Penang Reformatory..."

3 An interview with a town dweller recorded by Read (1984: 126) in 1979 described aspects of life at Erambie.

"It's a lot cleaner in town, and a lot quieter. They're trying to fix it [Erambie] up proper now, but when we were living up there with all my children, when it rained you'd see big puddles, and the kids would come in with scaly feet from playing in the mud, and carry all the mud into the houses. Them houses are hard to keep clean, fibro houses, especially if you've got a lot of kids. They used to get scabies, and I don't think the townspeople ever got them, only the dark people. Measles and chicken-pox they used to get, and cuts through drunks throwing flagons on the road or in the grass, sores and everything. Oh, it was hard up there I reckon."
4 This is illustrated in Read's (1984: 126) interview with an Aboriginal town dweller, part of which was quoted above.

"... The drink has got terrible worse on the Mission [Erambie]. Like, long ago they weren't drinking that much, but now they drink nearly every day if they can get their hands on it. I used to drink meself before I moved down here, but I don't drink every day... There's too many drunk and a terrible lot of swearing, and the little kids pick up swearing easily. Today its no place to bring your kids up..."

5 Two women who had been involved with the establishment of the child care centre told me that while women were trying to set it up they encountered the belief that women should stay at home to care for children, and, therefore, there should be no need for a child care centre. They attributed the early disinterest of the Council to this belief. I did not see evidence of this in the political arena in 1986. I found no suggestion of such a rationale being applied in the Vacation Play Centre matter. While it is impossible to discount the possibility of this ideology having some effect at a covert level, there were signs of recognition by men of the value of non-domestic roles for women, especially where off-farm income was essential.
Local politics in Cowra Shire are specialised. The non-issues over matters which had a substantial bearing on the life chances and living conditions of Cowra residents implicitly pose the question of what does or can become an issue. Issues certainly arose. The Council split into factions and councillors engaged in spirited debate. This Chapter argues that, in part due to the nature of governmental process in general and in local government in particular, and in part due to the ideological orientations of councillors, conflict between councillors and Council's senior officers dominated Council affairs. This distracted attention from matters which were allowed to become, or were turned into, non-issues and, moreover, helped to maintain a popular definition of local politics which enhanced the political resources of people with business and farm interests while denying resources to others.

Discussion about problems of local government helps to identify the conditions in which powerful groups perceived their interests to be opposing those of bureaucracy, and defined such opposition as productive grounds for political action within the 'people's corporation'. The argument is supported by evidence drawn from observation of Council proceedings, interviews and conversations with councillors, Council officers and other people interested in Council affairs, and the pages of the *Cowra Guardian*.

**Perspectives on Councillor - Officer Relations**

Two interpretations of relations between elected representatives and the bureaucracy are
particularly prominent in the literature. One assumes that bureaucracy is an independent and powerful actor in political relations. The second suggests that bureaucracy and a business elite form a unified powerful force. There are other possibilities: pluralism, with bureaucratic and other interests opposed but balanced; and a democratic ideal in which the bureaucracy is not a significant power actor. These are rendered unlikely by the elitist tradition of local government and the prominent role which bureaucracy has played in it.

Bureaucracy poses fundamental problems for the operation of democratic government when it is viewed as an independent actor in power relations, by decreasing the likelihood of the democratic ideal in which the bureaucracy is independent but insignificant. Bureaucracy is, as argued by Etzioni-Halevy (1985: 87), essentially undemocratic at the same time as it is essential to the operation of democracy, as it is supposed to be both independent and subservient at the same time. In such an interpretation of a citizen's perspective, incompatible goals are held to be desirable. People want the services of professionals at the same time as they want to retain some influence over the actions of professionals. They are, however, also aware that influence over officials can lead to corruption and inefficiency. (For example, nineteenth century reform in the United States established independent local bureaucracy in order to replace influence with efficiency (Viteritti, 1982).) Hence they want an insulated bureaucracy (Alford, 1969).

Bureaucracy need only act to further its pursuit of the demands made upon it to illustrate the contradictions. That is, acting in its own interests while acting contrary to others may amount to no more than pursuing one of the contradictory demands placed upon it. For example, bureaucracy's urge for efficiency may be sufficient to place it counter to the interests of citizens by stifling opportunities for pluralistic bargaining (see Chapter Six).

In so far as this view proposes that bureaucrats act in the interests of the bureaucracy which they serve, it is parallel in its Weberian approach to that of the managerialist school in urban sociology (see Chapter Three above). Without pluralism this perspective becomes a "technocratic view" (Etzioni-Halevy, 1985: 54) which is sometimes expressed as "dictatorship of the official" (by for
example, Newton, 1976: 145 and Stoker and Wilson, 1986: 287). This interpretation found strong expression in reactions to imposition of planning decisions and regulations in the late 1960s and early 1970s, where bureaucracy was seen to be powerful, irrational and malevolent. This view was expressed by Davies (1972), who felt that "... the exercise of [official] power has taken the place of reason" (page 226), and that officials and councillors assume "an inevitable conjunction of authority and competence" (page 227). Such ideas, with those of, for example, Goodman (1972), moved planners toward acceptance of public participation, such as that intended for Cowra's plan (the LEP) formulation process.

Empirical support for 'the dictatorship of the official' in Australian local studies is inconclusive. Pandey (1972) and Vandeloo (1983) found officers to be of at least substantial potential influence in local affairs, but Oxley (1978) found that bureaucrats were subservient to councillors while councillors were subservient to their constituents. The latter finding suggests that the conclusion drawn by Newton (1976: 164) from his British study may be more appropriate than an attribution of supreme power to officials. That is, the relationship between councillors and officers is "more equal than Weber suggests". (The British literature offers useful comparisons in this context, mainly because both systems have similar management arrangements, based on the committee system.)

The other potentially fruitful interpretation of the councillor-officer relationship places bureaucrats in a 'joint elite' with councillors who represent a propertied ruling class. The traditional role of local government as provider of property services and the elitist dominance of councils by those with property interests render elites with other than property interests unlikely. The relationship between councillors and officers is seen with this interpretation to be one of close co-operation.

The rules of local democracy, although changed from the traditional property franchise to an adult resident franchise, have not stimulated pluralistic demands and expectations which might politicise the arena and logically imply a need for an independent bureaucracy. Moreover, in the image of the a-political 'people's corporation', the potential problem of corruption does not arise,
because the members are elected to be trustworthy representatives of an all-encompassing mutual interest group. Hence there is no need for an independent bureaucracy. Parker (1978: 390), however, points out that councillors' intimate role in administration opens opportunities for them to obtain favours for faithful voters. If there is a bureaucracy, its alliance with property interests would be quite acceptable to electors, or indeed essential for efficient operation of the 'people's corporation'. To the extent that the 'people's corporation' does not need democracy, the local government tradition is not democratic (Purdie, 1976: 26). The joint-elite model might therefore be readily applicable, and the prospects for pluralism would be nil.

Evidence from British studies neither conclusively supports nor refutes the joint-elite model. Alexander (1982), Cockburn (1977), Green (1981) and Saunders (1979) all identified a joint-elite, but Stoker and Wilson (1986), citing instances of conflict between councillors and officers in which councillors rejected officers' recommendations, claim that a joint-elite consensus should not be assumed. Madgwick et al (1973) and Bell et al (1976), in rural situations, found councillors in disagreement with officers. Bell et al identified "stout resistance of many councillors to any bureaucratic development" (ibid: 41). Alexander (1982), while finding a joint-elite, also suggested such conflict, in so far as some councillors feared dictatorship by officials, and this had some effect on their relationship.

Chapman and Wood (1984) found Australian evidence to indicate that councillors and officers want to work in partnership, despite legal responsibility for council affairs lying with councillors, and "the real informal action is one of mutual agreement between councillors and clerks" (page 64). Such mutual agreement was illustrated by the relationship between the Mayor and the Town Clerk in Wild's (1974a) 'Bradstow'. These two cemented an elite, taming the aldermen to the extent that the duumvirate maintained control of the council's agenda. But like the British, the Australian literature also offers contradictory evidence. Sinclair (1987: 79) reported that on some councils, members are not allowed to speak to the staff, treating staff as enemies. That does not, however, imply pluralism, as only two interests remain represented in the arena.
A Joint-Elite in Cowra?

The evidence of farmer and business control of Council's agenda is not amenable to pluralism, nor does it suggest that the bureaucracy is an insignificant power actor. It does not, however, encourage application of the 'joint-elite' and 'dictatorship of the official' models either. The 'dictatorship of the official' model is not readily applicable because officials suffered defeat several times. The Shire Clerk's plans to decrease the size of Council and introduce differential rating for 'hobby farms' were rejected; the Shire Engineer's options for supplying water to West Cowra were bypassed and the Draft Local Environmental Plan was drastically changed; and the Health Surveyor's recommendation about fire-rating for the Japanese Gardens building was altered (Chapters Six and Seven). Councillors could and did ignore the wishes of senior officers, and made independent assessments before making their decisions.

One might, however, suppose either that the elite existed but was not very cohesive, or that as Saunders (1979), Green (1981) and Wild (1974a) found, the elite consisted of senior councillors and senior officers only. Both of these suppositions are difficult to sustain because the lack of cohesion was profound, and there was no on-going working arrangement between the senior officers and the elected members, or senior elected members and senior officers. This is not to say that there was no close association between Clerk Neville Armstrong and President Cyril Treasure. They worked in consultation, but did not dominate Council. Indeed their relationship precipitated debate in Council, when some councillors were tempted to see it as a conspiracy.

I observed two instances of councillors rebuking Cyril for bilateral action with Neville without Council's endorsement. After Cyril had written to town businesses explaining Council's decision about fire-rating (see Chapter Seven), Stephen Bell asked him at the next meeting to "please inform the Council" about his action, suggesting that someone could move endorsement. Ab Oliver responded that endorsement was not necessary and there was no further discussion. On the other occasion Jack Mallon protested that he had been excluded from a meeting which the President, Engineer and Clerk had held with the 'Concerned Citizens Committee' and the LGPA
to discuss the LEP. Jack also objected to the recording of the minutes of the last Council meeting. His motion to have them altered was successful. Such debate certainly does not fit the joint-elite model as it was exemplified by Wild (1974a). Moreover, Cyril rejected the advice of senior officers, as he did in the West Cowra Water Supply matter (Chapter Six).

1986 was not the only year in which conflict had been apparent between senior staff and councillors. The Health Inspector was criticised as a "joke" by Mayor Whitby (Cowra Guardian on 12 January, 1951, page 1). Whitby and Leo Lynch clashed with the Engineer about the condition of a street (Cowra Guardian, 4 March, 1955). The Guardian of 17 October, 1958 reported an argument between a Waugoola councillor and the Shire Engineer after the Engineer offered an explanation for the condition of a road. These may have been isolated incidents, but they do suggest that if a joint-elite has been present, it has been unstable.

1986 Council meetings provided many illustrations of conflict among the would-be joint-elite over relatively minor matters in addition to the more important ones discussed above. A compromise proposed by Cyril Treasure replaced Neville Armstrong's recommendations for distribution of Bicentennial grants after the latter's plan precipitated public opposition. Neville's rejection of a request to extend the opening period of the town swimming pool was overturned by the Council. A request from the Health Surveyor for leave for one of his subordinates to attend a work-related conference (at the subordinate's own expense) was rejected by Council. Another recommendation of the Health Surveyor, this time for adoption of regulations for the installation of domestic fireplaces and solid fuel heaters, was also rejected. They were also willing to criticise. The councillors did not look upon themselves as 'rubber stamps'.

Failure to criticise where they felt it warranted would have been dereliction of duty to the 'people's corporation', whose bureaucrats could, if left unyoked, become enemies of the people whom they were employed to serve. The perceived need to keep the bureaucrats under control, and keep the 'corporation' for the 'people', turned councillor-officer relations toward the relationship of enemies referred to by Sinclair (1987). Councillors restrained bureaucrats from
what might have been seen as assumption of undue privilege. Desire to see the Council obey the same stringency and regulation as it imposed on others was expressed by Harold Upston and Jack Mallon when Harold asked the Health Surveyor if Council had applied to itself for permission to modify the front door of the Civic Centre. Jack seconded Harold’s unsuccessful motion that Council be required to submit an application.

These disputes were not minor quarrels among otherwise united allies. The major disagreements over the LEP, the West Cowra water supply and the other matters analysed in earlier Chapters discourage such an interpretation. Informal networks linked senior officers and councillors as Wild (1974a) found, but evidence that such links effected co-ordination among councillors and officers was not available in Cowra. Neville Armstrong, Ab Oliver and Don Kibbler were all prominent members of Rotary, but that contact did not produce perception of universal common interest among them. All councillors were likely to encounter each other and the senior officers on social occasions, but all valued isolation of social relations from political life. Some councillors expressed concern that the divisions created by contentious issues in Council were being maintained outside. A councillor indicated the value placed on isolation of political vendettas inside the Council:

"There is some dissent [inside Council]. But you do get good results when there are different points of view provided that those who are beaten still play. One of the worst things is to have a decision go against you and then tear them to pieces down the street."

Another saw Council being divided by personal vendettas which were carried outside.

"Personal vendettas are appearing, among councillors as well as between staff and councillors. Not every decision [in the former Municipal Council] was unanimous but we were able to sort things out without bearing grudges. Now people form grudges in Council which are taken outside."

Rather than informal networks maintaining an elite in Council, conflict in Council was destroying, or at least was felt by some to be destroying, informal networks.
The joint elite model is difficult to impose on the local political arena in Cowra, not because Cowra had deviated from tradition into a pluralistic democracy, but rather because of strains in the would-be elite relationship. Some signs of a joint-elite, however, emerged. They were most obvious in the human services non-issues when all Councillors concurred with Neville Armstrong's view of the Vacation Play Centre and Neighbourhood Centre matters (Chapter Eight), but were also apparent when the Policy Register was applied to West Cowra's drainage (Chapter Six), the response to the complaints about air pollution from Taragala (Chapter Six) and the railway decline non-issue (Chapter Seven). Why a joint-elite would emerge over these matters and not others is discussed below. For now, the important point is that a resilient joint-elite, as Wild (1974a) found, was not apparent in Cowra, despite the apparently largely favourable conditions revealed in Chapter Five.

We are left, therefore, without an appropriate model among all four of those proposed above. The bureaucracy was significant but not all powerful, and it was neither part of a persistent joint-elite with councillors nor a participant in a pluralistic arena. The "technocratic view" (Etzioni-Halevy, 1985) was, however, useful as an interpretation of the view of councillors rather than for its illumination of the power structure. They saw bureaucracy as independent of them and pursuing its own interests.

Institutional Explanations for Councillor-Officer Friction

A recipe for councillor-officer friction is built into local government, and is reinforced by relations between local and State Government. The 'people's corporation' image, without the usual governmental need for service from an independent bureaucracy, places the bureaucracy in an ambivalent situation. It seeks independence at the same time as elected members seek, and to some extent have, intimate relationships with it, in line with the 'people's corporation' image. The bureaucrats are free to think, advise and speak but are not so free to act. The 'people's corporation' places responsibility for its efficient management in the hands of the people's
representatives. Conflict arises because an 'unnecessary' independent bureaucracy does exist, it
does take an independent stance, and its actions are sometimes seen as unacceptable.

Local government operates a committee system rather than an executive system of government,
placing councillors close to administration, as noted by Painter (1974). All Cowra's councillors
shared in decision making. All Cowra Shire's senior bureaucrats usually attended the meetings
of all three committees, and were available to be questioned as well as offer advice. They did
both quite freely, especially at committee meetings which were less formal than Council
meetings. They also entered debate in Council meetings, and could do so to provide information
as they felt necessary, not just in response to a councillor's question. This was highlighted by
the incident during the LEP controversy in which President Ab Oliver asked Harold Upston to
leave the chamber (see Chapter Seven). The Guardian (24 April, 1985, page 1) reported that the
commotion had arisen after Harold claimed that Clerk Neville Armstrong's report of a meeting
was inaccurate. The Guardian continued:

"The Shire Clerk commented that he had been present at the meeting and
Councillor Upston was not making any sense to him. He indicated he
thought the decisions Councillor Upston was referring to were only private
comments. Councillor Upston retorted that the Shire Clerk didn't make
much sense to a lot of people either."

Harold's refusal to apologise for this comment precipitated, as reported in the Guardian, Ab's
request for his absence. Neville and Harold soon exchanged apologies. The Guardian report
continued with a quote from Harold:

"At the meeting I made history by being the first Shire Councillor ever to be
asked to leave. However, I am not sorry for my remarks. The Shire Clerk
is a paid employee of the Council and I am sick of his remarks. Councillors
are only allowed to make one comment on an issue and yet in my opinion,
the Shire Clerk is constantly making his remarks. My understanding is that
he is supposed to speak when he is spoken to and last night I decided I'd
had enough and would pull him into line."
(Harold was referring to a standing order which prohibits councillors from speaking more than once on a motion, other than in right-of-reply.)

Councillors could develop an intimate knowledge of the operation of Council. Indeed their own interpretation of their job as councillors, as well as their formal responsibilities under State legislation, required it. Some examples of matters raised in Council illustrate councillors' closeness to the administration of its affairs: Neville Pengilly queried the condition of the compactor machine at the rubbish tip; the decision to allow, or not allow, officers to attend conferences was made by Council rather than officers alone; councillors sought and made detailed input into the setting of priorities for work on small items such as culverts. Such intimate involvement has been recognised in other councils (Parker, 1978: 390). It was illustrated by the annual tour of the Shire made by members of Policy and Resources Committee (I accompanied them in 1986) to take a close look at the condition of roads and other facilities before determining priorities for forthcoming work. I was struck by councillors' detailed knowledge; one was able to tell which employee had done some grading work on a section of unsealed road by looking at the road, applying knowledge of Council management and considering the standard of the work. Long serving councillors could see Shire Clerks come and go, especially as local government officers move among councils to gain promotion, and some knew as much about Council's employees as the senior officers.

Councillors as well as officers were judged by Council's performance and the legal responsibility for management affairs rested with councillors. They were intimately involved in all Council activities, down to day-to-day matters such as equipment purchases, staffing, detail of location and design of water reticulation systems and recreation facilities, and many more. There was plenty of room for dispute when two groups were given different definitions of the same task.²

Most State politicians and bureaucrats treat local government as a State department (Wiltshire, 1985). As Wild (1983) illustrated, State government can take what is seen locally to be an arrogant stance against local interests, and bring great pressure to bear on local government.
State governments make regulations and pass them on to local government to enforce them. The LEP and fire regulation issues (see Chapter Seven) were raised after officers had been obliged to bring up matters which offended what councillors perceived to be local interests, offering a parallel in Cowra to the finding of Bell et al (1976: 46) that major local conflicts are usually instigated elsewhere.

The councillor-officer relationship is one between amateurs and professionals, and, moreover, one in which the professionals not only have information but can control its flow. An officer could "exert biases in favour of his own demands and at the same time feed the [council] negative information about the demands of his opponents" (Pettigrew, 1972: 202), but should do so tactfully because council "should always feel that it has itself made the decision" (Richards, 1975: 131). The Guardian implicitly accused Clerk Neville Armstrong of presenting inadequate information about the Vacation Play Centre (see Chapter Eight). Criticism of the Caravan Park accounts by Harold Upston implied that he felt that Neville was not providing adequate information. As Chapman and Wood (1984: 64) point out, "councillors must trade off the desire for more information with trust in the staff". They do not have time to acquire knowledge as their full-time professional counterparts have. This was the "fundamental complaint" found by Heclo (1969: 198) among British councillors.

All Cowra's councillors indicated dependence on the senior officers for the information upon which to base decisions, in line with the finding of Chapman and Wood (1984: 65). Many told me that they used other sources, especially local contacts and newspapers, but with a large pile of agenda papers to be battled through before each meeting, their capacity to learn from other sources was limited. They were well aware of this deficiency, just as they were aware of the senior officers' greater information resources.

Three institutional features: the committee system, inter-governmental relations and councillors' dependence on officers for information, build strains into the councillor-officer relationship. These strains, however, did not bring about a state of continual war between the two groups in
Cowra. Other ingredients entered the recipe for overt conflict, one of which was ideological: the technocratic view of the relationship. The three institutional features appear to have fostered the technocratic view, in that officers' resources were obvious to councillors in the intimacy of their working relationship, at the same time as officers' regulatory roles handed down from the State Government took on the appearance of an undesirable imposition on councillors. Officers could appear to be building an empire which appeared to the councillors as an end in itself, while the officers were finding that they needed greater resources to perform their tasks. Institutional factors, however, were only part of the process in which resentment at such apparent empire building came about. Analysis of the politics generated in councillor-officer relations will enable further consideration of the ideological factors.

Councillors and Officers Making Local Politics

Councillor-officer relations were implicated in the most divisive, perhaps the only internally divisive issues to confront the Council in 1986. Local political issues, as against non-issues, all contained a strong councillor versus officer element without which a joint-elite model could emerge. That is, perception by one or more councillors of the bureaucracy pursuing its own or foreign interests, in conflict with what they felt to be the general local interest, was a prerequisite for action to raise an issue. The bureaucracy could act bureaucratically without precipitating a reaction, as it did by applying the Policy Register and as it did in the Taragala air pollution non-issue (Chapter Six), or it could put a negative point of view as it did in the Play Centre and Neighbourhood Centre matters (Chapter Eight), but in all those cases no councillors, or insufficient councillors, saw the bureaucracy to be pursuing a hostile interest. Hence such matters did not become issues in the way of, for example, the LEP and the Japanese Gardens lease (Chapter Seven).

The adversary element entered local politics when bureaucrats were seen to be pursuing interests which enough councillors saw to be threatening. It seems that only bureaucrats could raise
threatening issues without being smothered by joint-elite action; they had sufficient resources bestowed by the institutional factors discussed above. The problem so implied is one of defining the conditions in which adversarial or joint-elite actions are pursued.

The adversary element may have existed more in interpretations by councillors than in the overt appearance of the issues. For example, while the rural rating and representation issues (Chapter Six) had an element of defence of rural interests against urban, some councillors felt that the issues were created by Clerk Neville Armstrong in his desire to further his organisation's strength in terms of revenue and its ability to influence councillors. Similarly, the conflict over the Tourist and Development Corporation's lease of the Japanese Garden site (Chapter Seven) was interpreted by some councillors to have been set up by Neville, his motivation being defence of the power of Council. There is some substance to that interpretation in that Neville stated in discussion about Corporation-member councillors' voting rights that he wanted to ensure that the Corporation did not take over the Council, but some councillors appeared to interpret that to mean that he wanted to maintain his own individual power.

Their technocratic view was clearest in the LEP issue (Chapter Seven). The councillors who opposed the plan took their stance because they believed that giving the Council the right to demand its consent for subdivision really meant giving bureaucrats the right to say no to development, even though bureaucrats could only recommend to Council that consent be denied. The power to reject subdivision applications would have belonged exclusively to the elected representatives, under the provisions of the plan, and all councillors knew so. Yet the plan's opponents consistently read it differently, inferring that councillors' power would be undermined by officers' technocratic domination, even though the LEP itself had provided a good example of defeat for the officers. The LEP became so notorious that it helped people to make sense of other issues. It legitimated the councillor-officer power issue, by suggesting that other issues could be seen that way, and by showing that the officers could be defeated.

The building regulation problems (Chapter Seven) illustrate a similarly technocratic view in that
the issue was: whose interests were to be catered for, business or bureaucracy? There was no assumed coincidence of authority and competence, to paraphrase Davies (1972: 227), and apparently little recognition of the Health Surveyor's attempts at compromise. The West Cowra water supply issue (Chapter Six) was an attack on officer legitimacy in the role of Council's adviser, rather than on officer competence. Tim West and Cyril Treasure designed a system, believing that they should be accorded equal legitimacy as Jim Finnimore in the designer role. The West/Treasure bid for legitimacy was contentious, and while it is not possible to say categorically that it was successful when the outcome was a compromise, it certainly created an issue.

All councillors shared the adversarial interpretation of their relations with the bureaucrats, but some reacted more strongly to it. A councillor who took a relatively mild view made the following observation:

"Some councillors have come onto Council who . . . saw their main concern as too much power being vested in the officers. They were concerned with that aspect more than some of the other issues. They were going to take on the Council officers, which brought another tension to an already tense situation".

While some councillors were going to "take on" the officers, all were willing to criticise when they felt it necessary, and all indicated to me that they felt an undercurrent of friction between councillors and officers, exemplified by the expression: "kick'em when they need to be kicked". One who made very few criticisms of officers feared that those who appeared to launch vendettas against officers were making themselves vulnerable, because they could not remove the ingredient of subservience in the councillors' position.

While the councillor-officer relationship split the Council it did not form anything like a government-opposition division. Rather, it created issues and they were its important products. Coalitions were formed in the course of issue resolution. While they were temporary coalitions,
some councillors consistently took a stance contrary to the officers (Table 9.1). In order to
differentiate between those councillors who opposed the officers and the others, the former will
be called the Adversary Group and the latter the Alliance Group.

Some names appear consistently, but not always, in each group rather than the other, indicating
that some councillors are more likely than others to have 'taken on' the officers. Harold Upston,
Don Kibbler, Jack Mallon and Stephen Bell do not appear in the 'alliance group'. Cyril
Treasure, Bruce Golsby and Col Newton do not appear in the 'adversary group'. This is not to
say, for example, that Bruce Golsby always supported the officers. A farmer in the visitors'
gallery at a Council meeting indicated to me that he had anticipated Bruce's support for the
Clerk's recommendation on a matter related to the LEP, and a local professional told me that
Bruce always supported the Clerk "because they are good mates", but such generalisation is not
warranted. Bruce may have been seen to be in league with the officers because he supported
their position on the highly visible issues like the LEP. From time to time he was critical of
Council management, such as the occasion mentioned above when he suggested that Jim
Finnimore had badly timed some repair work on the main street. The same could be said for
other councillors. The appearance of a name in the adversary group does not mean that that
councillor opposed the officers just in order to trim their power. It was possible, for example,
for councillors to oppose the Clerk's recommendation on matters relating to the Tourist and
Development Corporation because they wanted, as they saw it, to defend the Corporation.

Table 9.1 indicates that some councillors (Upston, Kibbler, Mallon and Bell) were less likely
than others to take the officer 'alliance' position, and hence contribute to the making of issues.
Of those four only Stephen Bell had been elected prior to the last election in 1983, having served
since 1977. The longer serving councillors also took a technocratic view, but tended to choose a
less active approach to its application.


Table 9.1
Councillor Grouping on Major Issues Discussed During 1986

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Alliance groups’ members</th>
<th>Adversary groups’ members</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>West Cowra water</td>
<td>Pengilly, Noble, Golsby</td>
<td>Treasure, West, Upston (who persuaded the remainder)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural rates</td>
<td>Treasure, Bennett, West</td>
<td>Kibbler, Noble, Mallon (who persuaded the remainder)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourist and Development</td>
<td>Treasure, Newton, Golsby, West</td>
<td>Oliver, Upston, Kibbler, Noble, Pengilly, Mallon, Bennett, Bell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corp. matters</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building regulation</td>
<td>Treasure, Golsby, Noble, West, Bennett, Newton</td>
<td>Upston, Kibbler, Mallon, Bell, Pengilly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LEP</td>
<td>Treasure, West, Oliver, Golsby, Newton</td>
<td>Upston, Kibbler, Mallon, Bell, Noble</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes:
Names are listed when they made a significant contribution to debate.
Some judgement has been used to generalise councillors’ positions from the way they voted and their contributions to debate. This does not mean that all the ‘adversary group’ spoke against the officers’ recommendations. Stephen Bell, for example, in the building regulation matters, made a significant contribution to debate by seeking information from officers about Council’s rights and responsibilities. His position overall indicated a desire to come to a decision, independent of the officer’s recommendation, which would protect the interests of the businesses concerned. His move for independence was a contribution to the “adversary group” stance.
By 1986 farmer interests had largely won their LEP victory. Hence the large “alliance group” for the LEP shown in the table does not deny that the outcome of the issue favoured an earlier “adversary group”.

The Council did not factionalise, even to the extent revealed in Table 9.1, on any matters in which a councillor-officer conflict theme was not identifiable. All issues other than West Cowra’s water supply were seen to affect the interests of farmers and business people. West Cowra water supply was purely a councillor-officer affair, over the management of the ‘people’s corporation’, in which no interests were apparent, except the legitimacy of performance of technical roles. In all the other issues, farmer and business interests were identifiable, and
contrary to what were seen to be the interests of the bureaucracy and the bureaucrats. Other interests were not precipitating issues while the councillor-officer relationship was creating strife, even when undue officer influence was publicly implied, as it was by the *Guardian* in the Vacation Play Centre matter (Chapter Eight). The councillor-officer conflict loaded the political agenda, or was available for the agenda to be loaded with it.

There being no joint-elite does not mean, however, that the relationship did not further particular interests. The products of the relationship may have been the same as one would expect if there was an identifiable and persistent joint-elite. If we think of a joint-elite in terms of its impact on the power structure rather than as individuals and their relationships, a joint-elite becomes visible. (An individualistic joint-elite model has the same shortcomings as those power studies which seek to explain power relations only in Lukes' (1974) first dimension, in that it does not admit consideration of agenda-setting and the effect of ideology.) The relationship between councillors and officers which produced the conflict might be described as a 'would-be joint-elite'. That is, one could reasonably hypothesise that a joint-elite would have been identifiable if the institutional and ideological factors behind conflict had not been present, or if they had been present, a joint-elite would have existed if councillors had not chosen to act in a way which those factors directed. Councillors' choice to raise issues could be explained structurally by the interests which they sought to defend against bureaucracy. Politics in Cowra were elitist in that a narrow range of interests was accommodated by the political agenda, but the political structure was not elitist in terms of control by a small cohesive group.

To analyse this production of politics, it is useful to call on some literature which conceptualises triad behaviour. Most issues and non-issues precipitated one of two types of coalition between a majority of councillors and the officers; what Mugford (1979: 261) describes as "facilitative coalitions" (when alliance groups had a majority) which were likely to produce non-issues, and "obstructive coalitions" (when adversary groups had a majority) which produced issues. Identification of the membership of a singular powerful group would be impossible and an attempt to do so would be pointless, partly because membership of the coalitions changed, but,
most importantly, the interests served by coalition formation did not. 'Facilitative coalitions' to
further the interests of women and Aboriginal people were not formed. The joint-elite may have
failed to form because councillors and officers found themselves to have opposing interests, but
their opposition became a large part of the political agenda.

An understanding of coalition behaviour requires introduction of the third element forming the
triad (Mugford 1979: 265). 'Obstructive coalitions' are formed to defend what their members
perceive to be a general interest. In this case the third element is the electorate, whose interests
the coalitions were interpreting, and in the case of obstructive coalitions, defending against the
bureaucracy. Focus will now turn to the factors external to the political arena which stimulated
local politics.

**Town and Country: Deference in Politics**

Tension in town and country relations has been identified in earlier studies. It has been found to
stem from the belief among farmers that the town is dependent upon them (Bell et al, 1976: 34;
Montague, 1981), and their perception of the town's relative insulation from the vicissitudes of
weather and foreign markets. Oeser and Emery (1957: 19) found that while town interests owed
their existence to farmers, the farmers were dependent on town businesses for supplies, and
town businesses could adjust prices and credit terms, or engage in "sharp practices". Oeser and
Emery (1957) and Montague (1981) pointed out that towns are decreasingly dependent on
farmers as industrial, government and other service employment has grown (see Chapter Four).

From the town perspective, the farmers' belief in its dependence can look like aloofness and
they saw as farmer arrogance, and criticised the then current protest action by the LGPA against
the policies of the Commonwealth Government. "They're all just bad farmers", one business
person said to me. Another explained business dislike of farmers, and reluctance of the latter to
support the town:

"They've been taught and trained the value of farming. So why be interested in anything else? That's their attitude. . . The farmers' attitude is that they do us a favour by doing business with us. "We don't need you. We can go to [a larger town about 100 kilometres distant]." They carry this attitude into community activities. On committees, they always like to think that they know more than we do."

A town-dwelling employed person told me that the farmers thought themselves to be "lords of the manor", and that they had a general contempt for people in the town. A retired farmer living in town felt that town business people have a general contempt for farmers, seeing them as slow-witted. "They go to business people who smile and pat them on the back; make them feel very important; make them feel that they are good blokes."

Farming people also expressed the tension. A farmer pointed out to me that rural people see town businesses prospering while avoiding the brunt of the ups and downs of agriculture. One who grew up on a Cowra district farm said:

"Ever since I can remember there has been a feeling of us and them between country people and the townies. . . You always got a feeling that there was a definite barrier between farmers and townies."

I became aware of town and country differentiation, or at least the potential for it, at an interactional level. A conversation which I overheard in a shop reminded me of the farmers' perspective. As a woman whom I knew to be a farmer approached the counter the attendant smiled and said "nice day". The customer muttered "even better if it rained", to which the attendant replied "yes, I like listening to the rain on the roof while I'm in bed at night". That reply caught my attention. It was mid winter at the time and there had been no significant rain since mid summer; farmers feared that they would not be able to sow their crops for the next harvest. While rain is either pleasant or inconvenient for town people, it is essential for farmers.
This is not to say that town people were unaware. In April 1981 the Cowra clergy organised special church services to pray for rain (Cowra Guardian, 29 April).

Town and country differentiation was acknowledged, and farmers defended their interests. In the rates issue (Chapter Six) farmers used the weapon of impending farm decline and consequent town business contraction, as they had done successfully during earlier drought years to keep their share of rate collections down. As Bruce Golsby said in arguing for expenditure restraint at the February, 1986 Council meeting, "if the rural part of the Shire is suffering, we are all suffering".

On occasions the Council readily deferred to farm interests. During discussion about a motion to increase parking time in the main street from one hour to two, a farmer councillor said bluntly that "farmers need two hours". There followed some laughter upon a comment from a town councillor that "they've got no money to spend anyway", whereupon another town councillor replied: "that's what we're here for, so let's make it two hours".

This is reminiscent of the "deferential dialectic" (Newby, 1975; Bell and Newby, 1976a; Newby, 1977). Farmers sought to retain a perception among town people of a unity of interest in farming among town and country people: a view of farming as "an 'organic' partnership in a cooperative enterprise" (Newby, 1975: 150). But in doing so they confronted the popular perception of hierarchical differentiation. Perception of hierarchy hung tenuously on the old belief in town dependence and popular aspirations and reverence for the farming life. Farmers maintained their belief that the town was largely dependent upon their economic well-being and argued that action which threatened their economic health was a threat to the economic health of the whole district. This view was expressed in one of the submissions to the LEP, which said: "I cannot understand how the members of a rural council can be so ignorant concerning the management of the area which actually keeps the town (Cowra) in existence". Another submission stated: "This district derives its main income from the earnings of agricultural pursuits and indeed survives only because of the agricultural effort".
To maintain a deferential relationship, they managed the tension inherent in the contradiction between identification and differentiation, in circumstances in which identification was threatened as farming had lost much of its dominance in the district's economy. As Newby (1975) suggested, an element of *localism* is, however, still available. Some irony is apparent in the observation that some issues which inflamed much conflict on Council were those raised by farmers who felt that their relative contribution to the Shire's revenue was excessive; when they used an ideology of localism to argue that their contribution to local collective wealth was too great. Oxley (1978) noted that farmers take an interest in town civic affairs, because, as Aitkin (1972) suggested, spending on town facilities may not be in their interests, especially when drawing upon their rate payments. It was farmers' perception of spending on town facilities which precipitated conflict over rural rates (Chapter Six), as it has done in Narrandera (Gammage, 1986). Farmers sought to take advantage of both identification and differentiation.

Farmers' willingness to raise the rates issue may have been reinforced by ignorance of their relative contribution to Council revenue, and reminders every time they go to town that rates helped to make life easier for the town people, who had sealed streets and reticulated water among other blessings, while farmers may have had to negotiate potholed and corrugated roads to get home to find a dry tank. This was evident in the letter from a farmer to the *Guardian* about the water augmentation scheme (Chapter Six). It was also evident in the following statement, made by a farmer at an interview, which I believe indicates a popular view:

"A lot of rural ratepayers are dissatisfied because they contribute such a large proportion of rates. This comes back to this business about us being considered wealthy because we have property... I think its something like seventy per cent of Council's income is contributed by rural landholders and yet we are only thirty per cent of the Shire population. I forget the exact figures. A lot of people see that as unfair. We don't get representation proportional to our input. Its a bit like taxation without representation."

Another farmer said:

"Our road was to be sealed at the time of the amalgamation, and it still
hasn't been done [five years on]. We pay big rates and get little for it."

Farmers' rate bills could consume a substantial part of their income but the rural part of the Shire contributed only about one sixth of Shire income in 1986.

The amalgamation of Waugoola and Cowra Shires created the potential battle ground over rating and representation, but the amalgamation alone could not be blamed for the persistence of the issues. One Councillor felt that the amalgamation had created adversary conditions which had subsequently waned:

"It's taken away the closeness and the acceptance of things because of certain issues... The problems are firstly the councillors who came across from the rural council never wanted the situation. They were saying it wasn't our idea. That was number one. Number two was "we are here to make sure that the people of the old shire are not disadvantaged by this exercise so we are going to do all we can to make sure that our interests are guarded". That dominated proceedings for some time. I don't see that as so strong now."

Waugoola Shire and Cowra Municipal Councils appear to have been good company, falling out only occasionally, but possibly significantly in local minds. In 1956 Waugoola supported the Municipal Council in a protest to the State Government over arrangements for a loan (Cowra Guardian, 25 February). In 1965 the Municipal Council made its building inspector available to Waugoola (Cowra Guardian, 9 November). The two Councils negotiated an agreement on responsibility for the cost of the civic centre (Cowra Guardian, 1 August, 1967). However, when the Municipal Council asked Waugoola for a contribution to the cost of reconstructing the swimming pool, Waugoola declined (Cowra Guardian, 26 November, 1976), and when, in 1963, Waugoola announced that it was going to build its own saleyards not far from the existing yards operated by the Municipal Council, the aldermen were upset (Armstrong, 1988 and Cowra Guardian, 25 October, 1963). A quotation from Shire President Oliver (Ab's brother) on the Guardian's page one could have been interpreted as paternalistic:
"... The Shire Council had always accepted the policy and responsibilities of Local Government in regard to bettering the town and district, and the Shire Council considered that Cowra was as much the Shire Council's town as it was the Municipal Council's town."

The amalgamation was a marriage based on a difficult relationship and no courtship. Farmers were accustomed to the notion that their use of town facilities gave them a right to some say in town affairs. This was illustrated when the Municipal Council received opinions from farmers during a debate over parking restrictions in 1974, during which one correspondent to the *Guardian* wrote:

"The fact that the [Municipal] Council is pleased to receive suggestions and opinions from the country people is most gratifying. . . it is difficult to understand why Shire residents should have no say in Municipal affairs."

The country people considered the town to be shared property. But at amalgamation, they realised that the town people would have more representatives on Council while they made a similar, or in the minds of some, a greater contribution to rate income. From the country perspective it was like a husband, in what had been a traditional patriarchal marriage, finding out that his wife had acquired most of the domestic political resources. The wave of amalgamations which hit Cowra was generally unpopular among town and country people, but it was more unpopular among country people (Musgrave et al, 1983, 1985). There had been tension between the two councils before amalgamation. Its persistence since that event is hardly surprising. It has added to councillor-officer politics, because the rural people were quick to see bureaucratic expansion, as they did in the LEP and rates issues, and demanded protection by their elected members. They got it.
Ratepayer Defence

Local politics largely arose from attempts to defend what were interpreted to be the interests of ratepayers. Property owners were expected by councillors to demand fair value for their rate contributions. As local government has been constrained to property service, emphasis has been placed on rate minimisation rather than service maximisation. That is the essence of the "ratepayer ideology", as described by Dunleavy (1980) and Halligan and Paris (1984). It was used in Cowra against business interests in the Japanese Gardens issue and by business interests in the human services non-issue (Chapters Seven and Eight).

The important feature of the ratepayer ideology is that, in situations like Cowra in which people of diverse occupations and incomes have a property interest by way of home ownership, it sweeps along a large proportion of the population regardless of other class characteristics. That is how it creates popular politics in a situation which, as will be discussed below, politics are ideologically barred. As Rose et al (1976: 703) showed, the universality of property interest, regardless of differences in kinds of property such as between those used for production (factories, farms etc) and those used for consumption (houses, motor cars etc), can be used to demonstrate a universal interest in maintaining the status quo. Privatisation and allegiance to property interest through home ownership, which Kilmartin and Thoms (1978) found to have a pacifying effect on suburban populations by suggesting a common interest in urban space, can, however, arouse protest which crosses class lines when that common interest is seen to be threatened. Other studies, including Painter (1974), Bell et al (1976), Oxley (1978) and Wild (1983), have revealed a willingness to protest about rating, or at least a concern to keep rates down.

Such concern was expressed long ago in Cowra, when in 1898, a Ratepayers' Association was formed under the chairmanship of the inimitable J.C. Ryall (Cowra Free Press , 5 May, 1898). In recent times ratepayers' associations have come and gone (see Chapter Five). A rise in rates is likely to ignite protest, as it did in 1986, but rises are also likely to be avoided by Council if it
feels that it can do so. In early 1986 Bruce Golsby successfully moved that there be no general rate increase that year. This occurred in a gloomy rural economic climate in which farmer moves for rate freezes were reported in the rural press (Petrikas, 1986).

Waugoola Council often avoided rate increases, but when it raised rates it sometimes attracted vehement criticism and disruptive protest in the form of withholding. The pages of the Guardian indicate that it did not raise its rate in 1950, 1954, 1955, 1956, 1958, 1960 and 1968. It actually reduced its rate in 1952, 1957, 1965 and 1971, but in 1951, 1962, 1964, 1969, 1970 and 1972, its rate rises attracted opposition. The opposition could be vehement and close to home. The Guardian of 21 March, 1952 (page 1) reported that at a Farmers and Settlers Association meeting "the 20-odd members present pounced on the councillors for the recent increase in Shire rates." A former Waugoola councillor told me that another farmer had challenged him to a public fight at one of the annual village shows after a rate increase. As Bell et al (1976: 5) offered a reminder, otherwise friendly rural neighbours can become mortal enemies, and rates offered a point for falling out.

The 1986 water rate protest (Chapter Six) arose after accounts were received by ratepayers. The accounts were larger than many people had expected but in line with Council policy for augmentation of the water reticulation system. The increases had come about through a reduction in the amount of water allowed under a fixed fee before it is to be paid for according to quantity consumed. A prominent local businessman called a meeting to re-form the Ratepayers Association. The Association attracted about 250 members. That meeting and other problems which arose over the water augmentation (Chapter Six) prompted a Special Council Meeting at which water rating policy decisions were made. Council resolved to apply the 'user pays' principle more stringently in domestic water rating but, among other matters, to continue to subsidise the town's large industries.

I heard appeals for application of the 'user pays' principle several times at Council meetings, and on one occasion a direct reference to the property value enhancement effect of Council works. At
a Policy and Resources Committee meeting, Tim West raised the matter of charging adjacent property owners for footpath paving. He claimed that the policy was unfair because people living further down a street made greater use of the footpath, and the charge was a burden on pensioners. He further argued that the cost should be met by general rate revenue because footpaths are a public asset. Don Kibbler and Bruce Golsby replied that footpaths increase property values and the discussion ceased.

A prominent member of the Ratepayers' Association told me after the water rates issue had dissipated that the Association had tried, but it was not optimistic about eliminating what it saw to be inefficiencies and inequities in Council administration. It was important, the member said, for the Association to have representatives from a variety of occupations. (Its executive included employed as well as business people.)

"The wealthy don't even notice an increase in rates. When the rates go up [a prominent business person] just increases the rent; [another prominent business person] raises prices, but the little bloke goes without."

This Ratepayers' Association member may have doubted the Associations' viability, but did not doubt the rightfulness of its objectives nor the legitimacy of its protest. The rating issue arose again in 1986 when a councillor examined the accounts presented by the Clerk at estimates time and concluded that Council's reserves were larger than necessary. The councillor moved to use the reserves to finance a rate reduction. He was not successful, but it is interesting to note that the matter was again thoroughly discussed in Council, and nobody inside or outside Council publicly suggested that the reserves be used to provide additional local facilities. There is plenty of room for those who want to raise the issue, but the politics of rates are removed from the potential issues of class, race and gender.
Status Politics

The issues surrounding the Tourist and Development Corporation (Chapter Seven) contained an individualistic element, introduced by the presence of Don Kibbler as Corporation President. Don's presence made the status system a resource of his opponents in so far as his personal background denied him resources which may have been available to others.

Australian community studies, notably Wild (1974a) and Oxley (1978) have provided extensive analyses of status systems. Oxley in particular pinpoints the hazards of climbing the social ladder into high local office, as Don had done.

"Social climbing is watched for and disapproved of. Anyone who fraternizes too much with people of a higher stratum risks criticism from his own." (page 97)

Don did not just aspire to friendships among high status people in order to social climb. He climbed by way of success in business. His parents had migrated from Britain and established a building firm in Cowra. Don continued the building business but later went into others including a hotel, a newsagency and real estate. During 1986 he was building a large home in a prominent position in North Cowra. Don makes his prosperity visible; he drives a Mercedes Benz with the registration plate COWRA. A photograph of him with Prime Minister Bob Hawke appeared on page one of the Guardian. The photograph was taken when the Prime Minister was in Japan on an official visit, and Don was there to discuss the Cowra Japanese Garden with Japanese dignitaries. Don had made a substantial contribution to the Garden project, but unfortunately for his experience in local politics, he collided with the Australian manifestation of Lloyd Warner's dictum:

"Successful social mobility in the American mind is a magnificent performance but is never as good as being born to the group of those who already belong." (1949: 295)
British rural community studies have also found such traps for self-made people. Littlejohn (1963) found that people who associated with others of a higher class were apt to be stigmatized, and Newby et al (1978: 309) found that both farmers and farm workers distinguished the "nouveaux riches" from those who were attributed the qualities of traditional high status.

Don had challenged what Gramson (1985: 610) might call "the working consensus" on the personal background desired for Cowra leadership, a challenge which could take on, with what were perceived to be Don's clearly displayed ambitions, "the character of moral transgression" (ibid). Four people close to the Corporation told me that they believed that opposition to it was a manifestation of the 'tall poppy syndrome', and merely a personal attack on Don. This personal aspect, however, did not surface in debate as the ratepayer principle did. (There was one attack made on an individual during a debate related to the Corporation, but it was aimed at another councillor and was followed quickly with a private conversation which I took to include an apology or at least an explanation.) The point is that the Corporation's affairs might more readily have become an issue when it was possible for its President's credentials, albeit status credentials, to be questioned. Don lacked an implicit resource of status legitimacy which others brought to high positions of trust and leadership in Cowra.

There was therefore some potential for status warfare in local politics, with, broadly speaking, a lower stratum fighting the middle. The lower stratum came to the fight armed with the principles of egalitarianism embedded in the status system, as discussed by Oxley (1978), while those at the top were made invulnerable by tradition based on property. It could be likened to the symbolic politics discussed by Gusfield (1963). For Gusfield, the politics of temperance symbolised protest against status; in Cowra protest over public support for the Tourist and Development Corporation in part at least symbolised a struggle to retain the old status structure with its reinforcing ideology of egalitarianism. To the very limited extent the the Tourist and Development Corporation issues were status politics, they lacked the councillor-officer dimension present in all others.
Conclusion: Coalitions and Interests

The overt politics of Cowra Shire arose when councillors perceived a need to defend their electorate, usually erroneously equated with the ratepayers, against the bureaucracy. In the Tourist and Development Corporation issues the 'real' matter of contention was seen in each instance as power being placed in the hands of senior officers. The water rate billing issue was seen to be a contest between the Shire Clerk and the ratepayers. The Council formed a 'facilitative coalition', standing by the officers and effectively turning it into a non-issue, because councillors believed that they and the officers were pursuing ratepayers' real interests. The rural rating and representation issues were seen differently: as problems of bureaucratic empire building. The Council formed an 'obstructive coalition', as it did in the Tourist and Development Corporation issues, with a majority of councillors opposing what they interpreted to be the Shire Clerk's wishes. As 'facilitative coalitions' produced non-issues, such as Taragala's air pollution and the general non-issue of human services, the formation of 'obstructive coalitions' virtually became visible local politics.

The important factor in formation of 'obstructive coalitions' in Cowra, as it was for Mugford (1979), was perception of the rightfulness of defending a third party, which in Cowra was the ratepayers. Ratepayers were believed to need protection from 'experts' and bureaucrats who could not be trusted to design water reticulation systems, who might have got away with pursuing their own interests, who might have strangled development and personal freedoms with rules and regulation, or might have thrown Council into an expensive exercise in human services which was not its own idea and was beyond its traditional bailiwick. The councillors believed that they were protecting what the ratepayers valued; that they were expressing not just their own values but those of the people they served. The constriction of politics into obstructive coalition formation was enabled by the desire of ratepayers to have their interests defended, and the
interpretation which both ratepayers and councillors placed upon those interests. Ratepayers' desire for defence constituted resources which were used by, and hence empowered, business and farm people. Chapter Ten discusses the ideological climate in which ratepayers, or electors, desires were formed.

Notes

1 Among examples of the expression of criticism during 1986 Council and Committee meetings were:
Harold Upston's statement that Engineer Finnimore was wrong in his interpretation of the ecology of part of the Shire (24 February), Harold's claim that Council's own trucks had not always had their loads covered as all trucks were required to do (18 March), his claim that the Caravan Park accounts were misleading (24 March), and also on a financial note, his criticism of the accuracy of figures on costs of road maintenance (28 April),
Stephen Bell's criticism of Jim Finnimore for not advising residents about road work (18 March),
Tim West's assertion that the Health Surveyor had exerted undue pressure on some village residents to improve the condition of their dwellings (22 April),
Jack Mallon's allegation that Council officers had been discourteous to owners when entering properties (25 August), and his criticism of Jim Finnimore's decision to approve establishment of a caravan park in Woodstock (27 October), and
Bruce Golsby's criticism of Jim's decision to carry out road work in the main street during a busy period (17 November).

2 A phantom distinction between councillors as policy makers and officers as administrators has a long history. Stanyer (1976) found its origins in an American attack on public corruption in the late nineteenth century. Stoker and Wilson (1986: 287) described it as a "hoary cliche", which had been superseded by the 'dictatorship of the official' hypothesis. These views are supported by the absence of stated policies among councillors. Blowers (1977) and Jones (1981) suggested that bureaucrats may be able to exploit a political vacuum. Elliott and McCrone (1982) and Laffin and Young (1985) found increased partisanship in British local government to have decreased the power of officials.
Chapter Ten

IDEOLOGIES AND RESOURCES

Business and farm interests dominated local politics in Cowra Shire as their proponents defined the political agenda. Such domination reflected the values and beliefs of councillors and was seen to be legitimate, "rightful" (Mueller, 1973: 129) by the people of the Shire. Domination was enabled by this perception of rightfulness. These observations pose an explanatory problem, in that the politics created, while popularly legitimate, contained expression of the interests of some people of the Shire, but either ignored or obscured the interests of others. They suggest that domination was at least in part a consequence of the wishes of those who were dominated. This Chapter seeks to specify some of the conditions in which this situation came about and was maintained.

The antecedents of the local power structure are defined largely in terms of ideological resources. That is, those structural products of the social system which were manifest in beliefs and values and which were expressed by councillors in the course of local politics. They were available as resources and were used consciously or unconsciously by political actors, because they were widely shared among both the more and the less powerful.

This Chapter looks at the antecedents to legitimacy. While legitimacy may be a property of rulers, it is a product of the ideas of the ruled. Mueller (op cit: 131) points to the desire of rulers to foster their own legitimacy, but their legitimacy need not be a product of their own efforts. The concept of resources breaks that connection. The ideas of the ruled can be resources of the rulers without either party making conscious attempts at creating, altering or maintaining them.
Attention moves from the local political arena to the "assumptive worlds" (Young, 1979: 31) of those who acted in it, and the conditions in which those "assumptive worlds" were constructed. The system of interrelated beliefs and values which legitimated political action are examined, before moving to the ways in which those beliefs and values accrued to actors as resources in the local political arena and were used as such. Data are drawn from sample survey work, interviews and participant observation, as well as documents, the *Guardian* and observation of local politics. This Chapter draws more heavily than its predecessors on ethnographic aspects of the research.

**Rhetoric**

To explore the assumptive worlds of political actors, it will be useful to apply analysis based on Bailey's (1983) concept of "assertive rhetoric":

"In short, assertive rhetoric inescapably must proceed by begging the question: by simple assertion of the correctness of one answer to the question at issue. There is no other way of arguing about intrinsic values, for these are ends in themselves. The speaker asserts a truth by identifying the true believers who "happen" to be those who believe that truth. Accordingly it is inappropriate to ask whether an argument advanced in this form of rhetoric is valid or invalid, and to test it by the rules of logic. The proper question to ask about assertive rhetoric concerns effectiveness. It is intended to provoke attitudes of approval or disapproval, to compel assent, to bring people over to one's side. For doing so what rhetorical devices are thought to be effective?" (1983: 135)

The West Cowra water supply issue (Chapter Six) offered examples of councillors asserting their right to challenge opinions of formally qualified technicians. Several councillors challenged 'expert' opinion, and claimed that consultation with them was unnecessary. Harold Upston claimed qualification to make technical judgements. He said that he was "amazed at some of the things that had been said about water", and suggested that "councillors should come to my place out the back to learn about fluids." Tim West criticised the design of the water works, claiming
that it would never work correctly. "We've been sold one of the greatest lemons any council has ever had." He claimed that the river bank pump vibrated so badly that "the bails fall of the stumps" at the nearby cricket ground. These councillors believed that engineers and technicians did not have a monopoly on design skill, and that the judgements of councillors who had no formal technical qualifications would be accepted as legitimate.

The comment by a passing politician about the Taragala air pollution problem (Chapter Six) asserted the value of the polluting factory to Cowra. Bruce Golsby's comment (Chapter Nine) about the effect of rural economic "suffering" was a similar assertion. Both assertions contained a belief in a communal identity for the Cowra district.

The Japanese Gardens issue (Chapter Seven) provided opposing assertions. While Stephen Bell implied that the bureaucrats were furthering their own interests, Col Newton implied that business was furthering its interests. Ab Oliver, in the debate about 'in-committee' sitting during discussion of the Gardens issue, appealed to perceptions of a wider public interest. None of these assertions contained an argument to support the interpretations they espoused. They rather appealed to value placed on what was seen to be fair and mutually beneficial dealing.

Don Kibbler and Harold Upston asserted that planning policies were undesirable because they required regulation (Chapter Seven). Don argued that planning policies were bad because they discouraged development which he implicitly assumed to be inherently good. Harold asserted that the LEP should not have included a statement that there are no types of prohibited development because there should be no need to say so (Chapter Seven). Ab Oliver appealed for maintenance of the exclusive property service function of Council on the basis that other functions were represented by external threats (Chapter Eight). Jack Mallon made the same appeal with reference to tradition. All such appeals assumed a consensus of values.

Each assertion was made, at least implicitly, as a defence of ratepayers. West Cowra people would have been better off without an 'expert' to design their water supply system. The polluting factory was good for Cowra's economy, just as suffering farmers would have been bad
for it. Profit by the bureaucracy, and business risk-taking at public expense would have been bad for ratepayers, but development of the project would have been in the general interest. Attempts by bureaucrats to formalise and regulate were bad for ratepayers, as were excursions into non-traditional functions which were all the ideas of outsiders anyway.

They were often effective, helping to achieve the eventual outcomes. The West/Treasure plan for West Cowra's water supply was accepted, albeit in modified form. Taragala's air pollution took ten years to be removed. The farmers were protected from rate increases. The Tourist and Development Corporation won the local battle for the Gardens. The LEP was drastically altered, and human services stayed off the local political agenda. The rhetoric which moved issues towards those outcomes was set in a climate of rural ideology.

Rural Ideology

The ideological resources, in the wishes of the people of Cowra but accruing as resources to farm and business interests, can be placed in a broad framework under the label of rural ideology. Although several sets of beliefs and values may be identified among the people of Cowra, they may be generalised into a single rural ideology because each has a particular manifestation and perhaps a special intensity associated with the rural situation. Similar ideologies, nevertheless, have also been identified in studies of urban local government (Dunleavy, 1980; Halligan and Paris, 1984). Some reasons for their special intensity in the rural situation are explored below.

Rural ideology was introduced (in Chapter Three) with references to Poiner's (1982: 34) use of a concept of a "rural idyll". A related notion was encountered again (in Chapter Four), this time as the agrarian ideal invoked as 'assertive rhetoric' by proponents of land reform. Both are expressions of an ideal of rural life perceived from an urban perspective, but being associated with what rural people see as positive aspects of rural life, they are also components of the rural belief system. It is, however, useful to separate the "rural idyll" from the ideologies of farmers. Origins of the "rural idyll" lie in British tradition, the core of which attributes harmony and virtue
to rural living and disorganisation and alienation to city life (Newby, 1977:12).

In the Australian context farming is seen not only as a good lifestyle but as an ennobling vocation, in that it consists of honest hard work in a situation in which self-reliance is essential and enterprise is rewarded. Farming produces many of the essentials of life for urban as well as rural people, and in Australia, it provides a traditionally very important contribution to economic prosperity by way of production for export. The better lifestyle component of the ideology is shared by those urban dwellers who idealise rural living, some of whom have chosen to move to the country to take up farming or some other small business, but it is the other components which give agricultural society its distinctiveness.

At a behavioural level, agrarianism has been credited with helping to sustain the small family farming system in Australia (Craig, 1983; Craig and Phillips, 1983). The role of ideology in family farming in the Cowra district was considered in Gray (1988b, Appendix C), which identified two sets of values among farming couples, "one set oriented towards the peculiarly rural aspects of farming and the other looking more like a business ethic". The ideal of family persistence in agriculture through inheritance was found to be stronger among those expressing the former set of values. Both sets of values had one feature prominently in common; they both included emphasis on independence and self-reliance, even among those respondents for whom the uniquely rural aspects of farming, like being part of a rural community and the opportunity to work close to nature were not so important. Agrarianism is more complex than the belief in the virtues of rural living of the British tradition and the land reform rhetoric. It contains rationalisations of persistence and survival in trying circumstances, which are now so trying as to be threatening the future of family farming (Lawrence, 1987).

Self-reliance is an important component of rural ideology, explored in the Cowra district in Gray (1988b, Appendix C). As Marshall (1985: 24) wrote of farmers: "They have claimed to possess the characteristics of independence and individual initiative, identifying them with all that is best in the 'national character'". Belief in self-reliance can have direct political ramifications as aversion to welfare (see Chapter Eight). Rural ideology has a gender dimension (also mentioned
in Chapter Eight). The woman in the home is a central feature of the image of rural bliss. Reality for farming women is, however, often much greater than the domestic tradition would have us suppose (Davidoff et al, 1976; Little, 1986).

Perception of contrast, even opposition, between country and city is a component of rural ideology. Such perceptions are often called 'countrymindedness', which Verrall et al (1985: 21) define as consisting of belief in "... the special elevated virtue of rural living, and the 'mission' of rural people to defend embattled faiths and 'standards' ..." Aitkin's (1972) research on the Country (now National) party found it to have adopted a 'countrymindedness' ideology which had changed little through the history of the party (page 17). The ideology is based on belief that farmers' interests should be fostered by government because Australia's economy is dependent on them, and farming is a worthy occupation which

"brought out in a man (sic) those qualities which made both for a full and virtuous life and for happy prosperous communities - individualism, rugged independence, and integrity. It was the conviction of their moral worth which made the farmers' movement a vigorous and confident one . . ." (page 4)

'Countrymindedness' produces differentiation at the individual level. Dempsey (1983: 119) found that having country origins helped to make newly arrived ministers in a rural parish acceptable as an "insider" rather than an "outsider". It also leads to contradictions which create tensions for country people. While they want to retain the country lifestyle and its valued attributes for their children, they know that city education and careers offer potential for relatively high income, which appears increasingly unlikely on the farm. While they value hard work and self-reliance, they envy the facilities and associated comfortable lifestyle of the cities. And while they see themselves as the backbone of the Australian economy, they see their share of exports having declined and the future for their international markets appearing bleak. Similar phenomena were identified by Widdows (1974) Bolton (1978) and Share (1987), and political paradoxes by Chatterton (1984). Cowra people have seen their autonomy succumb to city
advances (see Chapter Four). 'Countrymindedness' in Cowra should be viewed in its context of the history of city-country relations, as it could be used by rural people to make sense of rural problems, and be reproduced at the same time.

Rural ideology is more than a set of beliefs and values which elevates rural living and helps to sustain rural settlement. It is a mode for comprehending a hierarchical relationship: that between city and country. Both these features have ramifications for local government. The next four sections describe characteristics of local government which are universally sought, but may, as observed by Sinclair (1987: 118), have particularly intense ideological manifestations in the rural situation. They were found to have such manifestations in Cowra.

Subjugation of Bureaucrats

Local government operates in a climate in which, as Dunleavy (1980: 145) found, "ideological forms . . . produce generalised or stereotyped responses to decision problems". He identified these forms as professionalism, managerialism, partisanship and localism. "By defining a series of options open to actors, and others which are foreclosed, such ideologies largely delimit the scope and direction of behavioural change, crucially influencing the 'styles' of local authority decision-making" (ibid). While moving the focus onto the constraining element in social structure rather than the enabling element of resource production and maintenance upon which this study is focused, Dunleavy has nevertheless isolated the contents of ideological resources. The differences between British and Australian local government in terms of scale and function make it difficult to apply Dunleavy's "ideological forms" directly to Cowra. In Australia, three ideologies: the ratepayer principle, political neutrality and localism have been found to affect local political relations (Halligan and Paris, 1984: 60). Nevertheless, some reference to Dunleavy's typology is made in the discussion to follow, and another ideology, that in which local social status is distributed, is considered as an ideological resource.

The characteristic which ratepayers are assumed to want most of all from their councillors is
willingness and initiative to subjugate their bureaucratic servants, who, from a popular technocratic perspective, threaten to become masters. In so far as it seeks to promote the welfare of ratepayers by constraining excesses within councils, it is related to Halligan and Paris's ratepayer principle. In Cowra the popularity of this view around the electorate was made clear to me in many conversations, some of which have been reported above, and others in which Harold Upston was praised in his absence for frequently reported attempts to curtail the supposed ambitions of the bureaucrats. The point was made to me by a candidate at the 1987 election, who said that the one thing that everybody the candidate had spoken to had asked was: "are you going to stir up [the officers and those councillors who were thought to readily join 'alliance groups']?"

The assumption that there was something about Council officers that made them need either mobilisation or restraint for the good of the people was the most direct ideological stimulus for 'obstructive coalitions'.

There were three aspects to this view. One was an assumed need for quite direct defence from objective threats in the form of unfair or unreasonable regulation and policing. Another stemmed from the belief that bureaucrats should not be powerful, either because they were inept, or because it was morally wrong for them to be powerful. The third arose from fear of less direct effects from poor management due to the assumed inherently stultifying effects of bureaucratisation on council management practices. In its demand for efficiency, the third could be seen in part to be an application of the ratepayer principle.

Regulation was sometimes assumed to open the door to potential bureaucratic malpractice. This view, expressed in the LEP controversy, (Chapter Seven) contradicted the reasoning behind the establishment of independent bureaucracies which emphasised the risk of elected representative malpractice. The Council has a policing role which can give it an authoritarian public image. It occasionally prosecuted malefactors, who, for example, had failed to remove their noxious weeds, rubbish or material which constituted a fire hazard. The officers' perspective on this role was depicted in the Guardian after the New South Wales Government had decided to move responsibility for administration of the Dog Act from the shoulders of the Police Force onto local government:
Nothing will make the heavens tremble like the outcry, wailing and vituperation of someone who has lost their pet dog and if it has disappeared forever into the maw of the Council's pound there is no weapon the sufferer will not lay his hands on to bring the miscreant official to the dust. He will have the sympathy of all other dog owners, relatives and friends - which comprise a sizeable portion of the community." (Cowra Guardian, 21 June, 1966, page 2)

The Council could find itself unable to please anyone, or could be used by some ratepayers to further their feuds with others. At a 1986 meeting of Works Committee, the Health Surveyor reported that a ratepayer had asked a solicitor to write to Council asking it to serve notice on a neighbour to remove manure placed beside trees along the common boundary. The Shire President and the Health Surveyor investigated and found that action by Council was not warranted. The Health Surveyor added the following to his report:

"It is well to mention that over the past five or six years inspections at [the neighbouring houses] have been made for the the purpose of investigation of alleged nuisances by four Health Surveyors, in some cases, several times, two Shire Presidents and the Health Department."

Councillors could seek to restrain this aspect of Council's operations. At another Works Committee meeting a councillor spoke against agreement to a request from the Health Surveyor that special constable status be sought for the Ordinance Officer (who was effectively Council's policeman), despite assurances from the Health Surveyor that most such officers in local government were special constables and that it was largely a convenient formality. The objecting councillor believed that such a move would be "contrary to the mood of the electorate".

Allegations from councillors of bureaucratic ineptitude (see Chapter Nine) were made in the context of conflict arising from feelings among both councillors and officers that each was usurping the others' roles. There were many illustrations, especially among the LEP submissions (Chapter Seven), of the fear of giving bureaucrats responsibilities of which they
were not worthy. The LEP also aroused moral indignation and fear of "socialism" among farmers. They saw planning as a threat from bureaucracy to the vital features of their business ethic, noted in Gray (1988b, Appendix C) to place great value on self reliance, initiative and independent decision making. A candidate at the 1987 Council election included in his manifesto, published in the *Guardian*, the statement: "There is a great danger that big government and creeping bureaucracy will rapidly absorb all the rights of local people, particularly their right to control their district through their own elected representatives and shire officers."

These sentiments were reflected in Council debates on other issues, notably in the positions taken by Harold Upston and Don Kibbler in building regulation and other planning matters (Chapter Seven) when they were used significantly as resources, even if those who used them could only obtain compromise. They were decisive resources in the wider arena opened by the public meetings, as they were used to arouse mass support for the 'concerned citizens' protest.

The third aspect of the view that bureaucrats needed mobilisation or restraint favoured mobilisation. This is the desire for efficiency, a source of legitimacy which Mueller (1973: 143) suggested to be the most important of modern industrial society, rationalised by promises of affluence and time to enjoy it. Efficiency is the keystone of the ratepayer principle, and is a component of Dunleavy's professionalism and managerialism, although these concepts describe pursuits of councils rather than desires of ratepayers. "Fiscal and resource conservatism" are, however, the "central thrust" of Dunleavy's (1980: 148) managerialism, and were strong features of the ratepayer principle, as it was expressed in Cowra Shire.

Bureaucrats lacked access to an important legitimating factor in Cowra's rural ideological climate: they were not subjected to the economic and physical environments' imposition of hard work and self-reliance. Farmers could consider themselves to be efficient, because the logic of the physical environment and the market place told them that they must be if they had survived so long. The valued attributes of the successful battler imposed on nominations of the Shire Clerk among the district's 'influentials' (see Chapter Five) illustrated this belief. Farmers consequently believed that they were entitled to efficiency among their local government servants. Moreover, farmers
themselves had to survive without ready availability of expert advice, often having just their own skills and perhaps those of family and/or neighbours to draw on. Faith in personal abilities was perhaps best expressed in Council by the West/Treasure plan for West Cowra's water supply.

As well as leading to debate which clouded the distributional aspects of issues, the desire for efficiency further clouded distributional aspects of local non-politics by ratifying administration practices (see Chapter Six). In this way 'facilitative coalitions', and associated non-issues, were created, rather than the 'obstructive coalitions' which formed over West Cowra's water among other matters (see Chapter Nine). The 'facilitative coalitions' were formed because the efficiency of the administrative apparatus, as operated by the bureaucrats, was to be defended for the sake of the ratepayers. The apparatus rather than the 'squeaky wheels' was seen to be benign.

Efficiency of administration had popular appeal. This may have been associated with the large number of self employed people and employers (see Chapter Four) who may have taken a particular interest in and value efficient administration. Painter (1974: 349) found some candidates for election to Sydney councils affirming "a belief in 'sound efficient administration'". Among Cowra election candidates, minimisation of rates was used as a platform, rather than more abstract references to efficiency, although a candidate at the 1977 Municipal election claimed to seek both minimal rates and efficiency, another emphasised his "extensive training in business management", another wanted the "best use of ratepayers money", another wanted to maintain a strong financial position and provide facilities, and yet another believed that "Cowra's future lies in steady continued growth based on sound management techniques" (Cowra Guardian, 16 September, pages 4 and 6). In 1980 four candidates mentioned management in their brief manifestos published in the Guardian. In 1983 a candidate planned to "assist in sound and responsible administration" (Cowra Guardian, 7 September, 1983, page 2). In 1987 two of the eighteen candidates mentioned management, and another used a metaphor I heard many times, and saw in a Guardian (3 October) editorial prior to the 1986 by-election: describing the Council as a large business.

Rural people sought a council which was worthy of the ideals they cast upon their social
environment as the font of freedom, enterprise and honourable living. Unfortunately for the bureaucrats, these features were either lacking in or threatened by their peculiar bureaucratic environment, in which organisation must prevail over individualism. Points of compatibility between the two systems were few, but were at least found in the search for managerial efficiency. Unfortunately that search also provided grounds for councillor-officer friction over their respective roles, so exacerbating the dominance of councillor-officer conflict over Cowra's local politics.

Political Neutrality

Maintenance of local government free of politics is the second of the Halligan and Paris (1984) ideologies. It accrues as a resource to those who seek to maintain the status quo by denying legitimacy to those who might pursue opposing interests. Political neutrality is commonly valued in both British and Australian local government. Gyford (1976: 53) found four grounds for hostility to politics in British local government. They are the claims that party politics "discourages the right sort of people from putting their names forward", that "the existence of party groups stifles free discussion", that "doctrinaire party policies are liable to be adopted regardless of individual local circumstances", and that "parties promote conflict within the local community". Newton (1976: 240) saw the a-political view as a denial of class, expressed in the adage that there is only one way to carry out the traditional local government functions like road building, which denies the process of distribution of costs and benefits as well as the possibility of non-issues. Bell et al (1976) and Newby et al (1978) found that rural local politicians expressed a desire to keep politics out of local government, and that this desire was manifest in the large proportion of seats occupied by 'Independents'. Madgwick et al (1973) reported from rural Wales that many councillors disapproved of party politicisation, some with expressed hostility.

In Australia, non-partisanship has been written into local government, institutionalised in a volume which has been a councillors' 'bible' (being Stuckey, 1975). This publication declares in
a heading that "Sectional Interests Have No Place in Local Government", and goes on to exhort councillors to turn their energies to looking after their whole municipalities and shires (page 6). (This perspective has, however, been contradicted in Colebatch and Degeling (1986), a more recent and realistic instructional publication aimed at councillors).

Not surprisingly, Australian studies have found a similar distaste for politics as the British. Loveday (1972), Painter (1974) and Bowman (n.d.) all reported the ideology as did Aitkin (1972), Pandey (1972) and Wild (1974a) in rural situations. Loveday (1972) found that criticism of politicisation was always aimed at the Labor Party. It was they who were politicising. Bowman (n.d.) found that conservatives tended to gain by being seen not to present a threat to entrenched interests in local government.

There are several factors, other than the preaching of local government idealists, and the use of their ideas by those whom local government traditionally favours, which contribute to the value placed on neutrality in rural local politics. Gyford's (1976) four 'grounds' quoted above could be found only in vague form in Cowra. Rather than such rationalisations, I encountered a more general distaste for conflict, seeing it as unnecessary and distracting, and associating it with political parties.

A view of politics as class based is obscured in a climate of 'countrymindedness'. As Aitkin (1972: 3) commented, farmers do not take a hierarchical view of society. Rather, they see divisions in terms of city and country, and economic sectors. In addition, as Oeser and Emery (1957) reported, there is such hostility to the Labor Party that its activities are discouraged. Hostility is, however, not necessary, because, as Rose et al (1976) reported, Labor is itself shy of politics. Dempsey (1983: 168) pointed out that political conflict can make life uncomfortable in small rural settlements where frequent interaction is common, adding undesirability of conflict to the perceived lack of necessity for local politicisation. The reluctance of aspirants to local public office, and the reticence of the Labor Party in local politics would be sufficient to rule out class based politics.
Labor has been a viable political party in Cowra (see Chapter Four). There are unions representing employees at the three large factories, the railway, the banks, the hospital and the high school. These are not, however, the traditional sources of support for rural Labor. Verrall et al (1985: 9) found that the decline of the railway had contributed to the decline of the Labor Party in rural areas, along with the decrease in numbers of rural workers. A member of the Party told me that local Party membership had fallen from about seventy to about fifteen as the railway had declined, but it is still able to attract around half the Cowra town vote at State and Federal elections.

In the 1987 House of Representatives election the ratio of first preference votes was 2 240 for Labor to 2 968 for the National candidate. That is, the ALP attracted forty-three per cent of the vote for the two major parties across the polling booths in the Shire (Australian Electoral Commission, 1987). (It attracted forty-five per cent at the town booths, rising to forty-eight per cent at the village of Woodstock, and falling to eight per cent at each of two rural booths.) If local politics operated and behaved electorally as State and Federal elections have done, the Labor Party could reasonably have expected to gain about as many representative seats as the National or Liberal Parties, other things, such as division of the electorate, having been equal.

The Labor Party members went as far as forming a group on the ballot paper at Shire elections, but maintained that they were standing as independents. Col Newton was quoted by the Guardian (19 September, page 2) before the 1983 election to have said: "... even though councillors were standing as groups, they were really standing as independents." It seemed that the councillors who were members of the Labor Party felt that being labelled as ' politicisers' would be politically gravely damaging for them. For this reason, and another to be mentioned shortly, I did not pursue my initial wish to attend Party meetings, as it seemed that some members would be concerned that my presence would create links in people's minds between the Party and the Council, which I was known to be studying.

There is some irony in this fear of political stigma, because while the councillors who happened to be members of the Labor Party found that they had to defend themselves from anticipated
allegations that they were politicising local politics, they made no attempt to pursue class politics when on Council, despite what appeared, to all voters but the few who might have been totally ignorant of local affairs, to be their appearance on the ballot paper as a Labor Party team. I heard suggestions from people who expressed fear of politicisation that despite their denials, the Labor councillors really did caucus and communicate in order to block vote at meetings. I found no evidence of that, which is not surprising, given that there was only one issue that even remotely resembled class politics (the controversy surrounding the Tourist and Development Corporation).

Party politics were excluded from Cowra Shire. That is the other reason for my not pursuing the party organisations. I knew two of the councillors to be, or to have been, associated with the National Party and to have held higher political ambitions. But that had no necessary relevance either. The Council may have operated as though it was dominated by the National Party, in that it served business and farm interests, but in Cowra's ideological climate, it could probably have done so with or without National Party member councillors. Conversely, there was nothing to suggest that the Council would have had more 'issues' on its agenda if a majority, or even all of its members were Labor Party members, such was the elimination of class politics from the agenda, except in so far as ratepayer defence was class politics, by the perceived necessity for constituent defence. The electorate largely ruled out overt class based politics.

Stephen Bell made the threat of politicisation work for him at the 1983 election. All candidates except Stephen and Jack Mallon decided to form or join a group on the ballot paper. Consequently Stephen and Jack were placed together, with one name above the other, on the ballot paper. They looked like another group. Stephen challenged the Clerk's decision to 'group' him with Jack, and the consequent fuss in Council made front page headlines in the *Guardian* during the week before the election. Stephen loudly proclaimed his independence, which gave the electorate the impression that he and Jack (Stephen was the one in the limelight) were the only independents. Stephen polled well, being elected fifth, behind four more experienced councillors (Ab Oliver, Barbara Bennett, Col Newton and Neville Pengilly). The *Guardian* reported (26 September, page 1) that "Cowra people . . . clearly demonstrated that they voted for people and not groups". For example, Don Kibbler was placed second in Group
A but was elected sixth, as he received many first preference votes.

The grouping at this election also attracted a letter to the *Guardian* which indicated a popular view, associating ballot paper group formation with politicisation:

"At the last Shire election it was obvious that party politics and sectional voting had been introduced... When viewing the 1983 proposed ballot it appears that most of the candidates have considered it necessary to follow suit. At the local government level most candidates and their abilities are known by the electors and I would have thought the organizational ability of political parties and perhaps biased views of sectional groups was unnecessary. We as electors of this diverse electorate need councillors with common sense and balanced views elected on their merit and not the effectiveness of a campaign." (19 September, page 2)

I encountered similar views in interviews and conversations:

"Grouping is the worst thing that has ever happened to the Council" (Farmer)

"There are few in it - I don't know how they got there - on these political tickets I think". (Town-dwelling employee)

"A lot of people said I wouldn't vote for a man in a group no matter who he was". (Former Waugoola Councillor)

Some believed that grouping on the ballot paper did not just mean tickets; it meant party political tickets.

"I believe that country towns used to be a-political. Locally up until the last two elections there was no party politics. Every person stood on their own merits. It never entered people's thoughts as to what affiliation they were..." (Farmer)

Expressions of the fear of politicisation extended to devising methods to combat its symptoms. I
heard a suggestion from a farmer that the ballot paper be circular so that grouping would be impossible. The seating at Council meetings was randomised around the table to discourage coordinated action among councillors.

Not surprisingly, and with the exception of aberrations like the 1983 election to be discussed further below, candidates presented themselves as independent of political parties, and/or claimed to represent the whole town and district. This suggests an explanation for the slow turnover of councillors (see Chapter Five). Electors were seldom offered policies which would upset the status quo, and when such policies were offered they were likely to be rejected. At the 1980 election two candidates each proposed to improve facilities in parts of the town (Mulyan and West Cowra), and were not elected. At the 1987 election only one group was formed, other than the usual one of Labor Party members. There was little prospect of a return to the old pluralistic spatial politics of the 1950s, because the administrative apparatus discouraged group ventures (Chapter Six), but moreover, because fear of politicisation eliminated electoral prospects for groups seeking to pursue a spatial interest.

In terms of forming tickets, the Council was politicised overtly and successfully at the 1983 election, but by the Chamber of Commerce rather than by the Labor Party members or spatial groups. The Chamber put up a group of candidates, called them the "Advance Cowra Team", and advertised them as such in the *Guardian*. The group of four included two successful candidates, Harold Upston and Neville Pengilly. While stating that "it was felt that Cowra's business sector, which pays 27% of the Shire rates should have representation on the Council", Harold Upston, who was described in the article as President of the Chamber of Commerce, said "if elected the team would serve as independents without affiliation to any party or organisation" (*Cowra Guardian*, 6 July, 1983, page 1). The group was popularly known as the Chamber of Commerce group, just as the Labor Party members were known as the Labor group. Ab Oliver and four other candidates produced a joint manifesto for the 1974 election without giving themselves a title. I recall a conversation with a group of three farmers at a social function in which one farmer suggested to another that he stand in the 1987 election as a Farmers' Association (LGPA) representative. Nobody baulked at the implied politicisation. The
Association placed an advertisement in the *Guardian* (23 September, page 15) recommending two candidates. There was a tendency among farmers and business people to believe that only Labor could politicise, and that any participation by it as a party must inevitably have that effect. There may have been an element of truth in that if one assumed the existence of a conservative autocracy in which all politics were a non-issue, but as implied above, Labor would have had to introduce class politics: a most unlikely scenario.

Belief in political neutrality was a resource available to conservative forces who used it to maintain their dominance by keeping conflict off the agenda; conflict, that is along class, gender, race or spatial lines. The ideology was most useful to conservative interests in its denial of resources to those who might potentially have wished to pursue opposing interests and disturb the status quo. In this way they created resources for themselves. While denying legitimacy to opposition, however, it did not deny legitimacy to pursuit of maintenance of farm and business interests. In that way it was similar to the ratepayer ideology.

**Localism**

The desire for political neutrality extended to elimination of all 'sectional interests', unless those interests could also be portrayed as common to everyone in the Shire. The interests of farmers and business people were portrayed as such, while other interests were rarely presented in the local political arena. The narrow definition of legitimate political interests was enabled by the ideology of localism, which supported the belief in the necessity of political neutrality by fostering perception of a social whole to which all local residents belong, and moreover, by proposing a unique common interest. In that way it became, and was used as, a political resource for business and farm interests. Localism is the third ideology of those identified by Dunleavy (1980) and Halligan and Paris (1984). (This section is partly drawn from Gray (1988c) which discussed application of the concept of localism as a political resource.)

Localism is essentially a simple concept. Strathern (1984a: 44; 1984b: 182) defined localism
as "a set of ideas about the significance of place", which puts it very close to notions of community. Complexity arises when localism is given positive connotations related to a proposed role and its supposed effects, as it is in public policy discussion related to devolution (discussed in Power, 1984 and Self, 1987). The concept has been extended by introducing a characteristic of "community" which local inhabitants bestow upon it: "the positive affect" of "communion" (Willmott, 1985: 16). (This describes a similar conceptual scheme to that used by Wild (1983).) Willmott, however, recognises significance for localism beyond Wild's scheme by noting the distracting effect which communion can have on class consciousness through offering an alternative avenue for group identity formation.

Bell and Newby (1976b) showed how localist ideology, as expressed in the ideal of neighbourhood communion, leads to misunderstanding of the local social system and distraction from its other attributes. Brook and Finn (1978) discussed localism as a spatially divisive attribute of working class images of society. Bryson and Mowbray (1981) and Mowbray (1985) discussed the ways in which the reified community has permeated public policy to the benefit of conservative interests. Dunleavy (1980: 150) suggested that localism may help to explain the decline of local radical politics in Britain. Attacks on localism usually focus on its tendency to obscure local class relations.

Localism should not, however, be depicted as a symptom of conspiracy. In the context of a locality study, Pearson (1980: 172) noted that images of local community legitimated local power relations, but he also noted that such images emanated from a power differential between a locality and elsewhere. Indeed, the growing interest in locality studies (see Chapter Two) has been associated with observation of the increasing significance of inter-local or inter-regional relations amid international economic change, and the recognition that the relationships between class and locality deserve exploration (Hall et al, 1984; Rees, 1985; Urry, 1981). The concern so aroused has turned attention to examination of characteristically local forms of class relations and political expression in the extra-local political arena. But while local class relations may be significant to political communion as it affects relations in the wider arena, so communion which directs political energy in the wider arena may be significant to local political relations,
because such communion may become a local political resource. It is necessary to disentangle both local and extra-local referents for localism in analysing its availability and use as a local political resource.

It is also necessary to establish whose resource localism is. As is the case with communion, localism may offer the promise of liberation from internal and external conflict. Williams (1983: 196) looked to Welsh mining valleys which had long suffered conflict and repression, but propinquity and freedom "from external ideological definitions" had fostered perception of common interest and social identity that brought real hope. The difference between localism as repression and localism as liberation lies in identification or obfuscation of interests. Those whose interests are identical with a common local interest, as presumably were those of the people of Williams' Welsh mining valleys, have localism as a potential resource, but so to do those who are able to use localism to distract local opponents from the latter's objective interests. Such distraction need not be conspiratorial. It may rather be an unintended consequence. Nor may it be appropriate to think of it simply as imposed from above, a point which Strathern (1982: 253) made about Newby's (1977) suggestion that farmers had imposed localism as a class model upon their employees. A model which describes imposition may explain domination but it would not explain how such domination came to be enabled.

Cowra Shire, perhaps unlike Williams' Welsh valleys, contains competing or potentially competing interest groups. The analysis which follows suggests that while calling on a broad local interest, which has its own objective reality, powerful people unwittingly arrested appreciation of local sectional interests. They may recreate their political resource through symbolic action in the manner discussed in Cohen (1985, 1986).

The point of departure for empirical exploration of localism remains, as it has traditionally been in community sociology, the process of identity formation in which local people form an attachment to their locality. One might apply the concepts of community and communion to the farmers action over the LEP commotion in the way that Wild (1983) applied them to the waste dump issue in Heathcote. Local 'communion' was the farmers' political resource, among others, as
they succeeded in raising support from beyond their own ranks (see Chapter Seven). There was, however, no such sustained communion working for and available to Taragala residents over the air pollution issue. That issue provided a threat to local interests which was more readily and objectively definable, yet those threatened could not even sustain support from among their own number (Chapter Six). The analysis to follow uses the model of Hall et al (1984), which proposes that any one or all of three sets of relations, being those based on property, propinquity and kinship, can be a basis for localism. They will be considered separately before introduction of a fourth factor, countrymindedness.

Property

The LEP issue brought forth communion, aroused as defence against threats to property. The point was made neatly in one submission which simply stated: "The plan will affect the sale of property thus affecting the development of Cowra and thus the future of all residents." Property brings more into local government than the common interest of ratepayers. It is also a focus of aspirations and a principle to be defended, as it was for those who feared socialist incursions and made submissions to the LEP process. To those people, the institution of private property was essential to Cowra's continued existence.

Propinquity

Hall et al found that boundaries and social organisation were propinquity's important concomitants. The binding forces of social organisation in terms of local clubs and societies are not so problematic as boundaries, for the latter may not necessarily have physical referents. As Strathern (1984a: 48) proposed, perception of a permeable and normally permeated boundary can co-exist in the same set of ideas as recognition of effective local limits.

Cowra people encountered each other at a frequency which most city dwellers would not have experienced, offering symbolic help in the construction of boundaries of their locality. When people passed each other in the street, they acknowledged one another's existence by at least
saying hello, regardless of whether or not they were formally acquainted. I quickly became accustomed to greeting everyone I met while walking about, except in the more crowded parts of the main street where it would be impossible to do so.

They also shared local knowledge, particularly of its spatial features and its prominent personalities. This is an aspect of Cohen's (1985) symbolic construction of community: that which provides local people with symbols "to think with" (page 19). They used place names which did not appear on maps, just as they used nicknames for prominent people. Bellevue Hill (see Map 2), for example, was known locally as "Billy Goat Hill".

This mutuality can appear more profound when it is instrumental, as demonstrated in instances of neighbourliness. I found that out on the evening I moved into my accommodation in Cowra. As I started to unload the van which had carried my furniture from Canberra, two of my neighbours, whom I had never seen before, came out of their homes to help me. Later, a farmer told me that after he had lost his home and virtually all its contents in a fire, townspeople led by the service clubs, rebuilt his house. Neighbourliness can also be intensely expressive. Early in my fieldwork period four young Cowra men were killed in a road accident. The tragedy had been prominently reported in the Guardian, and was a frequent topic of conversation. So too was the vast expression of sympathy. I heard people say that the church "overflowed", and the town "stood still" during the funeral. Neighbours were not, however, always friendly, as conflict over rate rises indicated (Chapter Nine), but neighbours could still be important parts of each others' lives.

Cowra had many local organisations in which many people participate. The 1985/86 directory compiled by the Shire Council listed 180. Of the 509 Cowra Shire respondents to the community needs survey, reported in Gray (1987a, Appendix A), sixty-four per cent stated that they were members of organisations whose meetings they attended, and thirty-seven per cent were members of more than one.

The collective local sense of "social self" is "informed by implicit or explicit contrast" (Cohen,
Living in a town or rural area offers an identity in its differentiation of its people against those of other towns and rural areas. Inter-town rivalry was noted by Aitkin (1972) and Wild (1983). Aitkin (1972: 96) likened inter-town school sport to "inter-tribal ritual warfare", something which Cohen (1985) might interpret as symbolic construction of community.

Local organisations illustrated the local-non-local dichotomy by being fiercely parochial. While setting up the data collection in the project reported in Gray (1987a, Appendix A), I addressed meetings of Apex Clubs in Cowra and two surrounding towns. One of the latter clubs' members expressed a competitive relationship with the Cowra Club, boasting that their club had poached members from Cowra's territory, promoting identity with the locality as much as with the organisation itself. I was a member of an organisation, the Historical Society, which implicitly saw its task as preservation and maintenance of local identity. I unfortunately missed observing a good illustration of local solidarity in the context of inter-town rivalry, when I left a meeting early in order to attend another. During a crowded lunch hour gathering at the Neighbourhood Centre, called to publicise an adult education program to be conducted there, a representative of a neighbourhood centre from a nearby town said that that town had a very progressive committee coordinating welfare activities. A representative from the Cowra Neighbourhood Centre proudly announced that Cowra had such a committee and that it was conducting a community needs survey (see Gray,1987a; Appendix A). My informant told me that the reply drew a resounding cheer, and my informant convinced me that the incident aroused a bond of sentiment among local people.

The Guardian from time to time contained expressions of concern for the locality. At the time the LEP controversy was brewing, it ran an editorial calling for "all Cowra and district residents becoming supporters and promoters of their area" (2 January, 1985, page 2). On 15 March 1985, it published a letter from a resident who was worried because he feared that Cowra was not attracting light industrial development as rapidly as a nearby town of similar size. Parallel concern prompted Waugoola Council to refuse permission for a motelier to erect a sign in the Shire advertising a business in the same town (Cowra Guardian, 21 March, 1961). In 1948 the Municipal Council refused a request from another shire for electricity, on the grounds that its
"first duty is to cater for the residents in the Cowra Municipality and Waugoola Shire" (Cowra Guardian, 19 November, page 11). The Guardian explained its support for the conservative opposition parties during the 1959 State election campaign in terms of arousing support for local defence. It headed an editorial: "Warning to Cowra and Waugoola Shire Residents", and continued

"This newspaper does not readily buy into political fights. We believe that the average elector has enough common sense to sort out the wheat from the chaff and vote accordingly. However, as a local newspaper, we have to safeguard the interests of Cowra and the surrounding districts." (27 February, page 1)

The editorial went on to explain that if the Labor Government was returned Cowra would lose control of its water and electricity reticulation and would lose its stock slaughtering to a regional abattoir. On 24 June, 1955, the Guardian's page one editorial was headed "Support the Local Man - He Supports You", and went on to alert readers that "outside organisations" were coming to Cowra and deflecting business away from local firms.

Councillors felt that supporting the town and district was an important task for them. They readily considered their performance as leaders by comparisons with other towns. One councillor reported frustration because he felt that the Council could do more for the town.

"Unfortunately clouds come across our passage to the extent that we fail to see where we're going. That has always been disappointing because if you live in a town that you feel has some potential and you see other towns around about doing their own little things and yet you never see your own town doing it."

The Shire Council's role as supporter of its locality extended to favouring local organisations over others. For example, it decided not to give a donation to the Royal Life Saving Society because it was not local, and refused a request to waive the Civic Centre hire charge for a non-local charity. The Council tried to support local business with its contracts for purchase of
goods and services, and on one occasion some councillors expressed disappointment when a local firm did not tender. When a travelling market organisation applied for permission to set up on the outskirts of town, several councillors sought means of preventing it from doing so, foreseeing unfair competition with local businesses. Such actions are products of, and help to foster perception of, a local identity which represents an interest to be pursued.

**Kinship**

Kinship is particularly salient in family farming areas where kinship networks may be locally concentrated (Hall et al, 1984: 207). Size and density of local social networks may be related to both propinquity and kinship as bases for local identification. Dempsey (1983: 436) found that locally powerful families had extensive local kin networks. He was referring to networks as directly manifesting a power resource, rather than doing so as a basis for an ideology of localism, but his finding indicates both possibilities. Such solidarity around a set of values would be likely to promote ideals related to maintenance of the group and its identity. Aitkin (1972: 107) attributed the relative political conservatism of the country to limited social contact and isolation from new and different ways of thinking. Newby et al (1978: 210) drew a parallel implied contrast between country and city in terms of social networks, illustrating a basis for localism in the narrow range of contact among farmers.

Strathern (1984a: 46) found that the villagers of her study agreed upon a model of their village as consisting of 'locals' and 'outsiders', but while the model was consistent among villagers, application of it by villagers to individuals was not. Birch (1959) and Strathern (1981, 1982, 1984a, b) associated kinship with ideas of belonging to a locality, of being an 'insider' which could be contrasted with being an 'outsider'. Being local is a product of family background, however vague the criteria may be. Strathern (1981) found that definitions of localness depended on family origins rather than place of birth. They had precision in the minds of local people from acceptance of the idea that there were 'insiders' and 'outsiders', even if as mentioned above, there was no universal agreement on which individuals fitted which category. Some local people were 'real' locals, separated by the idea of a boundary rather than a real boundary which would
have relevance to everyday life.

Many people in the Cowra district had kinship networks which were concentrated locally, and many had similar friendship networks. Forty-one percent of the 509 Cowra Shire respondents to the community needs survey (Gray, 1987a, Appendix A) stated that either most or all of their "good friends" lived within about fifty kilometres of their homes. Forty-six per cent said that either most or all of their "friends" who lived within about fifty kilometres of their homes knew each other well. This left many people whose networks were neither locally concentrated nor locally dense, but it showed that for many others, their locality was an important base of social contact.

The same survey prompts similar conclusions about kinship networks, although the proportion of respondents having most or all of their relatives within fifty kilometres is smaller than the figure for friends, at eighteen per cent. This is also fewer than the twenty-seven per cent who said that they had no relatives within about fifty kilometres. But again, for many people their locality contained a concentration of kin. Thirty-seven per cent of respondents stated that about half or more of their relatives lived in their locality, when defined as the area within a fifty kilometre radius of the respondents' homes. Many also had a dense network of friends and relatives. Thirty-one per cent of respondents said that most or all of their local friends knew some or all of their relatives. It should not be assumed that kinship is associated with intimacy or even contact, as kin may also be enemies or just irrelevant to everyday life. As Hall et al (1984: 207) proposed with regard to New Zealand, it appears likely that kinship relations played a relatively minor direct role in the structuring of localism.

Cowra people, nevertheless, had a model of local identity which implies an important role for kinship in association with longevity of family residence. This model defined 'locals' in a similar fashion to the definition 'insiders' discussed by Birch (1959) and Strathern (1981, 1982, 1984a, b). A business person who had moved to Cowra from Sydney about eight years previously said to me that he had noticed two differences between life in Cowra and life in Sydney:
"First, people live here slowly. Second, you have to be a 'local local'".

He suggested that being a 'local local' was a prerequisite for acceptance, relating a story about a club committee which was desperate for an additional person to serve on it. In its predicament it allowed someone to serve on it after living in Cowra for ten years, but didn't listen to him. A farmer who took a more cynical approach to this said:

"You know we haven't been here very long. I mean, my father only bought the place thirty three years ago. You have to be here a lot longer to be a local."

The farmer explained that newcomers could be isolated because farming people found it difficult to become accustomed to having strangers in their neighbourhood, and was pained to assure me that nobody wanted or tried to make newcomers feel unwelcome. (I am sure that nobody tried to make me feel unwelcome, and if people did, they failed.) A telling comment came at a social gathering from a woman who had lived in Cowra for thirty years. She was among a group of people that included a member of a family which could trace its ancestry back to early settlers, discussing some fine points of local history, when she said that although she had lived in Cowra for thirty years she did not feel that she was part of the town as some of the older families were. Whereupon the member of one of the 'older families' said with tongue-in-cheek: "You mean you don't feel that you really understand Cowra". She agreed. The town was sometimes portrayed as one big family, such as when one notably successful expatriate was described as 'a Cowra girl'. This is reminiscent of the image called upon by aspirants to Council seats at election time, mentioned above as service to the 'whole' community. This holistic view was used by one of the submissions to the LEP, which said: "The principal aim of a Local Environmental Plan should be first and foremost to promote the growth, development and prosperity of the Shire as a whole".
Perception of the locality in its external relations, fostered in a climate of 'countrymindedness', also contributed to the formation of localism. The dependence of Cohen's (1985) symbolic construction of community on reference to other localities extended to contrast of the rural identity of the district with the cities which local people have seen to threaten them. Identity formation may draw on models which range geographically, demographically and politically beyond the locality. As Young (1986: 12) proposed: "... identification as a member of such a community also often occurs as an oppositional differentiation from other groups, who are feared, or at best devalued."

Country people have long been aware of their subordination to city interests, and indeed have seen growth in their own localities hindered by "Sydney tyranny" (Aitkin, 1972: 13). Kennedy (1981) found that Broken Hill people were bound by anti-metropolitan sentiment which had a substantial bearing on the city's history. Wild (1983) found a similar binding sentiment. Fear of the effect of decision making in the cities for the cities is still expressed in rural political discussion, with good reason. (See, for example, Jones, 1987 and McPhedran, 1987). At an individual level, Dempsey (1983: 119) found, as quoted above, that newcomers were more likely to be accepted as 'insiders' if they had characteristics which they attributed to rural people.

Perception of a relationship between a locality and other places which are in some way different, a relationship in which interests are not mutual, adds perception of interests as motivation for action to property, propinquity and kinship as bases for localism, and interpretation of action generates localism as a political resource.

Strathern (1984a), Bell et al (1976) and Cohen (1982b) offer reminders that local idioms can also be interpreted as characteristic of a wider geographical reality. Understanding Strathern's villagers requires interpretation of their Englishness as well as their village situation. Bell et al (page 42) found among locally powerful individuals an ideology of community in which anti-urbanism was an essential factor. In a similar theme, Cohen saw local perceptions of an external reality to be important. His islanders saw themselves and their locality as peripheral,
drawing on images of incompetent outsiders who are willing to meddle with and even trample on local interests. One might expect such images to emerge in Cowra Shire, given its history of local vulnerability and perceived external interference.

Hall et al (1984: 213) considered a different process: in which sentiment surrounding local institutions develops identity with, rather than against, a larger entity, such as a local war memorial fostering nationalism. The opposite is also feasible. 'Countrymindedness' may help local people make sense of their situation in the locality, by suggesting explanations of local events which are often products of extra-local relationships. Being 'country', or for that matter being Australian, may be just as salient to identity as a local person as residence within the Shire. Self-identification as rural people maintains a political resource as it is reconstructed in local discourse. Perception of such an external threat identifies a local interest which allows no internal division, as it motivates political action. It can do so more readily than threats from neighbouring towns, because its rapaciousness appears invincible.

The LEP brought forth clear images of this distant enemy. One submission read:

"The plan is just not suitable to the Cowra farming community. The farmers would be the best judge of their properties, not a city slicker in a big office that knows nothing of country management."

Another said "The plan is obviously taken off a plan suitable for a big city area..."; and another put its author's position quite clearly: "I've been on the land for sixty years and I consider I know more about what's good for the land than city bureaucrats". Perhaps the most colourful submission suggested that it would be better if the "desk commandos" who had written the plan "devoted their energies to cleaning up the dirty stinking city environment and left us alone". A letter to the Guardian indicated a clear perception of threat: "... You elected the councillors to protect your interests in this area and they need your support to avoid a 'takeover' by some city based department" (15 February, 1985, page 2). This was not a new phenomenon. In 1956, when rumours were spreading that Cowra would lose control of its electricity supply, the Guardian asked "Is the master plan to eventually amalgamate all electricity undertakings into one
huge octopus with headquarters in Sydney?" (4 December, page 14). The need for self defence is sometimes expressed in Council. The *Guardian* of 26 September 1984 reported (page 3) that Council had received a letter from the mayor of a Sydney municipality seeking support for animal liberation, and quoted Stephen Bell: "It's a case of to hell with the people beyond Parramatta; they don't exist". Stephen went on to suggest that some mice be forwarded with a reply. (There was a plague of them at the time.)

The Cowra press has not hesitated to infer that city decision makers look after their own territory at the expense of Cowra. In 1918 the *Free Press* (23 March, page 2) headed an item "Country vs City - Politicians Always Put the Latter First - The Curse of Vested Interests", and went on to complain that rural railway construction had not been completed, but, curiously, also said that work on a city railway had ceased. During the local housing shortage in 1952, the *Guardian* reported that the Housing Commission had stopped building houses in Cowra because, it claimed, it had run out of money, but it was still building houses in Sydney (25 March, page 1). When the *Guardian* took sides in the 1959 election campaign under the banner of local defence, as quoted above, Col Newton wrote to it complaining about politicisation. Its editorial of 25 March (page 1) claimed that it owed no political allegiance and supported only Cowra. It continued:

"Many people say we are parochial. Of course we are parochial and we make no apology for it. Too long have country towns suffered from the domination of Sydney; and any country newspaper that does not fight for its town and district is not worth its salt."

Such statements made the threat visible. Seeing one issue that way opened the door to similar interpretations of others. Cowra people had seen their locality succumb to the encroachment of city-based organisations. They had perceived their local autonomy wither under forces directed by people who not only come from distant places, but pursue the interests of those distant places (see Chapter Four). When Cowra people felt that they had much to share, when it was possible to identify families as living local heritage, and when there was a common enemy that threatened,
Cowra was all that mattered.

These processes reconstructed the symbolic boundaries of the locality. The local sense of the virtuous was dependent on contrast with plundering bureaucrats and politicians from the city. As Cohen (1985: 69) points out, people become aware of their culture when they see it threatened, and to defend it, they state it symbolically by reversing their normal behaviour. The farmers thought the LEP to be attacking the foundations of local tradition: property, and in the family farming tradition: kinship. As Cohen (1985) would suggest, they stood at their boundary and reversed normal local political behaviour. Instead of supporting their local representatives on the Shire Council, they turned against them, temporarily destroying the image of trusteeship in which councillors were usually held. But in doing so they defended their culture, bringing forth its meaning by showing their willingness to destroy their own image of local harmony. The resulting local political crisis was not a denial of the image of a community devoid of conflicting interests, an image which normally accrues to powerful people as a political resource, because it identified a threat which had infiltrated the locality, disturbing its usual harmony. This identification at the same time strengthened perception of that usual harmony. Vidich and Bensman (1968) provide a contrast. The people of "Springdale" were portrayed as supplicants to "mass society", basking in their own self-righteousness, showing few signs of understanding their structural position (page 287). Cowra people were well aware of their interests in relation to metropolitan Australia, and have fiercely resisted its dominance, reproducing localism.

Localism has been shown to contain a division between 'local locals' and others, but that division was not perceived to be grounds for a clash of interests. Rather, it served to show that there were people who really belonged, and that concomitantly, the district was more than a geographical expression; it was an identity that people could belong to. The old families may have been looked upon as different, but they bestowed continuity on the locality, and to that extent personified local identity. Such an identity must be unique; it left no room for division. Any individual who tried to demonstrate a group interest within the whole was liable to attract accusation of divisiveness, of failing to recognise that the district had an identity of its own, and moreover, that identity counted for more than what were popularly described as 'sectional
interests'. This was implicit in calls for support for 'the community' from the Tourist and Development Corporation when it sought help from the Shire Council. It was also implicit in one of the submissions to the LEP which read: "I feel that any councillors that accept this plan are selling out their community and their forefathers who built this area into what it is today". Hall et al (1984) admit the possibility that propinquity, kinship and property may be contradictory, but in this locality, it would appear that they are mutually reinforcing.

Localism can be used as a resource, as it was when Harold Upston called in Council for further tourism development for the sake of the local community (Chapter Seven). Localism could also be used to deny other people legitimacy. A councillor complained to me that the people who had recently been protesting about smells emanating from the garbage tip had only lived in Cowra for a few years. Localism was effective as a resource, not only because it held the promise of arousing communion, as occurred in the LEP issue, but moreover, because it rationalised political neutrality. Localism obfuscated the local political interests of those who were already weak. Herein lies Lukes' third dimension of power, because while people believed that political neutrality served their interests they were unlikely to take political action which might have benefited them. They were more inclined to leave the political stage vacant for those who were already powerful.

The side of local politics which could enlist localism had a great advantage. In the hands of the farmers the LEP itself came to symbolise the evils of metropolitan dominance. The farmers took advantage of such symbolism by using it to stir localist sentiment into communion, set up by the mutual reinforcement of values related to property, propinquity and kinship, and taken to its heights by perception of an external threat. Localism was such a useful resource that nobody could afford to approach Cowra's local politics without it. This was associated with the tendency for election candidates, such as the first Aboriginal candidate (see Chapter Eight) to be seen to pursue a general rather than only a specific group interest. In this climate there may be a temptation leading to self-contradiction for anyone seeking to pursue a group interest. When, in 1932, formation of the Taragala Progress Association was announced in the _Guardian_, the article stated that the Association had decided to call itself the Cowra Progress Association. In
1949, after completing construction of a sports ground, the West Cowra Progress Association was reported to be in a vigorous debate (in the Guardian of 4 November, page 15) over the name for the ground. Some members felt that West Cowra should not be mentioned, as "the Association had resolved to work for the progress and development of Cowra and District". This view was repeated in 1975 when the committee formed to combat the air pollution problem confronting Taragala called itself the Cowra Anti-Pollution Committee. Taragala people twice implicitly denied their interest as Taragala people. They wanted to be seen to serve the 'whole' town, rather than just their particular area. While pursuing their interests they feared accusations of doing just that. Of course such accusations could readily be sensibly made, moving the invaluable resource of localism beyond their reach and turning it against them.

They were effectively, like female ratepayers (see Chapter Eight), in a double bind, for their interests lay in supporting both their area and being seen to support the town as a whole, when obtaining facilities for their area would deny them to others. Their titling of their organisations 'Cowra' would no doubt have been motivated by a desire to serve the interests of the 'whole' town, but the definition of acceptable ways of doing so was out of their hands, and in the LEP case at least, firmly in the hands of farmers and business.

The Cowra Labor Party actively supported and reinforced this 'countryminded' definition of legitimate political action. A short time before the 1983 local government elections, a letter from a farmer attacking the Labor Party for supporting the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA) was published in the Guardian. Tim West replied, describing himself as the local ALP Secretary and State Conference Delegate, stating that the Party was not involved with the RSPCA and did not support it. The letter continued: "The Labor Party has within its ranks many members who, directly or indirectly, have close association with rural enterprise", and concluded that the Party would not do anything to disrupt rural enterprise (Cowra Guardian, 26 August, 1983, page 2). Tim was the first to write to the Guardian protesting about the LEP, as acknowledged by a leader of the 'concerned citizens' in a letter to the Guardian published on 18 January, 1985 (page 2). Tim opposed the plan's proposals for environmental protection, which would have seemed to be another threat to farming. Tim entered the fray implicitly
defending the farmers (although when the issue became Council's planning power, he opposed them), and the Party made no efforts to pursue the interests of anyone else. Tim used the resource of localism in the symbolic manner discussed by Edelman (1971). He used the LEP to make reassurances that he, and implicitly given his high public profile, the Labor Party, was looking after 'local' interests. This action, as Edelman (1971: 10) would suggest, may have helped to keep alive the adversary interpretation of Cowra's relationship with 'the city'; it helped to confirm the external threat.

**Status**

Like localism, status was available as a resource, but unlike localism it was logically specific to some individuals leaving no possibility of it being called upon by others. Status, what those blessed individuals possessed, was the perception of others that they had it. Popular perceptions of status among individuals either created or denied a potential, although minor, power resource. The problem posed by status is one of identification of those perceptions.

Status is often approached in terms of the stratifying effects of such perceptions, and the attributes of the resulting hierarchy, following Weber (in *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft*, as reprinted by Gerth and Mills, 1977: 186-88). So Wild (1974a: 2) used the concept to refer to lifestyles and "forms of conduct in so far as these provide bases for interaction." Oxley (1978: 30) used two dimensions of status, being esteem (in terms of achieved characteristics) as well as prestige (in terms of ascribed characteristics). The concept of status as a resource, however, requires further extension of the concept. The concept of status can help to reveal much more, when as Barbalet (1986) and Omodei (1982) seek, Weber is reinterpreted so that status includes access to or exclusion from rights, and duties. The popular perceptions, therefore, through which some people gained power resources while others did not, are those which bestowed rights and duties, as well as prestige and esteem, while placing people high on the status ladder.

Those at the top of the ladder were seen to have a claim on rights and responsibilities of
leadership (see Chapter Five). Ab Oliver and Barbara Bennett both enjoyed enormous prestige, being associated with families which had long and successful local histories, and esteem from their records of service. They were both assuredly 'local locals'. Their status was, however, more than that. It gave them a right to a special claim on public office at the same time as it laid down their responsibilities to the locality, which some of their ancestors had also served in local government. When Barbara was elected Mayor for her first term as such, Ab was quoted by the Guardian (14 September, 1976, page 1) to have said: "Mrs Bennett's background as one of Cowra's pioneer families should stand her in good stead". For them, status was a resource, and they neither had to create nor consciously use it, although it might be claimed that simply stating their backgrounds at election time was using it. Status may also have been called upon during Council debate, as the supporters of the Tourist and Development Corporation implicitly did when Ab Oliver made an opening speech in the Japanese Garden issue (Chapter Seven).

For those, the vast majority, who were not at the top of the ladder, status had only indirect relevance and should not be overstated as a contributory factor in elitism of representation (see Chapter Five). As Chapman and Wood (1984) indicate, however, personal characteristics of prospective councillors can be more important than policies at election time in Australian local government. Status positions may suggest personal characteristics of election candidates. In a climate of ostensible political neutrality, electors are asked to vote for particular people as "trustees" (Jones, 1981: 212). It is important, therefore, for election candidates that they be known to the voters (Painter, 1974), and that they be worthy of the rights of office and capable of the duties. Hence election manifestos emphasised experience in community service and often mentioned longevity of residence. 'Local locals' were more likely than others to be able to make such claims. In this way status reinforced as it reconstructed the political neutrality ideal at each election.

Australian community studies have constructed status ladders for country districts which would implicitly put Cowra's 'local locals' at the top. The people with the easiest claim on 'local localness' would be those farming families whose ancestry went back to early settlers, simply because, despite the long history of closer settlement, they may still have retained large farms,
and they would have handsomely met the longevity criterion. This may be related conversely to the point made by Rose et al (1976: 704) that ownership of property can gain legitimacy, in addition to that gained from legal criteria, through traditional association with particular families. In Cowra, particular families gained legitimacy through long association with particular properties. Business people may also have longevity, and some, including Neville Pengilly, did so, but town business did not bestow the same legitimacy as rural property. In the rural ideological climate, successful farming is a greater source of esteem than successful business. In any case, three of the four largest town business proprietors were first generation Cowra people, and the family of the fourth qualified as 'local local' through very long and continuing association with farming.

High positions on the status ladder were not monopolised by landed 'local locals', but such people were certainly at or close to the top. The prestige ranking of occupations by Nalson and Craig (1987: 337), which places "grazing" above "professions" above "business entrepreneurs" followed by "mixed" and "other farming" which are above "small business" and "skilled", is not easily applied strictly to Cowra because some of the highest status 'local locals' derived income from farming in the best country by the Lachlan River. The other rankings still largely held true, although application to specific occupations could bring forth problems, as such classifications often do. Dempsey (1983: 119) found teachers to have lower status than farmers and businessmen. Oxley's (1978: 84) classification of townspeople may be a more useful approach. Oxley identified an upper stratum consisting of professionals, managers, higher spiralists and larger burgesses; a middle stratum of smaller burgesses, junior industry staff and lower spiralists; and a lower stratum of skilled, semi-skilled and other workers.

Such problems do not, however, prohibit analysis of recent local government elections in order to consider an hypothesised bias in favour of candidates with higher status occupations. Comparing the recent electoral performance of skilled and other workers with other occupations shows that they did not perform especially poorly. At the 1987 election similar proportions of the two groups, three of five low status candidates, and eight of thirteen higher status (Oxley's middle and upper), were successful. In 1983, one of three low status compared with eleven of
seventeen higher status candidates were elected. In the 1977 Municipal Council election, three of six low status and six of ten higher status candidates were elected. (The 1980 election was an aberration with a large number of farmers nominating following amalgamation.) The apparent elitism identified in Chapter Five was a product of the relatively small number of lower status candidates, fourteen against forty higher status at the three elections, rather than failure at the polls.

Status based on occupation (prestige) is not a good indicator of local electoral potential, because people with low occupational prestige may have gained esteem and become known to voters. Col Newton's consistently good electoral performance over a long period was a product of the esteem in which he was held, rather then prestige associated with his occupation. Much of his esteem had been earned through local service, most notably although by no means entirely, in local government. The value placed on local service was exemplified by a quotation from Shire President Cyril Treasure in the context of an appeal for nominations at the 1987 election, published in the Guardian of 7 August (page 1): "The service clubs in this town have a large number of strong leaders who would be the ideal type of people to stand for Council". As would be expected, the service clubs had their own status ladder based on occupational prestige, with Rotary at the top, but that certainly does not mean that only Rotarians could earn sufficient esteem to add to what prestige they may have derived from their occupations to bring them to the attention of the electorate. Nor does it mean that participation in a service club was a necessary qualification. But participation may, as Cyril Treasure implied, have helped.

Prestige had greater impact on local politics in the shared perception of 'local localness'. 'Local locals' may have been more likely to nominate for Council, but the abstract nature of the concept rules out the testing of such a proposition. While Ab Oliver and Barbara Bennett were certainly 'local locals', there were in 1986 several other sitting councillors who might also have been. No hard and fast criteria are available, except perhaps family residence in the district for at least two, or perhaps three, generations.

When combined with property, longevity of residence became the key to the rights and duties of
high status. Such rights and duties were not, therefore, available to professionals who might have similar occupational prestige to the highest status 'local local' farm families. Although some professionals whose families had been resident for several generations could claim similar status. I met people who believed that there was a top stratum and others who felt, and expressed annoyance, that they were mistakenly included in the top rank by some who felt themselves lower. Property had an important place in such thinking, a point which was made by Hill (1985: 76-77). A farming woman told me that when people heard that she and her husband did not own their property, they were excluded from one "set"; and when it became known that she was employed off-farm, they were excluded from another. To her disgust, a friend went to the rugby union club in order to mix with the "right" people. A town-dweller put the role of property for farmers quite plainly: "They have pride in their bit of dirt. That's their status". When I asked a farmer if he thought that town people felt farmers to be aloof, he replied

"I think that existed. . . There were grazing families who sent their children away to boarding school and there certainly was a class distinction there. I've often heard us referred to as blue bloods. I've thought of that as an insult. We don't go back to squattocracy. There's been nothing easy for my father or grandfather. I've taken it good naturedly but it's an insult to be called a blue blood because I think that's the way people have meant it."

My interviewee had not denied the existence of "blue bloods", only that he was not one of them. I asked: who would call you a blue blood?

"Just ordinary people. I heard a local greengrocer say "don't you blue bloods ever go to the picnics [races]?" I said why do you call us blue bloods? How long has your family been here? He said since 1934. I said you're as much a blue blood as me. My grandfather has only been here since 1920. You have got a business in town. Why aren't you a blue blood? A lot of people on the land do think there is something special about them because they have a property."

Perceptions of what my interviewee above referred to as 'blue bloodedness' have more instrumental connotations. When I asked another farmer to identify the influential people in the
district, he replied

"There are certain families who have been here for 100 years, own four or five farms, and there is a tendency in the community to look up to these people. Their opinions are respected, right down to the fact that if one of these families were to say to you that you have a fire hazard, they'd expect you to do something about it. If I was to say to you that you've got a fire hazard you'd say mind your own bloody business."

The wife of a town businessman offered another perspective. She related that after they had moved to Cowra and taken on management of a business:

"Some of the old families of the district came into [the business] and thought they could tell my husband how to run it. They had been customers for generations and thought that gave them authority."

One would expect that such behaviour could not attract the kind of esteem enjoyed by Ab Oliver and Barbara Bennett, but perceptions that there were people who may have commanded deference and in some circumstances received it, indicates acknowledgement of rights peculiar to this high prestige group, even if exercise of those rights was not always considered legitimate. Only farm families could possess such rights, and those who did had a resource which at the very least helped to make them known, and at most legitimated leadership.

It's legitimacy, however, was vulnerable, not only because people saw its use as arrogance, but because it had dynastic connotations. A town business person who expressed frustration at what was seen as Council's inactivity in economic development, attributed the alleged problem to unnamed conservative councillors whose families had been represented on Council for generations. Certainly some councillors could find aldermen and councillors in their family trees, but the point was made more generally, like the "old established families" mentioned above. It was as if a cloud of families was seen to be hanging over Cowra's economic and political life.

Perhaps the greatest effects of status perceptions on local politics in Cowra during 1986 came
from the issues surrounding the Tourist and Development Corporation. The people who saw Don Kibbler as a 'tall poppy' under attack were implicitly seeing the attackers as defenders of the status structure. Some of them also saw the traditional supposedly dynastic system as undesirable. These interpretations came from business people and farmers, who were seeing Don under attack in the name of small ratepayers who could not afford to have their rate contributions gambled. That is, they saw people lower in the status structure implicitly defending that structure and reinforcing what they saw as a dynastic system.

Resources and Non-Resources

The ideologies discussed above were resources available to some groups rather than others while they were maintained by all. The ideals of efficiency, bureaucratic subservience, political neutrality and localism were available to reinforce demands on the political apparatus, as they were used in the instances of "assertive rhetoric" quoted above. Status ideology was, however, a minor factor when operating in those rare circumstances of traditional deference to highly honoured families, but played a greater role by focusing attention on personal characteristics of election candidates, thereby removing potential threats to political neutrality. Without sustenance from below, however, those resources would not have survived. They were resources only because they were adhered to by subordinate groups. But while ideological resources were dependent on subordinate groups, they may, as discussed above, have obscured the interests of subordinate groups, and as will be discussed below, not have been available for use by subordinate groups to further their own interests.

This concluding section illustrates inter-dependence of ideologies by showing how one group, the railway workers, were denied resources, while under the same ideological climate that both groups reproduced, their local political superiors failed to recognise their own interests. Being able to call logically upon one ideology did not guarantee possession and potential use of a viable resource, because another ideology may have negated the first. At the same time possession and use of resources did not necessarily lead to benefit for those so endowed, because there was no
necessity in the local ideological climate that the powerful would recognise their own interests.

Chapter Seven discussed the decline of local railway employment and the lack of local action to slow it, until the interests of farmers and ratepayers were threatened. It seemed that perceptions of the local interest had not been aroused as railway employment fell in recent years, at least not in the way a local interest was perceived in the LEP issue. There are three avenues for explanation of this paradox. One lies in the relationship between the railway people and the rest of the town; another lies in perceptions by others of the railway; and the third lies in the railway workers' perceptions of their predicament.

The railway people were not set apart, but they had their own social surrounds, having some of the characteristics of Lockwood's (1975) 'proletarian traditional' workers. They were a substantial part of the population, there being about two hundred railway employees and hence perhaps six hundred members of railway families out of a town population of about five thousand in the early nineteen fifties. They had their own recreation, based on the Railway Institute Library and Hall, and sport teams. A retired railway worker told me that there were three tennis courts behind the locomotive depot that the employees had put in themselves, built up with truckloads of locomotive ash. There was also a cricket ground. The railway had cricket and rugby teams. When I asked if the railway people joined the railway rather than other local teams, my interviewee said:

"Yes. It brought the railway people together. It gave us something to do amongst ourselves, instead of everybody going away to do different things. There were very, very few railway men with the other teams."

I asked a retired employee if he kept in touch with his old mates. "Oh yes", he replied, "I see a lot of them. We have a yarn. There's dozens of them here. A lot of our friends are railway people."

Some of the older railway people spoke of it as having been a high status occupation.
"At one time a railway man was always looked up to. The young fellows were always trying to get a position on the railway. Because they always maintained they were somebody. The train driver was every boy's idol."

Some railway families qualified as 'local locals'. Watmore and Roberson (n.d.) identified four families which had provided railway staff at Cowra across several generations. Although railway employees moved about to obtain promotion, they tended to settle after marriage, and two that I spoke to came back and remained in Cowra where they had started. When I asked a current employee if there was a rapid turnover, he replied that one who had been in Cowra for twelve years was considered a newcomer. This would seem to be fertile ground for formation of a Cowra railway people's identity, and adoption of the power model image of society discussed by Lockwood (1975).

I detected two images of their social situation in the predicament of decline. One was disbelief.

"When you look at it over the years - the way its deteriorated - when you look at the job in 1925 and look at the staff now, you'd hardly reckon it could happen. It was a booming industry. Thousands of pounds used to come into the town."

The railway had been a deep personal loss. Perhaps the most moving experience I had in Cowra was receipt of a note in which a retired railway employee conveyed some reminiscences. The note concluded:

"I have seen Cowra at its top and seen it at bed rock. I can not believe this could happen."

Some employed railway workers adopted the dichotomous power model suggested by Lockwood (1975), but they placed it in the localism image. That is, they saw the railway decline as a product of urban-rural relations. A member of a long-time railway family told me how the "big wigs in Sydney" made decisions in ignorance of conditions in the country. Perhaps the most galling habit among them was their practice of travelling by road. This practice that
Vaughan (1984) found so disturbing, looked like treachery to Cowra railway people. Many times I heard them speak of the improvements being made to the metropolitan rail network at the apparent expense of the country system.

It is not just that Cowra's railway workers were employed by an extra-local authority and responded to that relationship, for they identified with Cowra just as the highest status farmers did, and they saw railway decline as local decline. A prominent member of the local branch of the Labor Party, which might be expected to support the railway as it did under Leo Lynch, indicated to me that he saw the matter in urban-rural terms also. Unlike Leo Lynch he felt that local political effort would therefore be futile. Decline in rural rail services was indeed another example of decisions made in Sydney to the detriment of the country, but it does not follow that such decision making is immutable. Rural people are justifiably concerned about rationalisation of rural government services (see McKenzie, 1986). It is not that the railway people were unaware of the lack of local action. One employee explained decline as a product of local business ignorance of and disinterest in the railway, which he could not understand. Country towns frequently unite in protest, as Cowra did over loss of its telephone exchange and other threats (see Chapter Four), but not the railway.

The explanation for the failure of localism to produce a viable political resource lies in the relationships between the elements of rural ideology and localism. Had railway people taken their problems to the local political arena, as they did in the time of Leo Lynch, armed with their localist perspective, they would also have been burdened with what might be called an anti-resource. They would have been vulnerable to the ideology which bestowed resources on farmers and business people. The railway was seen among the latter as a bureaucracy, perhaps a bureaucracy of the worst kind. Railway workers did not have the legitimacy bestowed by independence and self-reliance. The following comment from a member of the Chamber of Commerce reveals the railway people's predicament.

"If we had really appreciated their role, what the benefits were, maybe we would have been stirred up and defended it. I never sensed that people had
a big hang up over rail. From a businessman's point of view it was probably just the opposite. The image of the railway was to go down there and see a few fellas sitting around and not doing too much. A lot of people thought they could do with less staff, and the fact that they were going to put the sweepers through may have been appreciated, rather than look at the effects it might have had in the town. That's the businessman's point of view but I think there would be support for that community wise too."

A farmer told me that he had been most impressed by the energy that some of the railway employees put into their centenary celebrations, people that he thought were usually lazy at their jobs. I knew the people he mentioned, and knew them to be conscientious at their work, but the image of bureaucracy, and the same lack of legitimacy suffered by Council officers, had taken over.

The railway people were devoid of local political resources, other than the energies of people like Leo Lynch and those since who had fought their struggle for survival in the wider industrial context. This gave them no place in local politics, and nowhere to raise the support which their call on localist sentiment might hypothetically obtain for them, were the counter ideological factors not operating. The resource of localism, which did so much for the farmers in the LEP issue, was not available to the railway workers in local politics, just as it was not available to the Taragala people and those who sought Council's entry into human services. While seemingly everybody adhered to the localist ideals, not all local interest groups identified their interests with the locality in a way which was universally accepted, as the farmers did in the LEP issue. Ability to claim defence of a local interest was not enough to ensure legitimacy. Legitimacy of one set of local ideals could be tempered by others, just as political neutrality was redefined by farmers and business people as they injected adversary elements into local politics.

Ideological resources were not the only resources drawn upon in local politics, but they were the least evenly distributed. The material resources required for political expression were not great. The farmers could finance a public meeting to set off the LEP issue, but so too did the Taragala people before Lachlan Industries was established, and the Neighbourhood Centre in its early establishment period. The Mulyan, Taragala and West Cowra Progress Associations had
substantial material resources. All of these groups had access to the local media. Even the railway decline could make front page news, but that did not make an issue. They could all find access to senior councillors. Ab Oliver chaired the public meeting that launched the Neighbourhood Centre and was involved with the committee that set up the child care centre. Money and contacts may be useful, but they do not guarantee political mobilisation.

Notes

1  Parts of this section were drawn from Gray (forthcoming).

2  1987 was not an aberration. In 1954, the Liberal Party obtained 2,314 votes to Labor's 2,002 in Cowra (Cowra Guardian, 1 June) at a House of Representatives election. The previous year Labor gained a majority of Cowra votes at a Senate election (Cowra Guardian, 12 May, 1953). The 1958 Federal election result was similar to that of 1954 (Cowra Guardian, 5 December, 1958). The Country Party won the 1971 election in the Cowra subdivision by only 2180 votes to 2,099 (Cowra Guardian, 16 February). In the 1972 Federal election, won by the Labor Party, that Party polled a majority of votes in Cowra, but in the 1973 State election it could manage only 1,865 to the Country Party's 3,044 (Cowra Guardian, 5 December and 20 November respectively). Tim West, as the Labor candidate, polled more votes than his overall successful Country Party opponent in 1981 (Cowra Guardian, 30 September).

3  Many Cowra Shire farmers remote from a town or village could claim allegiance to a named area, probably using the name of an early squatter's run.

4  Contrary to what one might anticipate after the finding of Newby et al (1978: 210) that farmers' social networks are heavily concentrated in their localities, the rural residents of the Shire showed a lower frequency of locally concentrated networks than town and village residents. Twenty-three, forty-four and forty-one per cent of rural, town and village residents respectively reported that most or all of their good friends lived within fifty kilometres of their homes. This does not, of course, contradict the Newby et al finding that farmers tend not to have many city dwelling or working class friends.

5  Controlling for place of residence does not suggest that rural people have greater local concentration of kin networks. Twelve, nineteen and twenty per cent
of rural, village and town dwelling respondents respectively reported that most or all of their relatives lived within about fifty kilometres of their homes.

6 Cohen (1986) considered the problem of identification of symbols being a matter of interpretation, and while offering no solution, he emphasised the common meaning of actions, like the LEP protest, which ethnographers impute to their informants, and alluded to the persistence of local interpretations of those actions as evidence to support the ethnographic interpretation of symbolic action. Thus persistence of the city versus country theme through the LEP issue and subsequent local discussion of it offers support to interpretation as symbolism.
Local government in Cowra was a specialised political arena, in that it acknowledged and gave expression to a particular set of ideals. These ideals were called upon successfully by the business and farming sectors of the population when they pursued their interests. The ideals were not, however, so easily called upon by others, and moreover, they could cloud the interests of others. The business and farm sectors were made powerful by these ideals.

The process of exclusion was not necessarily a product of conscious action on the part of farm and business people, nor was it always, nor indeed often, recognised as such by others. Rather, the political actors identified in the study all endeavoured to act in ways which they and their electorate believed would serve the common interest of everybody in the district. The product of this high ambition became symbolic conflict; the common ideals consisted largely of efficiency and the maintenance of local tradition, expressed symbolically by assault on bureaucracy, during which the parameters were defined from the perspective of business and farm interests.

These processes occurred in a rural district whose people were conscious of a dependent and subordinate relationship with metropolitan Australia (Chapter Four). They looked upon their subservience as a contributing factor in impending economic decline. The process of centralisation had removed large amounts of local autonomy, and government policies which had fostered growth and prosperity had been reversed. Cowra people, however, looked to and may be increasingly dependent on government support.

Local government was the most important potential medium for obtaining that support (Chapter
This was one of the factors, which made it the arena of local politics. It was important to local people, not just for its role in service provision, but for its potential role as a mediator with other levels of government. Cowra Shire Council showed signs of elitism in its membership, and the reputation survey fueled that interpretation, but at the same time it had not been exclusivist as some earlier studies would suggest that it might have been. Elitist leadership by business and farm people rests easily with the traditional image of local government as a managerial institution, as a 'people's corporation'. Individualistic analysis, however, misses the source of elitism, by failing to consider the relationships between interests identifiable in Cowra, and interests which received viable political expression. Local government in Cowra would appear to have been an arena in which a range of interests might pluralistically have been expressed and issues raised for debate.

Chapter Six revealed that difficulty was encountered by those who tried to raise issues over allocation of Council resources, or 'squeak the wheel'. During the 1950s and 1960 such issues were raised, but Council administration practices had been refined. In 1986, people still perceived provision of services differentially across social areas, with those in the poorer areas perceiving the lower standards. The bureaucratic apparatus, promising efficient and fair administration, was ready to smother issues which might have been raised by people in these areas, as was seen in the West Cowra matters and Taragala's air pollution. Councillors applied their ideologies to determine what was legitimate for their discussion, and those ideologies placed great importance on efficiency of management. While this was easily accommodated by the 'people's corporation' image, it also inhibited pluralism. Moreover, while councillors strove for efficiency they set the agenda in such a way that the interests of resident groups were obscured, and conflict arose between councillors and officers.

What can restrain potential issues can elevate others into political crises (Chapter Seven). When the power of bureaucracy was seen as a threat by farmers and business people, it became an issue. Issues were raised when conflicts between the interests of the bureaucracy and a general local interest were perceived, as they were most enthusiastically by farmers in the LEP issue. Non-farm, non-business people were very quiet, unless their interests could be expressed as part
of a general ratepayer interest, as they were in the Tourist and Development Corporation matters. In the 'people's corporation' image, ratepayer interests were the only legitimate ones, and farming and business interests could easily be equated with a ratepayer interest that was congruent to the interest of the entire locality. Councillors readily made this connection for farm and business people, but did not do so for railway people.

Local interests could be placed in opposition to a deviant and malevolent local bureaucracy. This was most obvious in the LEP issue but was also evident in development regulation matters. In the LEP issue, farmers were so strong as to be able to destroy the 'people's corporation' image, casting aside the public participation process that had been designed to limit bureaucratic control, and creating their own. The farmers' 'coup' had popular, though not universally active support, and was seen as defence of a general local interest. But its greatest impact was deepened division of the Council into two camps: those who supported and those who attacked the officers. This division was also apparent when building regulation problems arose. This time the business interest was put forward, and respected, as a general local interest. The power of business and farm people to create issues is best illustrated by the contrast they presented with railway employees, who were able reasonably to claim a general local interest, and had their concerns voiced in the *Guardian*, but did not see their issue raised. At least, that is, until it was seen as a threat to farmers.

Desire for efficiency was also observed in Chapter Eight, expressed as ratepayer defence with a dash of localism. It kept human services off the agenda. A human services role would have enabled the Council to better serve the interests of women and Aborigines in particular, but human services had touched rather than penetrated the local political agenda. Those in whose interests human services lay, however, were caught in a double bind. This further protected property interests by appeal to the ratepayer interest which would inevitably be threatened by the increase in local expenditure that human services entail. Human services as a non-issue resembled other matters, such as West Cowra's water, Taragala's air pollution and the decline of the railway, where issues were voiced but not effectively placed on the local political agenda. The Aboriginal non-issue was even further off the agenda due to its history of dissociation with
local affairs.

Ideals which stimulated issues were specialised. Ratepayer defence created issues, specifically the controversy about water rates, and the Tourist and Development Corporation matters with a little help from symbolism as status action. Along with the undercurrent of town and country conflict, ratepayer defence could create issues, which when fueled with localism, could precipitate conflict of pluralistic appearance. Chapter Nine argued, however, that all issues, as against non-issues, became conflict between councillors and officers. Such conflict was the content of local politics, so that while local politics was not enacted by some small cohesive group in the elitist mould, the polity was subservient to a narrow range of interests. There was no incentive to form such a cohesive elite. The political actors saw themselves as defenders of a general interest.

Explanation of this constraint on the polity is enabled by the concept of resources. Possession and deployment of resources were the means by which representatives of the narrow range of interests maintained constraint. Resources discussed were predominantly ideological, but others of less significance were also identifiable.

Successful deployment of resources required access to the political arena. The most direct path to it ran through councillors and senior officers. Although there was no 'Bradstow' style agenda-setting clique, both councillors and officers may have been remote because they tended to be white males who were either professionals or self-employed. They did not, however, all fit these categories, and indeed people from all status levels had their needs expressed in Council. The most successful instance of issue-raising took place at the first public meeting about the LEP, not in Council. Lack of representation cannot account for constraints on issues; representation on Council was not a crucial resource. Under the ideal of political neutrality, moreover, representation did not occur; it was defined out of local politics.

The crucial resources were those which legitimated expressed interests as local rather than sectional. Those who could present their wishes as an expression of a general local interest had a
prospect of being heard and raising an issue. Their prospects, however, ranged from very weak in the case of railway workers, through marginal in the case of ratepayers, to significant for business people, and very strong for farmers. The possibility of issue creation was determined by the climate of rural ideology which delineated potential resources. While it denied them to some it reinforced them for others. Rural ideology ratified only those particular expressions of the universal ideals of local government (ratepayer defence, political neutrality and localism) which were compatible with it.

As representation was of secondary importance the political significance of the democratic process was small. Council elections were a ritual which reinforced the ideal of political neutrality, a ritual which denied the reality of democracy it is usually held to represent. Election campaigns were little more than outpourings of a-political localist sentiment, which in the scarcity of policies and platforms, gave electors little other than efficiency to have a say about, except at the occasional opportunity to express respect for people of high prestige or esteem.

Some people felt a need to step beyond the democratic apparatus and pursued their interests outside it. Of those, some achieved their aims. Others were discouraged or unable to proceed. Others can be seen to have had an objective interest in acting but did not do so, while wishing to preserve a politically neutral or administratively efficient 'people's corporation'. The first group was enabled by resources; the second encountered opponents' deployment of resources; and the third did not enter the race.

This suggests consideration of Lukes' (1974) three dimensions of power. In Lukes' terms, power was consistently exerted in the second dimension. That is, some people benefited while others' interests were kept off the agenda. Power relations stepped beyond the second dimension into the third, when as mentioned above, people failed to recognise their objective interests while adhering to ideologies which supported the interests of those who were able to extract benefit from the political arena. Some politics, especially those surrounding conflict between councillors and officers, were legitimate, and their legitimacy was a product of popular acceptance of the need for defence against marauding bureaucrats. The third dimensional element entered via the
issues that were raised in those politics: the legitimate issues tended to be those pursued by and for farmers and business people. In this way the values and beliefs that were widely shared become political resources of the powerful. Discouragement of 'sectional' action by the political neutrality ideal, and the double bind for those in whose interests human services lay, illustrated the sharing of values and consequent effects on political activity. As the railway decline non-issue showed, the power relationship could be seen to extend beyond that which was enabled by the sharing of values. The powerful had such a monopoly of legitimacy that they were able to deny the same shared beliefs as ideological resources for others, when those others were not seen to embody the ideals of rural ideology.

The action which created and reinforced the power relationship need not have been associated with conscious intention to do so because these ideologies were widely shared. Just as the powerless believed that their interests were being defended, so the powerful believed that they were defending mutual interests. It is difficult to take an individualistic approach which would interpret such sharing as imposition of values by the powerful onto the powerless and perhaps risk allocating blame to individuals. Rural ideology is a product of a long history of rural settlement, in particular the property relations following nineteenth century land reform, and the on-going relationship between city and country. Localism in particular has a real referent; country districts do have an interest to pursue.

If the causes of Cowra's power structure cannot so usefully be traced to individuals in Cowra Shire, how then can it be explained? The concept of resources provides the key to explanation, but not all of it. Possession of resources is a necessary precursor to the exercise of power, but it is not enough merely to have them. Resources must also be deployed. Farming and business groups chose to deploy theirs. They did not, however, set up the conditions in which such deployment became possible. The most important of such conditions were the property relations of rural society, and the nature of local government as servant of property interests. These historical circumstances, within which rural ideology had diffused, established both the interest alignments and the resources used to place and maintain those interests in a power relationship. While there is no theoretical or empirical necessity for the choice to deploy to be made, the
circumstances in which deployment was enabled, and choices guided toward such deployment, existed in the rural ideological climate.

Considered in the terms of the elitist-pluralist debate, this result is far from a pluralist interpretation, and in its structural ideological perspective, just as far from the old elitism while being closer to 'neo-elitism'. Not only does it indicate that power was a possession of part of the population, but it also suggests that there was little prospect of that situation changing. There were signs of resistance, as in the West Cowra water supply, Taragala air pollution, human services and Tourist and Development Corporation matters, but these did not alter the structure, and the last mentioned in particular merely reinforced the status structure and defended the essentially conservative interests of ratepayers. Those who sought a human services role for the Council were caught in a double bind, and those, like the railway workers, who logically had access to resources, may not have been able to deploy them.

The structure appears immutable, under the weight of conservative and localist ideology. Given that Cowra, along with many other small and medium size country towns, faces the prospect of at best very slow growth while larger towns and cities prosper, the ideology of localism may grow in meaning. Along with it, the ideological resources of the people who are already powerful will also grow. The property relations around which rural ideology has grown, may not, however, be so apparently permanent, with the looming possibility of decline in family farming. One might expect, however, that like family farming, rural ideology will prove to be durable.

Aspects of these findings are compatible with those of earlier studies but delve further into ideology and power processes. McIntyre and McIntyre (1944), in so far as they found an ideology to maintain an elite, identified ideology more akin to fatalism than the system of beliefs discussed in Chapter Ten. The finding of Oeser and Emery (1957) that politics were defined out of the local arena by a conservative and powerful group rings true in Cowra, but Oeser and Emery, without the theoretical sophistication available to later work, gave their powerful actors a tone of intentionality which could not fairly be applied to Cowra.
Poiner's (1982) focus on rural ideology may have been moved into a more extensive study of local power processes if a local political arena had revealed the use of ideological resources. Her observation that an associated ideology of localism was available to property interests is equally applicable to Cowra for the way it obscured interests which, if perceived and acted upon, might have precipitated political conflict. Poiner's focus on gender when transferred to Cowra would spotlight the lack of penetration of women's interests into local politics.

Among the Australian studies reviewed in Chapter Three, Oxley (1978) is the furthest removed from this study both empirically and theoretically. Yet it is possible to see ideological structures operating in his "two towns" which had parallels among the resources of the powerful in Cowra. Oxley focused on the denial of structure by an egalitarianism which thereby helped to maintain a status structure. Localism in Cowra denied structural opposition of interests and thereby helped to maintain power relations. Similar processes to those analysed by Oxley operated in Cowra to maintain a status quo. In Cowra, the associated ideologies can be seen as political resources.

The findings of this study are in the broad sense of elitism compatible with those of Wild (1974a), but his individualistic approach left him short of analysis of structural processes. The relationship between this study and "Bradstow" might be summarised by the finding that an elitist power structure can also occur in a rural service town of normal appearance; that is, one without an aloof gentry attenuating the social ladder. Moreover, such a structure can occur without the conscious agenda setting processes which appeared to characterise the "Bradstow" political system.

Wild (1974a) has the same shortcomings of the other studies which relied on the largely individualistic techniques exercised in the elitist-pluralist debate. Those studies, such as Halliwell (1966), Soovere (1967) and Pandey (1972) which gave at least a broad indication of elitism, have findings which are compatible with those of this study. Each of these suggested ideological resources at the disposal of the powerful. One might speculate that, had Pandey used a more structural and process oriented approach, he would have obtained similar findings. Of all
the Australian empirical works reviewed in Chapter Three, the findings of Pandey (1972) and Wild (1974a) are those most clearly extended by this study in its identification of ideological resources. Cowra’s polity has shown how the features that Pandey and Wild noticed become key components of the management of local consensus.

Wild (1983) is an important antecedent because it was a study of power processes, albeit processes engaging actors external to the locality to a far greater extent. Like Heathcote, Cowra illustrates the value of analysing the processes in which one issue contributes to perceptions, and hence outcomes, of the next. Heathcote also illustrates local perceptions of external political processes, perceptions which in Cowra contributed to issue raising by giving meaning to local events and fuelling localism as a political resource.

Consideration of the Australian literature in the light of evidence from Cowra reinforces the value of the neo-elitist approach and the move away from individualism toward account of structure. Most of the studies reviewed took some account of ideology and implicitly suggested ideological resources at the disposal of the powerful. In so far as these suggestions formed hypotheses, they could be accepted in the light of the findings of this study. Bell’s (1978) appeal for study "upwards" of the mechanisms of power maintenance has been heeded.1

At a theoretical level, the heuristic value in Lukes (1974) ‘three dimensions’ has been revealed here as it was in Gaventa (1980). Analysis of power in terms of behaviour, and restricting it to Lukes’ first dimension is a serious error. Non-decision making was rampant in Cowra, but care must be exercised in its specification. Saunders (1979) three stage non-decision making filter was useful in separating those issues that were not articulated from those that were expressed but not responded to. Local politics in Cowra demonstrated the latter kind more often than the former. Anticipated reactions were not important, but mobilisation of bias was, as indicated in the rhetoric of councillors. Analysis of power processes has moved into social context, as Lukes’ third dimension would demand, with attention aimed at ideology.
Focus on unintended consequences has moved power study away from organisation among individuals toward the unconscious conditions of action. When farmers and business people in Cowra drew on resources of localism they were acting in what they believed in good faith to be a common interest of all people in the Shire. They were not conscious of the ideology which supported their deferential relationship with the town. Nor were they aware that their expression of that ideology reconstructed denial of resources to people who might otherwise have gained greater expression of their interests in local affairs. As Lukes (1986: 14) demanded, resources have been shown to be associated with the relationship between weak and powerful groups.

Identification of resources is not, however, sufficient to specify a power relation, for resources must also be deployed. The conditions in which decisions to deploy resources have been seen in the agenda of visible politics, in those factors discussed in Chapter Nine which made local politics. Resources were deployed when what were perceived to be the interests of business, farming or ratepayers appeared to be threatened. Under the popular technocratic model of bureaucracy, it was the bureaucracy which did the threatening. The bureaucratic interest was the most often, almost the only, structurally offensive interest perceived. Perceptions of this interest had real referents. It was a mistake to assume all ideology to be self-deception. Cowra people faced a bureaucracy which posed real threats in the form of increased rates and punishment for malefactors, just as the railway workers confronted a city based bureaucracy which, while determining their career prospects, could not be expected to cater to their interests at the expense of others. Cowra people also faced double-binds, notably arising from membership of groups with incompatible interests (as suggested by Hindess, 1982), a situation in which ratepayers who would have benefited from new or improved services found themselves.

An attempt to specify the cause or causes of the power relation found in Cowra confronts great complexity among ideal and real factors. The analysis presented has focused on the ideal factors which could and did or did not motivate (interests) and enable (resources) action. Interests and resources were intertwined when interests perceived by one group became resources of another. The problem of establishing objective interests which are not perceived while contrary false interests are has not been serious, town amenities, human services and continued employment
being obviously valuable. By looking (as recommended by Hindess, 1986b) at the processes in which people located their interests by identifying themselves as members of a rural community, the lack of action to pursue sectional interests, has become understandable. That identity constrained choices as it obscured possibilities for some, while giving both motivation and options for action to others.

The fieldwork method was essential to collection of data on this process of identity formation, as it was essential to development of the rapport necessary to study powerful people. Short visits would not have provided the detailed information and understanding which comes in relationships of trust between researcher and informant, which can only be developed through a long period of time. Understanding of the local perspective took time, and it brought sympathy as well as empathy. Had fieldwork consisted of spasmodic visits, friendships with local people would have been impossible, and it was those friendships, and people simply becoming accustomed to my presence which became the primary medium for development of my understanding of the local perspective. The importance of the structural ideological perspective is evidence of the value of the community study method to the study of local power relations, despite the largely justifiable accusations of individualism made by Dunleavy (1980).

One could conclude that the value of the study of local power lies in the revelation of processes which are largely ideological. Those processes may or may not operate at a societal level. The concepts used to reveal them are ostensibly applicable at any level. Application at the local level has revealed power processes that have significant effects on the well-being and life chances of local people. It has also shown how those processes operate in the context of regional processes, as part of a national and regional political economy, in a manner parallel to that discussed by Eipper (1986). Account of interaction between local and regional processes, is essential to enquiry into social inequality, because inequality exists within and between localities just as it exists among individuals. This thesis has shown how inequality, in part predicated on regional differentiation, can be explained by local social process, and in doing so has demonstrated the worth of what have traditionally been called community studies.
It is difficult to focus attention on individual action, other than that which reproduces the structures of domination, when those structures are so formidable. Nevertheless, as Hindess (1982) states, such determinism is simplification. Attempts to escape from it, however, should be wary of going too far too soon. Resistance has been evident, but it offered a feeble reminder of the views of post-structuralists such as Foucault (1983) as it highlighted the absence of action threatening to the ideological structures which have pervaded and maintained power. Women have sought assistance with human service projects but have not challenged the beliefs upon which avoidance of human services is based. The people of West Cowra and Taragala sought a better deal from Council but did not challenge the system of allocation. The only group to disorganise legitimacy (Therborn, 1980) was the farmers.

While there is an inherent simplification involved in this analysis, it is set in a situation in which some complications which one might find elsewhere are absent. The locale of power processes was a place of individual interaction in which institutions and organisations, other than the 'people's corporation', were few. Local organisations which might have mediated between individual and structure were not prominent as institutional actors divorced from individuals and their interests. Even the farmers' and business organisations were not large in the final analysis, as illustrated by the lack of prominence, despite its participation, of the LGPA in the LEP issue. Obviously the Tourist and Development Corporation and the Neighbourhood Centre matters would not have arisen without the existence of those organisations, but it is possible to reasonably infer an interest for and another counter to each, and accept that the individuals involved were driven by those interests.

The tradition of community power studies has been left behind other genres of sociology which have explored structural analysis and now search beyond to escape a harsh determinism. The study of power relations in Cowra has necessarily been set prior to a 'post-structuralist' approach, but it is not totally constrained by determinism. When compared to Vidich and Bensman (1968) it can be seen to contain elements of voluntarism and resistance in its emphasis on acknowledgement of and action upon local interests at the level of the relationship between country and city. It steps past elitism and its specification of static power structures in favour of
a dynamic analysis of relationships in which individuals are enabled and constrained by structures of their own making but not of their own intention. It has revealed relationships by focusing on processes rather than individuals. Perhaps subsequent rural local power studies might develop modes of local political analysis which acknowledge a structural process perspective, but focus specifically on processes of interest group formation and resistance at a micro level. This thesis has laid foundations for such work by exploring the machinery of power, which is a necessary precursor to investigation of responses to it.

Note

1 When the locally powerful are themselves politically divided, it can be done without the problems of access to the powerful which Bell (1978: 33) anticipated. Division within Cowra’s 'elite', as it was initially identified in Chapter Five, was so endemic that, were its members ever tempted to do anything that they might subsequently want to hide, the vigour of their political opponents would be strong discouragement. Corruption is rendered unlikely when ties between politicians and bureaucrats are weak. (I am indebted to Dr Eva Etzioni-Halevy for this point.) In any case, the stakes in Cowra’s property market are low compared to the enticements to illicit dealing in metropolitan local government.
I left Cowra in November, 1986 with an enormous debt to all those people who had taken me at face value without much understanding of what I was doing despite my attempts at explanation. Those who told me about their side of issues (and non-issues) could have held little hope that I could further their cause. Their motives were not selfish, certainly not as selfish as mine would have been if I had intended to take information and give nothing in return. In the case of an overt exchange process, that of the 'Community Needs Survey' reported in Gray (1987a, Appendix A), I provided a report in exchange for the extensive support I was given, but that did not fulfill all the hopes of my supporters (as discussed in Gray, 1987b). At times I felt that some people helped me because they thought I might be an ear in the national capital, and while there may be some truth in my interpretation, it would be unjust as a generalisation. I believe that people saw me as a student who was ignorant of life in the bush, and being willing to listen, was worth talking to.

Throughout fieldwork and during the contact I have continued since, I felt from time to time that if Cowra people had the means of sociological understanding, they would be better able to direct their action towards the systems of rule rather than the personalities which just happen to be involved in it. I came to believe that my understanding could be just as valuable to them as their understanding of themselves was to me. I started to hope, naively perhaps, that the sparks of resistance illustrated in the thesis might start fires which would be fuelled by those who, while unwittingly maintaining systems of dominance, were not so intent on doing so that they would not see the oppression that they had unintentionally created and start to dismantle the apparatus that maintained it. My debt to Cowra people could be repaid by dissemination of research.
findings, in which I include the rural-urban relationship perspective developed in Chapter Four and furthered by discussion of localism in Chapter Ten, for that intellectual means is all I have to offer as an ear in the national capital. As I have made and maintained many friendships in Cowra, it is important at a personal level that I make what could be the most valuable contribution to those friendships: the results of three years work which they in part made possible.

For all these reasons, and the simple pragmatic possibility that Cowra people close to local politics might correct errors in my reporting, I offered a copy of an advanced draft of Chapters Five to Eleven to Shire President Cyril Treasure, Clerk Neville Armstrong and Engineer Jim Finnimore. (Jim and Neville had previously read a paper from which Chapter Four was condensed.) I chose these three because they were well placed to both understand the thesis and initiate action in response to it, which as Barnes (1970: 237) offered a reminder, is a possible outcome of research which must be borne in mind. And they had given me substantial help through the project.

This choice was not, however, an easy one. My dilemma was more complex than the one mentioned by Barnes (1977: 10), which confronts the student of local politics who would find research findings approved by one side of politics while being disapproved by the other. For in Cowra there were no political 'sides', and dissemination of a draft thesis to every identifiable interest group which did or did not have its interests expressed in the local political arena was logistically impossible. The 'people's corporation' was the organisation whose operation was most clearly implicated, so its leadership in terms of both a councillor and officers seemed to be the obvious people to vet the thesis.

I met Neville and Jim in Neville's office, after both had read the draft. Unfortunately Cyril did not attend, although he had the draft for a reasonable period of time and had returned it to Neville without comment. The meeting was most gratifying, because both Neville and Jim had understood the thesis and acknowledged value in its approach. It was also gratifying that they had detected only four very minor errors, correction of which has had no effect on the arguments. The difference between their interpretations and mine was clear in their attribution of
responsibility to individuals. This offered a contrast to my structural approach. But while appreciating the difference between our interpretations they were keen to emphasise one structural interpretation. They pointed to the limited range of choice of action imposed on local government councillors and officers in discharge of their responsibilities, and the effect that this has on local politics.

I had offered in my structural approach a level of understanding that, while it may have been apparent, was certainly obscured in the day to day business of dealing with individuals. We discussed the value of a structural approach to such issues as human services and development matters, as well as Council's allocation policy. Neville acknowledged that the policy apparatus constituted an oppressive structure, in that it had moved the political system so far from the squeaky wheel model that deserving wheels were unable to 'squeak'. Our conversation about possible means of redressing this imbalance reminded me of how difficult it is at a practical level to make a public allocation system work equitably. To the extent that some people in positions of responsibility have gained insight into their locality which they might not otherwise have had, and that those people may try to redress some of the imbalances of power resources that the thesis has identified, I feel that I can claim some satisfaction, and can believe that I have returned something to the community.

It would of course be vastly arrogant to claim that my insights have or could prompt an attack on the power structure. Such action may only come from those who have led resistance. For some the struggles continue. The Neighbourhood Centre continues its insecure existence into 1989, still without the State funding which would give it greater security, and which Council's initial support may have helped it to gain. The railway employees continue to see their career prospects and working conditions deteriorate. Along with all country people whose livelihood is dependent on the family farming system, Cowra people are confronted with government proposals for deregulation which would take away support for small farmers while making opportunities for those farms which are already large and efficient.

People who have to decide whether to support or reject Neighbourhood Centres, railway
transportation and the small farm system would, like the senior officers of Cowra Shire Council, benefit from acquaintance with the structural element, simplifying though it be, of the analysis undertaken in this thesis. If research such as this is to fulfill any of its promise of liberation, disseminating interpretation of local social process at a structural level should have high priority, because the old individualistic focus of Australian community power studies may only further the popularity of conspiracy theories, encouraging witch-hunting rather than action to alter the structures of oppression.
Appendix A

The Cowra Area Study
Report No. 1

To the Cowra and District Home and Community Care Committee

THE DEMAND FOR COMMUNITY CARE

Ian Gray

Sociology Department
The Faculties
The Australian National University

September, 1987
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Thanks are also due to the 110 people who distributed questionnaires. They included members of the Home and Community Care Committee, Cowra Apex Club and the Apex Clubs of Grenfell and Canowindra, the Lions Club of Eugowra, Cowra Hospital staff and volunteers, Community Nursing staff, Cowra Masonic Lodge, Gooloogong Progress Association, Cowra Committee for the Disabled and Cowra Neighbourhood Centre. I am also grateful to the many people, not affiliated with any of these organisations, who also volunteered to distribute questionnaires.

My thanks also go to Dr Stephen Mugford of the Sociology Department (Faculties) at The Australian National University (ANU) for his advice on questionnaire design and comments on drafts of the paper, to Mr Mark Ramsay of the Statistics Department at ANU for his help with the questionnaire and advice on statistical analysis, and Mr Jim Millwood of the Department of Community Services, Canberra, for his comments on the questionnaire.
INTRODUCTION

Background to the Survey

The Cowra and District Home and Community Care Committee carried out a survey of its area's population in 1986 so that local people could plan their community activities and apply for funding on a sound statistical basis. I joined the Committee to help it carry out the survey and to supplement data which I had collected in the district as part of a wider community study project. This paper outlines some findings of the survey and considers implications for public policy relating to the care of the elderly.

The survey had two objectives:
1. To estimate the numbers of people in the district who were in situations which may lead to them needing a service, and hence becoming potential clients of one or more of the agencies represented on the Committee.
2. To draw social profiles of such populations.

The Committee was established under the guidelines of the Home and Community Care Program (HACC). HACC is a Commonwealth and State Government program which aims "to improve the quality of life for aged and disabled people and their carers through the development of a comprehensive range of integrated home care services thereby providing a realistic alternative to premature or inappropriate long term residential care" (Department of Community Services, 1985, 2). HACC emphasises the importance of local needs based planning. It seeks to give priority to "persons within the target population most in need of home and community care . . ." and it wishes "to facilitate the involvement of community organisations representing both service providers and users in the provision of advice to the Commonwealth and the State Minister on needs and priorities under the program" (Department of Community Services, 1985, 3). The Committee felt that it could only formulate its recommendations for implementation of HACC when it had an overall picture of its potential client population.

The paper does, however, consider groups other than potential HACC clients. As the survey appeared to be the only one to be conducted locally in the foreseeable future, the questionnaire was designed to gather information useful to planners of services outside the realm of HACC, such as child care and help for single parents, low income earners and the socially and geographically isolated.

The area covered by the survey is located in the central west of New South Wales. It contains the large town of Cowra, the smaller towns of Canowindra, Grenfell and Eugowra and several villages. Its economy is based on agriculture. The area had a population of 19 500 at the 1981 Census, of which 7 900 lived in the town of Cowra. The area has a relatively old population,
17.4 per cent being 60 years of age or older at the 1981 Census compared to 14.5 per cent for the State of New South Wales. A recent environmental and demographic study (Jackson Teece Chesterman Willis and Partners, 1982) suggested that, due to net migration loss of younger people and age structure movement, the proportion of the area's population in the older age groups will rise and the total population will remain stable. Like many rural areas, the Cowra district may experience relatively rapid population ageing.

The survey obtained completed questionnaires from a random sample of 870 adults across the area. An additional survey was carried out in the village of Gooloogong where every household in the village was given a questionnaire. Details of sampling methods are given in Appendix A: The Sample. The questionnaire is in Appendix B: The Questionnaire. A pilot survey of 30 elderly people and hospital patients was carried out to test the questionnaire.

Part 1 of the paper describes the populations potentially in need of services as found in the survey. Part 2 focuses on HACC. It particularly looks at care for the elderly, discussing questions about what might happen as responsibility for care for the elderly moves away from institutions towards their relatives and friends.
PART 1
People with Problems

Part 1 will consider the size and circumstances of the Committee's "target groups". That is, groups of people who may be in situations of some difficulty, who are at risk of missing out on help from voluntary and government agencies and family and friends, and whose situations might be improved with some help from the community. The target groups for the survey were the chronically ill or disabled, socially isolated people, those who have difficulty with transport or just getting about, low income earners, people who have housing problems, and those who have a family or household member needing care through illness, disability or old age. (The last mentioned will be considered in Part 2, as they are a target group for HACC.) The survey also collected data on potential demand for child care and perceived availability and quality of community facilities.

Part 1 will look for explanations for the situations of the people in these groups. That is, it will consider factors which may have lead people to situations of difficulty. It will explore the characteristics of the target groups and attempt to identify the potentially most useful types of help for them. This will be done by asking whether particular difficulties occur commonly within each group. Difficulties to be considered include lack of mobility, housing problems and lack of social support. Types of help which might overcome such difficulties include transport, home maintenance, provision of appropriate public housing, respite care and provision of informal support to reduce social and emotional isolation. Part 1 will conclude with some comparisons between the village of Gooloogong and the larger sample, an assessment of the demand for child care and a summary of perceived availability of community facilities. Estimates use the random sample. That is, respondents in Gooloogong, other than those selected by the random process, are excluded.

Chronic Health Problems and Disabilities

46.5 per cent of respondents indicated that they suffered from one or more chronic health problems or disabilities. 19.7 per cent indicated more than one problem. 42.4 per cent of respondents indicated one or more physical problems. 9.4 per cent of respondents indicated one or more mental or emotional problems. Some common types of physical problems identified by the survey are listed in Table 1.
Table 1
Common Chronic Health Problems and Disabilities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem</th>
<th>Estimated % of adult population</th>
<th>Estimated number of adults</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arthritis and/or rheumatism</td>
<td>25.6</td>
<td>3 426</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asthma</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>1 311</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deafness (including partial)</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>990</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depression</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>669</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heart disease</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>629</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anxiety</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>549</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diabetes</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>374</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blindness (including partial)</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>267</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As one might expect, the incidence of such health problems increased with age. This is shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1
Percentages of Respondents Who Reported Chronic Physical Health Problems and Disabilities by Age

There was no such association for mental and emotional problems. Nor was any association found between gender and either physical or mental/emotional problems. There is no evidence of
Appendix A

either physical or mental/emotional problems varying in frequency among rural, village or town populations.

Mobility Problems

Mobility has been measured by an index derived from questions about availability of a motor car, ability to get to the shops, ability to get to and participate in recreation activity and ability to walk 100 metres without tiring, being questions 23, 28, 29 and 30 of the questionnaire in Appendix B: The Questionnaire. Respondents can score between zero and four points, from low to high mobility.

Across the whole sample, the level of mobility was found to be high. 80.8 per cent of respondents scored the maximum four points. However, the Committee is primarily interested in people who, through mobility problems, might "miss out" on services and facilities available to others. Table 2 shows percentages of respondents who reported mobility problems and estimates of their number in the district for each mobility variable and the mobility index.

Table 2
Mobility Problems

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem</th>
<th>Estimated % of adult population</th>
<th>Estimated number of adults</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No use of motor car</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>1 097</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unable to get to/participate in favourite recreation alone</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>883</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unable to walk 100 metres without tiring</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>856</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unable to get to shops alone</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>495</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zero score on mobility index</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>347</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The number of zero scorers is very small (one or two respondents) in all age groups except those over 75. The over 75s had 12 zero scorers, or 17 per cent of that age group.

Village respondents showed the highest proportion of zero scorers at three out of 56 respondents
or five per cent. 2.4 per cent of both town and rural respondents scored zero, representing 14 and five respondents respectively. Differences between average levels of mobility among village, town and rural dwellers were insignificant, but variation among village dwellers was greater than among either town or rural dwellers. 2

The survey did not collect enough information to allow us to specify all the causes of low mobility. It did, however, show that low mobility may in part be caused by health problems. 72 per cent of those who scored zero or one out of four had a physical health problem. There was a similar association between mental/emotional problems and mobility. The broad definition of mobility implied by the four factors used to build the mobility index leaves room for the operation of many causal factors, some of which may be more important than health. There is evidence that living alone had a stronger effect than physical health. Lack of close contact may be the most important factor putting people in situations of difficulty in getting about. 3

Social and Emotional Isolation

The Survey approached social isolation in two ways. It sought to estimate numbers of people who lived in apparent isolation and numbers who lacked supporting or potentially supporting relationships.

111 respondents, or 12.8 per cent of respondents, were living alone at the time of the survey. That offers an estimate of 1,712 adults living alone in the district. 70 per cent of those living alone were aged 60 years or older, 62 per cent were female and 65 per cent were widowed. Village dwellers had the smallest proportion living alone (3 out of 55 respondents or 5 per cent), followed by rural (24 out of 239 respondents or 10 per cent) and town (84 out of 563 respondents or 15 per cent).

17 respondents, or two per cent of respondents, were living alone and had no close relatives. That offers an estimate of 268 adults in such circumstances. 13 of the 17 were aged 60 or older and the remainder were aged between 25 and 29. Among the 17, there were more males (10 of the 17) than females and a majority in the never married (five respondents, three of them males) and widowed (eight respondents, four of them males) marital status groups.

The survey took a direct approach to social isolation and loneliness by asking questions about respondents' relationships. Living alone and having no close relatives do not necessarily bring isolation and loneliness. They should not by themselves be used to indicate these conditions. Questions about relationships sought to establish whether or not supporting relationships were available or potentially available. Answers to several questions were grouped to form indexes which gave an assessment of relative isolation for each respondent.
An expressive relations index was used to measure loneliness. It was constructed using questions on close friendships, personal acceptance and sharing of interests to indicate availability of emotional contact. The questions are numbers 12, 13 and 14 of the questionnaire in Appendix B: The Questionnaire. An instrumental relations index was used to indicate potential availability of practical support. It was constructed from questions on acquaintance with neighbours, availability of someone to do small domestic favours and local organisation membership, questions 10, 11 and 15 of the questionnaire in Appendix B: The Questionnaire. A friends and relatives index was used to indicate potential availability of friends and relatives. It was constructed from three questions on friends and relatives living nearby, questions 3, 5 and 9 of the questionnaire in Appendix B: The Questionnaire.

People who are most isolated are of most concern to the Committee. Such cases were indicated by zero scores on the indexes. Estimated percentages and numbers of people who were most isolated (scored zero on the indexes) are shown in Table 3. Respondents who scored zero on the expressive relations, instrumental relations and friends and relatives indexes numbered 45, 60 and 32 respectively.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Index</th>
<th>Zero scorers as estimated percentage of adults</th>
<th>Estimated number of zero scorers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Expressive relations</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>696</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instrumental relations</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>923</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends and relatives</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>495</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Isolation tended to come with being elderly, divorced, to some extent being male, and to some extent also, being a village dweller. Each of these factors, age, marital status, gender and place of living, will be considered as factors which may influence loneliness and isolation.

Socially isolated respondents were relatively concentrated in the older age groups. 25 of the 45 zero scorers on the expressive relations index were aged 60 or older, and 15 of the 45 were aged 75 or older. On the instrumental relations index, 24 out of 60 zero scorers were aged 60 or older and 14 of the 60 were aged 75 or older. The friends and relatives index indicated least concentration of elderly among zero scorers, with 10 out of 32 aged 60 or older and 6 out of 32
Aged 75 or older.

Figure 2 shows the relatively high proportions of socially isolated people among the elderly. The friends and relatives index presents a different picture to the other indexes. While old age may bring expressive and instrumental isolation, it is less likely to bring isolation from friends and relatives. The oldest respondents were the most isolated. About one in five respondents aged 75 and older lacked emotional support, about one in five showed low potential instrumental support, and one in 12 had no friends and relatives nearby.

Figure 2 also shows relatively high proportions of isolated people in the 30 to 39 years age group. This may reflect a life cycle pattern. Young people have emotional support from family as singles or from spouses in the early years of marriage. Children, careers and mobility bring stresses that may reduce perceived and available support.

Respondents aged between 30 and 39 had the most consistent proportion of zero scorers across indexes of all age groups. They also had the highest proportion of divorced respondents (5 per cent) and the highest proportion of single parents (7 per cent) of all age groups. 51 per cent of 30 to 39 years old respondents were married and had had both partners working outside the home. Only 12 per cent of 30 to 39 years old respondents had no children in their care, compared with 23 per cent of 40 to 49 year olds.
The survey revealed no association between marital status and proximity of friends and relatives, but it did find association between marital status and expressive and instrumental relations. The mean score for divorced people on the expressive relations index was significantly lower than for others. Figure 3 suggests that divorced people were the most likely group to be isolated on both dimensions.

Figure 3 shows that divorce can bring loneliness and isolation. Having friends and relatives nearby does not preclude isolation. A larger proportion (18 per cent) of divorced people scored zero on the expressive relations index than scored zero on the friends and relatives network index (3 per cent). All those divorced people who scored zero on the expressive relations index had some friends or relatives in the district.

Low scores on the expressive relations index are not explained by lack of friends and relatives. While there is a relationship between the two, it is not strong. That is, people had friends and relatives living nearby and still lacked expressive relations. There is a slightly stronger relationship between friends and relatives and instrumental relations. This indicates that friends and relatives may be more frequent sources of instrumental than emotional support, but may not determine the availability of either. There is some evidence that having close relatives anywhere has more explanatory power than having friends and relatives in the district, but these variables
cannot account for expressive relations or lack of them.  

No associations between gender and instrumental relations and friends and relatives indexes were found. However, there is some indication that men are more likely to be emotionally isolated than women.  

Village populations showed a higher frequency of isolation than town populations, and rural populations showed the lowest. This is indicated in Figure 4. However, variation within the village category is, as it was for the mobility index, greater than within both the town and rural categories.

The tendency for frequency of isolation to be higher among village dwellers is only confirmed for the instrumental relations and friends and relatives indexes. That is, we have evidence that there are more isolated people among village dwellers than among town and rural dwellers for the instrumental relations and friends and relatives dimensions but not for expressive relations. Analysis of variance showed no significant differences among the means of each index for each location. We cannot conclude that the average levels of isolation differ among town, village and rural areas, but we do have evidence that village dwellers are more likely to lack friends and relatives and instrumental support.
Low Household Incomes

Low household incomes were more numerous among elderly respondents. Of the 101 respondents who reported annual household incomes under $4,999, 51 were aged over 60 years. Of the 152 who reported annual household incomes between $5,000 and $9,999, 72, or 47.4 per cent, were aged over 60.12

Low household incomes were also most numerous in the "farmer and grazier" and "pensioner" occupation groups. Of the under $4,999 household income group, 36 per cent described the occupation of their main household income earner as farmer and/or grazier, and 25 per cent described he/she as a pensioner. The remainder was spread about evenly among semi-skilled and skilled workers, small business proprietors, farm workers and labourers, service workers and the unemployed. Farmers and graziers constituted 24.7 per cent of the sample and pensioners 6.2 per cent, indicating that the latter group is the more over-represented among low income earners.

Figure 5 shows that the proportions of low household incomes increased with the ages of respondents from the 30 to 39 years age group. 16 per cent of respondents aged between 30 and 39 years reported household incomes under $10,000 for 1985/86. The percentage climbs to 78 for those aged 70 years and older.

---

**Figure 5**

Percentages of Age Groups Who Reported Annual Household Incomes Under $10,000

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Per cent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>70+</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60-69</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-59</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-49</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-39</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-29</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

12. The percentage of respondents aged 60 years and over is significantly higher in the low income group compared to the general population.
Appendix A

Single parents also tended to have low incomes.13 28 respondents indicated that they were single parents. That is 3.3 per cent of the sample, giving an estimated number of single parents in the district at 442. While 22.3 per cent of all respondents reported household incomes between $5 000 and $9 999, 61 percent (17 respondents) of single parents were in that income group. 21 reported incomes under $9 999. 14 gave "pensioner" or "unemployed" as the occupation of their main household income earner.

Over half the single parent respondents (15 of 28) had one child in their care, and a further quarter (7) had two. Almost half (12) of the single parent respondents were in the 30 to 39 years age group. Almost two thirds (18) were separated or divorced, and nearly all the remainder were widowed. Only 2 had never married. They were proportionately most numerous among village dwellers at 5 out of 54, or 9 per cent of village respondents, and proportionately least numerous among rural respondents at 0.3 per cent. They were significantly more likely to have difficulty with home maintenance than were other respondents, and were more likely to have a lower standard of housing and domestic facilities.14 (Difficulties related to standard of housing and domestic facilities have been measured by six variables. The variables are possession of, or having the use of, a telephone, a car, a washing machine, adequacy of heating, adequacy of cooling and difficulty with home maintenance, corresponding to questions 20, 23, 24, 25, 26 and 31 of the questionnaire. These items have been used to form an index on which each respondent could score a maximum of six points.)

The occurrence of unemployment of a household member or members was also associated with low household income.15 Of those respondents who had had a household member who usually works unemployed for one month or longer during the twelve months prior to the survey, 44 per cent reported their 1985/86 household income to be below $10 000. 31 per cent of other respondents reported such incomes. Respondents who had not completed school were also more likely to have low incomes.16 48 per cent of those who stated that they had not completed school reported 1985/86 household incomes below $10 000.

Housing Problems

Percentages of respondents and estimated numbers of adults who did not have each of the five domestic facilities on which information was sought in the questionnaire are shown in Table 4. Difficulty with home maintenance will be discussed later.
Table 4
Percentages of Respondents and Estimated Numbers of Adults without Certain Domestic Facilities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facilities lacking</th>
<th>Percentage of respondents</th>
<th>Estimated number of adults</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Telephone</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>442</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Car</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>1 124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washing machine</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>214</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adequate heating</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>575</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adequate cooling</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>1 298</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

67.5 per cent of respondents scored six points on the domestic facilities index. 12.0 per cent of respondents scored four or fewer points. Women, the elderly and the widowed tended not to score as well as other people. 13.0 per cent of women, 17.2 21.5 per cent of the over 70 years old respondents, and 26.2 per cent of the widowed scored four or fewer points. Rural, village and town dwellers scored about equally.

14.4 per cent of respondents (122), or an estimated 1 927 adults, had some difficulty maintaining their home. 31.1 per cent of those who indicated difficulty (38 respondents) also said that they had no help looking after their home. That is 4.4 per cent of respondents, or an estimated 585 adults.

Of those who received help (83 respondents), 39 per cent (31) received it from a voluntary or professional service, 34 per cent (27) from family, 14 per cent (11) from friends and/or relatives and the remainder from a combination of these. This is illustrated in Figure 6.

Women and the elderly were more likely to have difficulty than men and younger age groups. Of the 122 respondents who said they had difficulty, 70 per cent were female and 51 per cent were 60 years of age or older. However, 31 per cent were between 18 and 39 years, suggesting that having young children may have lead to such difficulties. The suggestion is given weight by taking out those who did not have children, to find that the percentage falls to 12. Larger proportions of low than high income earners reported home maintenance difficulty. This is shown in Figure 7.
Of the 38 respondents who reported difficulty maintaining their home and received no help, 33 were female. Of those females who had difficulty (82 respondents), 33 (40 per cent) received no help, while among the males, 5 out of 31 (15 per cent) received no help. Although voluntary and professional services and family were more common sources of help than friends and relatives, there is evidence that people who had friends and relatives in the area were more likely to have help than those who did not. Of those who had maintenance difficulty (122 respondents) and scored maximum points on the friends and relatives index (80 respondents), 76 per cent (or
61 respondents) received help. 16 of the 30 who scored two, two of the seven who scored one and both the two who scored zero received no help.

There is no association indicated between having close relatives (as indicated by responses to question 3 of the questionnaire) and receiving help, nor between having friends and relatives close by (as indicated by question 9 of the questionnaire) and receiving help. 33 of the 38 who received no help had close relatives, and 28 had friends and/or relatives living close by. 31 respondents received help from voluntary or professional services. They did not all lack close relatives or friends or relatives close by. 17 indicated that they had close relatives whom they have contact with at least once each week, and 25 had friends and/or relatives living close by.

14.1 per cent of respondents indicated that they were not happy with their accommodation and planning to stay in it indefinitely. That provides an estimate of 1887 adults. Being away from family was the reason given most frequently for dissatisfaction with present accommodation. Almost twice as many people gave that response as gave any other. The other responses included present accommodation being too expensive, too small, too far from town and difficulties managing house and garden. People under age 39 were more likely to intend to move than those older. Those between 50 and 59 appeared least likely to move. This is illustrated by Figure 8 which also shows that those over 60 and even over 70 may be likely to move.

Figure 8
Percentages of Respondents in Age Groups Likely to Move

There is no association between gender, income, or place of living (rural, village or town) and intention to move. The only occupation group which had more people intending to move than
intending to stay was the unemployed. The occupation group with the highest proportion (93 per cent) intending to stay was the farmers and graziers.

Gooloogong: A Village Comparison

The Gooloogong sample provides an opportunity to compare the situations of the people of a village with the overall average for the area. This section will compare Gooloogong with the larger sample on some of the important characteristics explored in the survey. Some of the following reflects the relatively large proportion of elderly in Gooloogong’s population. At the 1981 Census, 30.3 per cent of Gooloogong's adult population was aged 60 years or older.

The demand for home care is relatively high in Gooloogong. When compared to the district's population as a whole, the home care needs of Gooloogong residents appear to be related more to age, and perhaps mobility, than to poor health, well being or living standards. Differences were found between Gooloogong and the larger sample in frequency of home maintenance difficulty and having someone in the family or household needing care. 23 per cent of Gooloogong respondents, compared to 14.4 per cent of other respondents, stated that they had difficulty maintaining their home. 21 14 per cent of Gooloogong respondents, compared to 6.2 per cent of other respondents, said that they had someone in their family or household needing care.22

Given its larger proportion of elderly, it is perhaps surprising that the Gooloogong sample showed a frequency of chronic illness and disability similar to the larger sample. Gooloogong had a slightly lower mean score on the mobility index, due to higher proportions stating that they could not get to and participate in their favourite recreation activity and higher proportions stating that they could not walk 100 metres without tiring. However, the overall difference was small and variation within Gooloogong was not greater than it was in the larger sample. Nor was a significant difference found between Gooloogong and the larger sample on the social relations indexes. Although a larger proportion (16 per cent) of Gooloogong respondents than others (11.1 per cent) scored four or fewer points on the domestic facilities index, no significant difference between average scores was found. Again, Gooloogong showed no more variation from its average score than did the larger sample. Despite this apparent lack of differences, Gooloogong is an older population with a consequently higher demand for home and community care services.

Child Care in Cowra Shire

The survey was designed to allow assessment of demand by use of an index which permits
comparisons among geographic areas. Respondents scored points on the index for having a child in their care, having a child under age 5, and where they had a child in their care, having had a period of time during the last 12 months when both marriage partners worked outside the home, that period of time being longer than one month, and both partners having worked full time during that period. Respondents could therefore score a maximum of 5 points. Single parents were given 4 points, unless they had a child under age 5, in which case they were given 5 points.

As respondents were answering questions about their families, the data are taken to describe families. This assumes that each respondent came from a different family.

The number of families scoring four or five points was estimated from percentages of survey respondents and the numbers of families in each area counted at the 1981 Census. The estimated number of families was multiplied by the mean (average) number of children aged under 16 and 5 and under in families scoring four or five points in each area to obtain the estimated numbers of children needing care. The results are shown in Table 5.

The survey also asked for respondents' perceptions of availability and quality of child care. Table 6 shows the responses to this question. It correctly identifies the location of child care facilities in the Cowra Shire as being in the Mulyan/North Cowra area.

Table 5 shows the greatest potential demand to be in that area, although Mulyan showed relatively low demand. This is a product of fewer children per family rather than a low proportion of respondents scoring four or five points on the child care index. Mulyan had the highest proportion (32.6 per cent of Mulyan respondents) of high scorers on the index. The high estimated demand in the rural area is a result of both a high proportion of high scorers (32.4 per cent) and a high average number of children per family. This may be distorted for those under 16 years old by respondents counting children who are living away from home at school.

Responses on perceptions of availability and quality of child care can be used to calculate an average score for each area. This is done by allocating a score of one to a response of "not available", two to "needs improvement" and so forth. The scores of respondents are summed for each area and the average (mean) calculated for each area and the Shire as a whole. Figure 9 shows how each area in Cowra Shire deviates from the overall mean score (2.33), with only Mulyan and North Cowra respondents being above the overall mean in perception of availability and quality of child care. This does not mean that all others took a negative view of child care. It suggests that in rural areas where demand is relatively high, perceived supply of child care services is relatively low, but not as low as it is in West Cowra and the villages.
Table 5  
Child Care Demand Indicators by Area

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Estimated number of children needing care</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Aged under 16</td>
<td>Aged 5 and under</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cowra villages</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>18</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cowra rural</td>
<td>742</td>
<td>251</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mulyan</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>34</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taragala</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>53</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Cowra*</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>35</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Cowra</td>
<td>402</td>
<td>121</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Cowra</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>48</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Does not include Erambie (to be covered by a forthcoming report on a survey of the Aboriginal population).

Table 6  
Perceptions of Availability and Quality of Child Care by Area

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Not available</th>
<th>Percentage who stated Needs improvement</th>
<th>Adequate</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Weddin Shire</td>
<td>52.4</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>32.6</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eugowra</td>
<td>69.4</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>18.1</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canowindra</td>
<td>47.1</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>29.6</td>
<td>13.1</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cowra villages</td>
<td>83.0</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cowra rural</td>
<td>59.5</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>20.8</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mulyan</td>
<td>20.4</td>
<td>18.9</td>
<td>31.5</td>
<td>29.1</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taragala</td>
<td>56.8</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>23.7</td>
<td>16.6</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Cowra</td>
<td>80.9</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Cowra</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>16.3</td>
<td>34.6</td>
<td>42.8</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Cowra</td>
<td>47.3</td>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>24.9</td>
<td>17.1</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Other Community Facilities

The Survey asked the same availability/quality questions for playgrounds, sports fields, parks, meeting rooms, shops, schools and playgroups. Table 7 shows the percentages of respondents from each area who perceived each facility to be unavailable in the area easily accessible from their homes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Playgrounds</th>
<th>Sports fields</th>
<th>Parks</th>
<th>Meeting rooms</th>
<th>Shops</th>
<th>Schools</th>
<th>Childrens playgroups</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Weddin</td>
<td>16.6</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>13.1</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>12.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eugowra</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>13.5</td>
<td>18.5</td>
<td>15.6</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>18.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canowindra</td>
<td>38.1</td>
<td>11.2</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>18.4</td>
<td>13.2</td>
<td>11.9</td>
<td>23.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cowra vill's</td>
<td>18.1</td>
<td>20.6</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>12.8</td>
<td>14.4</td>
<td>12.8</td>
<td>44.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cowra rural</td>
<td>41.9</td>
<td>36.0</td>
<td>39.4</td>
<td>31.6</td>
<td>32.9</td>
<td>30.7</td>
<td>49.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mulyan</td>
<td>18.3</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>33.2</td>
<td>51.1</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>20.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taragala</td>
<td>27.1</td>
<td>15.6</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>49.7</td>
<td>11.0</td>
<td>17.3</td>
<td>37.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Cowra</td>
<td>55.3</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>54.0</td>
<td>66.9</td>
<td>23.9</td>
<td>61.8</td>
<td>61.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Cowra</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>26.9</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>13.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central C'ra</td>
<td>36.8</td>
<td>28.3</td>
<td>20.9</td>
<td>30.8</td>
<td>15.3</td>
<td>14.7</td>
<td>33.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 8 shows deviations of each area from the overall mean score for Cowra Shire. That is, it indicates those areas which scored higher and lower than the average for the Shire in the same way as described for perceptions and availability of child care. The rural category and North Cowra are notable for showing consistent negative and positive deviations respectively. West Cowra is notable for showing large negative deviations from the means for all facilities, except for sports fields on which it showed a positive deviation.

The survey also sought information on other facilities which respondents felt were needed in their area. 34.4 per cent of respondents indicated a facility or service lacking in their area. 40 types of facility and service were given by respondents. The most popular types given were youth facilities, child care, parks and bus services.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Playgrounds</th>
<th>Sports fields</th>
<th>Parks</th>
<th>Meeting rooms</th>
<th>Shops</th>
<th>Schools</th>
<th>Schools</th>
<th>Childrens playgroups</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Shire Mean)</td>
<td>(2.43)</td>
<td>(2.95)</td>
<td>(2.69)</td>
<td>(2.25)</td>
<td>(2.87)</td>
<td>(3.12)</td>
<td>(2.37)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Villages</td>
<td>+0.10</td>
<td>-0.47</td>
<td>+0.04</td>
<td>+0.52</td>
<td>-0.30</td>
<td>-0.17</td>
<td>-0.25</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>-0.37</td>
<td>-0.48</td>
<td>-0.38</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>-0.58</td>
<td>-0.42</td>
<td>-0.28</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mulyan</td>
<td>-0.14</td>
<td>+0.22</td>
<td>-0.34</td>
<td>-0.36</td>
<td>+0.03</td>
<td>+0.24</td>
<td>+0.14</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taragala</td>
<td>-0.13</td>
<td>-0.02</td>
<td>+0.12</td>
<td>-0.24</td>
<td>+0.21</td>
<td>-0.01</td>
<td>-0.19</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Cowra</td>
<td>-0.79</td>
<td>+0.11</td>
<td>-0.72</td>
<td>-0.69</td>
<td>-0.42</td>
<td>-1.26</td>
<td>-0.84</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Cowra</td>
<td>+0.55</td>
<td>+0.30</td>
<td>+0.44</td>
<td>+0.24</td>
<td>+0.30</td>
<td>+0.47</td>
<td>+0.46</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central C'ra</td>
<td>-0.16</td>
<td>-0.13</td>
<td>+0.11</td>
<td>+0.14</td>
<td>+0.22</td>
<td>+0.08</td>
<td>-0.02</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PART 2
The Elderly Population and Home and Community Care

The Survey aimed to provide service planners with information to help them prepare for changes in emphasis in provision of services to the elderly and disabled population which may accompany the HACC program. The Committee wanted to know what might happen to elderly people and carers as responsibility for care moves away from institutions towards relatives and friends.

Part 2 of the paper considers some findings which may have implications for aged persons care under HACC. It does not consider implications of specific policies or program decisions. Nor does it attempt to evaluate the program. Rather, it looks at the elderly population and carers and potential carers and asks the question: what will happen to the elderly and carers as greater emphasis is placed on home and community care?

While policy makers have sought to develop home and community care as a substitute for institutional care, researchers have sounded warnings about negative effects on both quality of care and the well-being of the family and community carers. Recent climates of government financial stringency in Australia and elsewhere have focused attention on means of obviating the financial burden of institutional care. This has been accompanied by excitement over the "rediscovery" of social support from family and friends (Litwak, 1986: xii). However, warnings have been sounded by research which indicates that informal support is not available to everyone. Such research also shows that when it is available, the burden of care may fall most heavily on those who are least able to bear it, or might be most disadvantaged by it.

Family care is largely provided by wives and daughters (Kendig, 1986; Kinnear and Graycar, 1986). It may mean that the burden of care will fall largely on people who are not only dependent themselves, but may also be precluded by caring responsibilities from furthering themselves in their employment and social roles (Kendig, 1986; Finch and Groves, 1980). Dependency on wives and daughters means that people who do not have a wife or daughter may have limited prospects for family care. Kendig (1986: 183) found that for about one quarter of very old women today there is no alternative to institutional care.

Numbers of friends and relatives available, or potentially available, to give help may not be as important as the quality of relationships. Mugford and Gibson (1986) found that a balanced range of social support is very important for the well being of the elderly. Expressive relations may be most important to the well being of the elderly, more important than socio-economic status, age or size of support network.
Evidence about attitudes to family care for the elderly is not so clear. Kendig (1986) found that although divorce may increasingly be depleting family ties through loss of spouse, parent-child relationships do endure. Dependence on family and community support may be quite viable for some people while it is problematic for others. Many people can and do support their elderly. But there appears to be much room for people to miss out. The important questions to answer are, who will miss out, and, if HACC is here to stay, what kind of community support will be needed? The survey aimed to collect information which may help to answer these questions.

Part 2 of this paper seeks to answer those questions by looking at the current situations of the elderly population. Part 1 showed how age can bring poor health, lack of mobility, isolation, low income and housing difficulties for many people. Part 2 will explore the frequency of occurrence of such problems among the elderly. It will consider evidence from the survey on the availability/potential availability of carers for the elderly, the suitability of current accommodation of the elderly and their plans for accommodation in the future. It will also consider survey evidence of the situations of present and likely future carers, before concluding with a discussion about implications for HACC.

The Elderly Population

The elderly population is defined as consisting of people 60 years of age and older. This is not intended to imply that such people form a homogeneous group, all members of which have characteristics which are generally associated with old age. But as Part 1 illustrated, people 60 years and older tend to encounter difficulties more frequently than younger people. There were 277 elderly respondents in the sample.

Part 1 showed that the elderly were overrepresented among low income earners. 68.8 per cent of elderly respondents stated that their annual household incomes were under $10,000 and 28.7 per cent indicated annual incomes under $5,000. The large proportions of low income earners among the elderly are illustrated in Figure 5. 67.5 per cent of elderly respondents, compared with 49.1 per cent of all respondents, indicated one or more chronic health problems or disabilities. The relatively high incidence of chronic health problems among the elderly is illustrated in Figure 1. The occurrence of problem or potential problem situations, including each mobility problem revealed by the survey, is described in Table 9.
Table 9
Percentages and Estimated Numbers of Elderly In Potential Problem Situations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Situation</th>
<th>Percentage of elderly respondents</th>
<th>Estimated number of elderly</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Widowed</td>
<td>32.9</td>
<td>1 116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living alone</td>
<td>30.4</td>
<td>1 031</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual income under $5 000</td>
<td>28.7</td>
<td>973</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chronic health problem(s)</td>
<td>67.5</td>
<td>2 290</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No use of washing machine</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inadequate heating</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inadequate cooling</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>237</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobility index score zero</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>210</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No use of car</td>
<td>17.8</td>
<td>604</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unable to get to shops alone</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>275</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unable to get to/participate in favourite recreation</td>
<td>14.9</td>
<td>505</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unable to walk 100 metres without tiring</td>
<td>15.6</td>
<td>529</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As one might expect, all of the situations in Table 9 occurred more frequently among the elderly than among the adult population as a whole.

Social Support for the Elderly

HACC presupposes that many, if not most, elderly have operating or potential support networks. It also presupposes that people will accept family support. The survey sought information which would indicate the potential availability of informal support and the extent to which it was currently used.

Part 1 showed that the older age groups have larger proportions of isolated people than the younger. 30.4 per cent of the elderly (81 elderly respondents) indicated that they lived alone. That is an estimated 1 031 people aged 60 or older live alone in the district. 5.4 per cent (14 respondents), or an estimated 183 elderly people in the district, lived alone and had no close relatives. They would certainly not have family support available to them.

Of the 81 elderly respondents who lived alone, 60 (76 per cent) were female and 68 (86 per cent) were widowed. Nine (12 per cent) had no friends or relatives living nearby. Of the 14 who lived alone and had no close relatives, three (21 per cent) had never married and eight (58 per
cent) were widowed. Four (25 per cent) scored zero on the expressive relations index; that is, they indicated loneliness. Estimates of numbers of socially isolated among all elderly people as indicated by the social relations indexes are shown in Table 10.

Table 10  
Estimates of Numbers of Socially Isolated Elderly People

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Index</th>
<th>Zero scorers as percentage of elderly respondents</th>
<th>Estimated number of elderly zero scorers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Expressive relations</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>346</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instrumental relations</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>336</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends and relatives</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 10 shows that there are many elderly people who lack relationships from which informal support is, or may be, forthcoming. It also shows that rather more elderly people lack instrumental and expressive support than lack friends and relatives nearby, implying that having friends and relatives in the district does not guarantee availability of emotional and practical support. However, there is some relationship and it is stronger among the elderly than among the whole sample.24

Home Help

Availability and use of home help may be indicated by considering those who need it and examining the kinds of support they receive, if any. 72.9 per cent of elderly respondents indicated that at least one person in their household had at least one chronic health problem or disability. 9.7 per cent, or an estimated 329 elderly people, had a member of their family or household who, through chronic illness, disability or age, could not fully look after him or herself. 23.8 per cent of the elderly (62 respondents) indicated that they had home maintenance difficulty. That provides an estimate of 807 people in the district. Of those 62 respondents, 46 (57 per cent) were widowed and 28 (45 per cent) lived alone. 40 (63 per cent) were female.

Almost one quarter (14 respondents or 23 per cent) of those elderly who had home maintenance difficulty received no help. That is 5.2 per cent of the elderly population, or an estimated 176 people. It is a smaller proportion than that of all adult respondents (31.1 per cent). Among those 48 respondents who did receive help, voluntary and professional services were the most popular sources (indicated by 20 respondents), followed by family (17 respondents) and friends
and relatives (six respondents). The remaining five used some combination with a professional or voluntary service. This is illustrated in Figure 10. Users of voluntary and professional services did not all lack potential family support. 11 of the 20 indicated that they had close relatives with whom they had contact at least once each week.

Figure 10
Sources of Help for Elderly Respondents Who Receive Help with Home Maintenance

Of the 21 elderly respondents who had someone in their family or household needing care, eight (36 per cent) received no help to look after that person. That is virtually the same as the proportion of all respondents who had a person needing care. Again voluntary and professional services were the most common sources of help for those who received it. Of the 14 who received help, six obtained it from voluntary and professional services, four from family and two from friends and relatives. The remaining two used some combination with a voluntary or professional service. This is illustrated in Figure 11. Of the six elderly who received help only from voluntary or professional services, three had close relatives whom they saw or spoke to at least once each week.
The survey has found evidence that help from family with home maintenance is less frequent than help from voluntary and professional organisations. It has also shown that friends and relatives are relatively uncommon sources of support, and that many people who have close family prefer to use voluntary or professional services. This supports opinions, like that of Litwak (1986), that informal support is a partner, and perhaps a junior partner, with community and government organisations in care giving.

**Housing Arrangements and Living Conditions**

HACC aims to encourage the elderly to stay in their own homes, rather than move to an institutional situation. Part 1 showed that the elderly are among the age groups more likely to intend to leave their present accommodation. 28 elderly respondents (10.8 per cent or an estimated 366 elderly people in the district) did not intend staying in their present home indefinitely.

Those not intending to stay were more likely than others to have a low score on the expressive
relations index,25 (but not on the other social relations indexes), were more likely to be living alone,26 and had a lower average standard of housing amenity.27 They were not more likely to have home maintenance difficulty, nor to have a low income.

The most common reasons given for dissatisfaction with accommodation were being far from family (10 respondents or 35 per cent of those not intending to stay), loneliness (nine respondents or 32 per cent), difficulty with house and garden (10 respondents or 35 per cent) and being too far from town (seven respondents or 24 per cent). Alternative accommodation was said to be too expensive by seven respondents (24 per cent), too far from family and friends by five respondents (19 per cent) and subject to a waiting list by three respondents (11 per cent). Five respondents (17 per cent) said they were staying in their present home because they could not sell it.

Nine of the 28 not intending to stay (32 per cent) said they would be happy to stay if they received help from a voluntary or other organisation. The most popular types of help were cooking (nine respondents or 32 per cent of those not intending to stay), home maintenance (seven respondents or 25 per cent) and transport (five respondents or 16 per cent).

While more than half (52.6 per cent) of elderly respondents said that, were they to move, their choice of accommodation would be a house, 38.8 per cent said that they would prefer a self-contained unit. The remainder would prefer a hostel (6.5 per cent), a farm or a nursing home.

The frequency of social isolation among those intending to move and the prominence of loneliness among reasons for moving suggest that staying in present accommodation may mean continuing loneliness and isolation from potential support for many elderly people. Several factors examined by the survey suggest that staying in present accommodation may bring hardship as well as loneliness. These factors include the tendency for those not intending to stay to have a lower standard of housing amenity, the figures for potential problem situations in Table 9, and the estimated 807 elderly people who have home maintenance difficulty. It may be encouraging that one third of those not intending to stay would do so if they had support, but to the many among the other two thirds for whom loneliness is significant, community care may be irrelevant.

The Carers

HACC implies that the burden on informal carers of both elderly and disabled people will increase. The survey sought to find out some of the characteristics of present and likely future carers to consider their capacity to carry an increasing burden of care. This section will further
explore their characteristics, and also consider the situations of those who indicated that they may have a caring role in the future.

Caring for a family or household member who is unable to look after him or herself can produce hardship, especially when the carers are themselves elderly or suffer ill health. 5.7 per cent of all respondents, or an estimated 762 adults in the district, had a member of their household or family who was unable to fully look after him or herself due to chronic illness, disability or age. About one third (16) of the 46 respondents who had a family or household member needing personal care were themselves 70 years of age or older. The remaining two thirds were roughly evenly distributed down to the 30 to 39 years age group. The evidence suggests that the average age of those who have caring responsibilities is higher than that of those who do not.28

16 respondents, or 36 per cent of those who had someone needing care received no help to care for that person. That is 2.0 per cent of the sample, or an estimated 268 people in the district. 14 of the 16 were women. Over half (nine of the 16) said that the care required included laundry, cleaning, transport and meals, or described it as "general care". No association was indicated between level of income and receipt of help.

Those who had someone needing care tended to score lower on both mobility and domestic facilities indexes.29 27 of the 46 (59 per cent) having someone needing care, compared with 84.9 per cent of the rest of the sample, scored maximum points on the mobility index. Similarly, 25 respondents (54 per cent) among those having someone needing care, compared with 73.0 per cent of the rest of the sample, scored maximum points on the domestic facilities index. However, those having someone needing care were similar to the rest of the sample in terms of gender, marital status, income, instrumental and expressive relations. The differences reflect the older age of the caring population.

The data indicate association between having both a person needing care and difficulty with home maintenance.30 That is, many people who had one problem also had the other. The percentage of elderly who had both someone needing care and home maintenance difficulty is relatively high, at 5.5 per cent compared to 2.2 per cent for other respondents.

The pattern of sources of help for all respondents with someone needing care differed little from the pattern of sources of help for the elderly. (Sources of help for the elderly were illustrated in Figure 11 on page 34) Like help with home maintenance (see Figure 6 on page 19), help to care for an aged or invalid family or household member was reported to come from voluntary and professional services about as frequently as it comes from family. Of the 30 respondents who had someone needing care and received help, 12 received help from family and 10 received help from a voluntary or professional service. This is illustrated in Figure 12. Those who used voluntary or professional services tended to have at least some potential family help. Nine of the
ten had close relatives whom they saw or spoke to at least once each week. The evidence from
the survey suggests that, if people who need care are to continue to reside in their own home
more frequently, rather than moving to an institution, the demand for care is likely to be felt by
families and services. Greater use of family would imply change in caring practice, with greater
acceptance of the burden by family members.

Some of those who had someone needing care indicated situations that may hinder their ability to
give care. One had no access to a car. Another had no telephone. Two scored zero on the
expressive relations index and another two scored zero on the instrumental relations index.
These numbers are small, but they confirm that such situations exist, and suggest that for some
people, caring may at times present a major problem.

Over half (51.6 per cent) of the sample stated that they were likely or very likely to have to care
for someone in the future. There is a positive association between being female and stated
likelihood of having a caring role. Understandably, those likely to care were also younger. 84.7 per cent were under the age of 60 years. They also had higher mean incomes and scored higher on the mobility and domestic facilities indexes.
Those likely to care in the future appear to be better equipped now than those who have caring responsibilities now. Yet, like those caring now, there were some who lacked facilities. 11 (2.5 per cent of likely future carers) had no access to a car and 11 (2.5 per cent) had no phone. 16 (3.8 per cent) scored zero on the expressive relations index (indicating loneliness) and 22 (5.3 per cent) scored zero on the instrumental relations index (indicating that certain sources or potential sources of support were not available). Not everybody was well equipped to take on a caring role.

Conclusion

The survey data have suggested that caring responsibilities for the elderly are presently shared between family and voluntary and professional organisations. A large scale increase in family responsibility presupposes a change in caring roles by many families, and an increased burden placed upon family members. If governments simply turn over the caring role to families, many people will not receive adequate care, or many families and community volunteers will have heavy demands placed upon them.

The change from institutional to home care will not treat everybody alike. While most elderly people are happy with their housing, health and emotional situations, there are many who live in relatively poor conditions, have health problems, are lonely and isolated from their families or have no family or other close relatives. For those people staying in their present accommodation and being cared for by their families seems to be an unlikely future. HACC will leave much scope for communities to provide for those who, through lack of potential support or hardship, will need continuing help. The survey found many such people in the Cowra district.
## Table 11
Summary of Estimates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem</th>
<th>Estimated %</th>
<th>Estimated number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Adult population</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arthritis and/or rheumatism</td>
<td>25.6</td>
<td>3 426</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asthma</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>1 311</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deafness (including partial)</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>1 990</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depression</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>669</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heart disease</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>629</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anxiety</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>549</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diabetes</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>374</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blindness (including partial)</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>267</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No use of motor car</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>1 097</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unable to get to/participate in favourite recreation alone</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>883</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unable to walk 100 metres without tiring</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>856</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unable to get to shops alone</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>495</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zero score on mobility index</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>347</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living alone</td>
<td>12.8</td>
<td>1 712</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Live alone and have no close relatives</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>268</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expressive relations zero score</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>696</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instrumental relations zero score</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>923</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends and relatives zero score</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>495</td>
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<tr>
<td>Single parents</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>442</td>
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<tr>
<td>No telephone</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>442</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No car</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>1 124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No washing machine</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>214</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inadequate heating</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>575</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inadequate cooling</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>1 298</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home maintenance difficulty</td>
<td>14.4</td>
<td>1 927</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home maintenance difficulty and have no help</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>585</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somebody in family/household needing care</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>762</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somebody in family/household needing care and having no help</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>268</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 11 Continued
Summary of Estimates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem</th>
<th>Estimated %</th>
<th>Estimated number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elderly population</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widowed</td>
<td>32.9</td>
<td>1 116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living alone</td>
<td>30.4</td>
<td>1 031</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Live alone and have no close relatives</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual income under $5 000</td>
<td>28.7</td>
<td>973</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chronic health problem(s)</td>
<td>67.5</td>
<td>2 290</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No use of washing machine</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inadequate heating</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inadequate cooling</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>237</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobility index score zero</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>210</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No use of car</td>
<td>17.8</td>
<td>604</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unable to get to shops alone</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>275</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unable to get to/participate in favourite recreation</td>
<td>14.9</td>
<td>505</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unable to walk 100 metres without tiring</td>
<td>15.6</td>
<td>529</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expressive relations zero score</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>346</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instrumental relations zero score</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>336</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends and relatives zero score</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somebody in family/household needing care</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>329</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home maintenance difficulty</td>
<td>23.8</td>
<td>807</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home maintenance difficulty and receive no help</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>176</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not happy with present accommodation and planning to stay indefinitely</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>366</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Endnotes

1 Estimates are given only where the standard error does not exceed 25 per cent of the sample mean.

2 Comparisons of means and standard deviations for rural, village and town samples should be made with their respective sample sizes in mind. There were 242 rural respondents, 56 village respondents and 572 town respondents in the random sample. Mean scores on the mobility index were 3.7391, 3.6488 and 3.6210 and standard deviations were 0.8111, 0.9912 and 0.8359 for rural, village and town dwellers respectively. A t-test contrasting the mean village score with town and rural mean scores revealed a level of significance of 0.873.

3 A step-wise multiple regression showed living alone to explain 8.87 per cent of variance in the mobility index, followed by physical health explaining an additional 3.91 per cent, marital status explaining an additional 1.30 per cent and age explaining an additional 1.38 per cent. All are significant at the 0.000 level. Total variance explained by these four variables is 15.47 per cent.

4 The expressive relations index has the largest proportion of zero scorers and the smallest proportion of less than maximum scorers. This is indicative of the greater ability of this index to define a dimension of isolation. That is, people who lacked one type of expressive relationship were likely to lack them all. This is shown by a relatively high alpha coefficient found in reliability testing of this index, being 0.7889, compared with 0.6270 for the friends and relatives index and 0.4902 for the instrumental relations index. Results of reliability tests on other indexes used in this paper are not given but are available from the author on request.

5 Analysis of variance contrasting the divorced with other marital status groups showed a level of significance for a t-test at 0.013.

6 Divorced respondents numbered 22, while married, never married, widowed and separated numbered 594, 129, 90 and 18 respectively.

7 A correlation coefficient of 0.2635 was found between these two variables. A slightly stronger correlation was found between friends and relatives and instrumental relations, being 0.3134.

8 A step-wise multiple regression found close relatives to explain 2.4 per cent of variance in the expressive relations index, while marital status added 1.9 per cent and the friends and relatives index added a further 1.6 per cent, to give total variance explained by the three variables at a very low 5.9 per cent.

9 Chi-square test of significance indicated significance at a level of 0.0093, and a t-test for difference between mean scores for males and females indicated significance at a level of 0.042.

10 Chi-square tests of significance indicated significance at levels of 0.0007, 0.0001 and 0.1625 for instrumental relations, friends and relatives and expressive relations indexes respectively. This takes no account of differences in number among rural, village and town respondents. (See Note 2 above.)

11 At the .05 significance level.

12 A t-test of significance of difference between the mean incomes of respondents age under 60 and those aged 60 and older showed significance at the 0.000 level.

13 A t-test revealed significance at a level of 0.004.

14 Chi-square tests of significance indicated significance at levels of 0.0076 and 0.0028 respectively.
15 Chi-square test of significance indicated significance at a level of 0.0222. A t-test revealed significance at a level of 0.000.

16 Chi-square test of significance indicated significance at a level of 0.0000. A t-test revealed significance at a level of 0.000.

17 A t-test revealed significance at a level of 0.000.

18 Analysis of variance contrasting mean score on the domestic facilities index of those aged 70 and older with the other age groups showed t-test significance at a level of 0.001.

19 Analysis of variance contrasting mean score on the domestic facilities index of widowed respondents with those of other marital status groups showed t-test significance at a level of 0.016.

20 Chi-square test of significance indicated significance at 0.0000 for both gender and age.

21 A t-test of difference between mean frequency of home maintenance difficulty for Gooloogong and the larger sample indicated significance at a level of 0.030.

22 A t-test of difference between mean frequency of having a person in the family or household needing care for Gooloogong respondents and the larger sample indicated significance at a level of 0.019.

23 A t-test of significance of the difference between mean incomes of those aged under 60 and those aged 60 and older indicated significance at a level of 0.000.

24 Correlation coefficients of 0.4384 between the friends and relatives and expressive relations indexes, and 0.4187 between the friends and relatives and instrumental relations indexes were found for the elderly component of the sample.

25 Association is indicated by a chi-square test showing significance at a level of 0.0040.

26 Association is indicated between living alone and not intending to stay in the present home by a chi-square test showing significance at a level of 0.0442.

27 Association is indicated between a low score on the housing amenity index and not intending to stay by a chi-square test showing significance at a level of 0.0448. A t-test of significance between mean levels of housing amenity for those intending and not intending to stay indicated significance at a level of 0.000.

28 A t-test of significance of the difference in mean age between carers and non-carers showed significance at a level of 0.001.

29 T-tests of differences between mean scores on mobility and domestic facilities indexes show significance at levels of 0.047 and 0.001 respectively.

30 Chi-square test shows significance at the 0.000 level.

31 Chi-square test of significance indicated significance at a level of 0.0015.

32 T-tests of significance of the differences between mean incomes and scores on the mobility and domestic facility indexes indicated significance at levels of 0.000, 0.000 and 0.047 respectively.
References

Department of Community Services (1985) *Home and Community Care Program Background Paper.*


Appendix A: The Sample

The survey used a clustered random sample of 870 adults across the district, and a sample of 72 from the population of Gooloogong.

The sampling procedure for the larger sample worked as follows. Every tenth name was selected from the electoral roll and that person's address was noted. The address was used as a starting point for questionnaire distribution. Questionnaire distributors were asked to hand one to an adult in each of ten neighbouring homes. The questionnaire instructed the person who received it to have it filled out by someone chosen at random, and asked that an adult be chosen at random by selecting the person 18 years of age or older whose birthday comes next. Distributors were asked to call again if a home was apparently occupied but nobody was at home. Envelopes were provided to preserve confidentiality as distributors called back to collect the completed questionnaires. Each distributor was given a number identifying their locality. They wrote that number on the outside of each envelope after collection. Each envelope was colour coded as a double check.

Unfortunately many names and addresses in the rural areas selected from the electoral rolls could not be identified, even with help from local people of long residence. In the towns there were some instances of overlap which resulted in questionnaires not being delivered. Hence 1,200 questionnaires were delivered out of a possible 1,330 for the larger sample.

The Gooloogong sample was drawn by handing a questionnaire to each household in the village. Four households in Gooloogong returned blank questionnaires.

The response rate for questionnaires delivered in the larger sample was 73 per cent. The geographic distribution of respondents was checked against the distribution of adults as indicated by the 1981 Census and found to be equivalent. The sample was weighted for age and sex based on the 1981 Census.
Appendix B: The Questionnaire

COMMUNITY NEEDS SURVEY

Community health and assistance organisations in Cowra, Canowindra, Eugowra and Grenfell have formed a committee to conduct a survey of community needs. The committee includes representatives of such groups as Senior Citizens and Pensioners Clubs, Home Care and Saint Vincent de Paul. The survey is being conducted so that all community groups can have statistical information which will help them manage their operations and seek support for their efforts to help people in need. We are asking people selected at random to take part, so that we can have a broad statistical picture of the district’s population as a whole.

The questionnaire asks you for information about community facilities and your needs, as well as some background information. We do not ask your name. An envelope is provided for you to seal the completed questionnaire inside, if you wish to do so. The information will only be used statistically, to describe the population of the district in terms of its needs.

Experts from the Sociology Department of The Australian National University are giving technical assistance and advice to the project to ensure that it meets high technical standards and is seen to be impartial when compared to surveys of other districts.

The questionnaire must be filled in by an adult woman or man chosen at random from your household. To choose someone at random, think of the birthdays of all the people in your household aged 18 years or older and work out whose birthday comes next. The person whose birthday comes next should be the person who fills in the questionnaire. For example, if there are two adults and one has a birthday in December and the other in March, the person whose birthday is in December should fill in the questionnaire.

The person who delivered the questionnaire will return to collect it in about one week, as you might arrange with him/her.

If you would like further information about the project, please phone either Carol Cutler or Ian Gray at the Cowra Neighbourhood Centre on 42 4138.

Please turn this page over to start the questionnaire.

Thank you for your help with the survey.
Please answer the questions by, where appropriate, circling a response such as Yes or No or just a few or by writing the answer in the box or space provided. If you feel uncertain, or if you feel that none of the possibilities offered describes your situation adequately, try to choose the best available answer, or make a good guess. A guess will be more useful than no answer at all.

1. We would first like to ask some questions about provision of community facilities in the area easily accessible from your home. Please comment on the availability and quality of services and facilities for people in your area by placing a cross in the appropriate box below. Think only about people in the area near your home and the facilities convenient to your home.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facility</th>
<th>not available</th>
<th>available but need improvement</th>
<th>adequate</th>
<th>good</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>playgrounds</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>child care</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sports fields</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>parks</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>meeting rooms</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shops</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>schools</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>childrens' playgroups</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Are there any other facilities which you feel are needed in your area?

No  
Yes  
go to question 3

a) Please specify them______________________________

Now we would like to ask some questions about your contact with friends, family and others. We ask these questions to get a statistical picture of the potential family and community sources of help available for all people. For many young and healthy people, family and friends are seldom needed for help. But with age and disability, people without family and community support may have special problems.
3. Of all your relatives, roughly how many live within about thirty miles (50 km) of your home?

| none | just a few | about half | most | all |

4. Do you have any relatives, not living in your household, to whom you feel particularly close? (Close relatives can include children, brothers, sisters, parents, uncles, aunts and cousins.)

   No
   Go to question 5

   Yes

   a) How often do you have contact with those close relatives outside your household whom you see/speak to most often?

   | About once per | day | week | month | year | Not at all |

5. Of the people you think of as good friends, what proportion lives within about thirty miles (50 km) of your home?

| none | just a few | about half | most | all |

6. Are you able to see your friends as often as you like to?

   No
   Yes

7. About how many of your friends who live within about thirty miles (50 km) of your home know each other well?

   | none | just a few | about half | most | all |

8. About how many of your friends who live within about thirty miles (50 km) of your home know some or all of your relatives?

   | none | just a few | about half | most | all |

9. Of all your friends and relatives, what proportion lives within walking distance, or a few minutes' drive, from your home?

   | none | just a few | about half | most | all |
10. Is there someone you do not hesitate to ask to do small favours for you, like look after your home or pets or garden while you are away?
   No  Yes

11. How many neighbours do you know well enough to visit in their house or in yours?
   ___

12. We would like to ask some questions about close friendships or relationships. Is there anyone to whom you feel very close?
   No  Yes

13. Is there someone who knows you very well as a person, and accepts you just as you are?
   No  Yes

14. Is there someone with whom you enjoy common interests, activities or outings?
   No  Yes

15. Are you a member of any clubs whose meetings you go to, such as sports clubs, church groups, service clubs, recreation clubs, cultural or educational groups?
   No  Yes
   Go to question 16
   a) How many such clubs do you belong to?  ___

Now we would like to ask about health problems, special needs and disabilities, so that we can assess the need for services in the district.

16. Please place a cross in the space provided to indicate any problems which you suffer from.

   Blindness ..................  ___
   Deafness ..................  ___
   Learning problems ......  ___
   Dementia .................  ___
   Brain damage ............  ___
   Cerebral palsy ...........  ___
   Epilepsy ..................  ___
   Muscular dystrophy ......  ___
   Multiple sclerosis ......  ___
   Arthritis/Rheumatism .  ___
   Heart disease ............  ___

(continues)
17. Does anybody else in your household suffer from one or more problems like those listed above?

No   Yes

As we said earlier, the survey is designed to find out the needs of present and future older members of the community, or those who in some way find it difficult to lead a healthy and satisfying life. For many young and healthy people there are few problems. For older or disabled people the simplest tasks can be difficult, especially if they lack suitable accommodation and facilities. Answers to the next few questions will help us to draw a picture of the needs of the community as a whole.

18. Thinking generally, are you happy with your present accommodation and planning to stay in it indefinitely?

No   Yes

a) Are you dissatisfied with your accommodation because

it is expensive ........................................   ___
you are not close to your family ....................   ___
you do not feel secure ................................   ___
you are lonely ............................................   ___
it's hard to manage the house and garden ....   ___
it's too small ............................................   ___
it's too far from town facilities ...................   ___
another reason (please specify) ________________________________
b) Are you staying in your present accommodation because alternative accommodation is

- too expensive
- too far from family or friends
- there is a waiting list for what you want
- another reason (please specify)


c) Would you be happy to stay in your present accommodation if someone from a volunteer or other organisation were to give you some help?

- No
- Yes

Go to question 19

d) Of the following kinds of help which ones would be useful to you?

- transport for shopping or recreation activity
- home maintenance
- cooking
- cleaning
- other (please specify)

19. If you were for any reason to choose alternative accommodation, would you choose

- a self contained unit or flat
- a hostel
- a house
- other (please specify)

20. Do you have, or have easy access to, a telephone?

- No
- Yes

21. Here is a list of community services. Please indicate your use of and satisfaction with them by placing a cross in the appropriate spaces.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Don't use</th>
<th>Use but not satisfied</th>
<th>Use and satisfied</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Home Care</td>
<td>___</td>
<td>___</td>
<td>___</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meals on Wheels</td>
<td>___</td>
<td>___</td>
<td>___</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Health</td>
<td>___</td>
<td>___</td>
<td>___</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District Nursing</td>
<td>___</td>
<td>___</td>
<td>___</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day Care Centre</td>
<td>___</td>
<td>___</td>
<td>___</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lachvale School</td>
<td>___</td>
<td>___</td>
<td>___</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix A

22. Are you visited regularly by any volunteer or charitable groups, other than those in the list above?

   No       Yes

23. Do you have, or have the use of, a car?

   No       Yes

24. Do you have, or have the use of, a washing machine?

   No       Yes

25. Is the heating in your home adequate?

   No       Yes

26. Are you able to cool your home sufficiently to avoid distress in summer?

   No       Yes

The next questions cover some simple problems which confront many people at some time in their lives.

27. Do you tire quickly when climbing stairs?

   No       Yes

28. Are you able to get to and use the shops on your own?

   No       Yes
29. Are you able on your own to get to and participate in your favourite recreation activity, such as sport or a club?
   No                          Yes

30. Can you walk about a hundred metres without tiring?
   No                          Yes

31. Do you have difficulty maintaining or looking after your home?
   No                          Yes
   Go to question 32
   a) Does anybody outside your household help you?
      No                          Yes
      Go to question 32
      a) Does anybody outside your household help you?
         No                          Yes
         Go to question 32
      b) Is the helper(s)
         friends or relatives       a voluntary or professional service
   b) Is the helper(s)
      friends or relatives       a voluntary or professional service

32. Is any member of your family or household through chronic illness, disability or age, unable to fully look after him or herself?
   No (all can fully look after themselves) Yes (someone needs help)
   Go to question 33
   a) Does anybody help you to look after that person?
      No                          Yes
      Go to c)
   b) Is the helper
      friend or relative          a voluntary or professional service
   b) Is the helper
      friend or relative          a voluntary or professional service
                                    family
c) Please describe as fully as possible the kind of care the person needs, such as laundry, cleaning, transport or meals.

Go to question 34

33. How likely is it that some time in the future you will help to care for an aged parent or relative?

very likely     likely     unlikely     impossible

Now we would like to ask for some background information.

34. In the box below, please write the total number of people, including yourself, who live in your household.  

35. How old were you at your last birthday?  

36. Are you  

Female?     Male?

37. Please circle the best description of your marital status.  

Married (formally or informally)     Never married  
Separate     Divorced     Widowed

38. Do you have any children in your care?  

No     Yes  

Go to question 39

a) By writing numbers (including 0 if appropriate) in the spaces below, please indicate how many of the children in your care are aged

5 years or younger ................  
between 6 and 15 years ..........  
16 years or older ...............  
39. Do you live in a

- house rented from the Housing Department . . . .
- house or unit you own or are buying . . . . . . .
- house rented privately . . . . . . . . . . . . . .
- flat rented from the Housing Department . . .
- flat rented privately . . . . . . . . . . . . . .

39. Are you of Aboriginal origin?

No  Yes

41. Were you born in Australia?

No  Yes

   Go to question 42

   a) Please indicate your country of birth.

   - Britain or Ireland . . . . .
   - Greece or Cyprus . . . . .
   - Italy . . . . . .
   - Netherlands . . . . .
   - New Zealand . . . . .
   - Yugoslavia . . . . .
   - Germany . . . . .

   Elsewhere (please specify . . . . .)

   b) How long have you lived in Australia? . . . . years

42. What kind of work does the main income earner in your household usually do?
(What is his/her occupation, or if retired, former occupation?)


43. Has there been a period of time during the last 12 months when both you and your wife/husband/partner were working outside the home? (Work outside the home can include work on the family farm or business.)

   No  Yes

   Go to question 44

   a) Was the total period of time during the last 12 months
       shorter than one month? . . . . . .
       between one and 6 months? . . . . .
       longer than 6 months? . . . . . .
Appendix A

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b) Were you both working full time? That is for longer than 35 hours per week.

No Yes

44. Has anybody in your household who usually works been unemployed for one month or longer during the past twelve months?

No Yes

45. Please circle the best description of the highest education qualification obtained by the main income earner of your household.

Trade qualification University/CAE degree Diploma
Higher School Certificate (or equivalent) Other certificate
Not completed school

46. Do you consider yourself to belong to any religion?

No Yes
go to question 47

a) What religion/denomination do you belong to?

Roman Catholic/Catholic Anglican/Church of England
Uniting Church Methodist Presbyterian
Baptist Orthodox Lutheran
other (please specify __________________________)

47. Please indicate, by circling the appropriate number, your approximate pre-tax household income for the last year, 1985-6.

$ 0 - 4,999 (0 - $96 per week) ........................................ 1
$ 5,000 - 9,999 ($97 - 192 per week) ................................ 2
$10,000 - 19,999 ($193 - 384 per week) ............................ 3
$20,000 - 29,999 ($385 - 576 per week) ............................ 4
$30,000 - 39,999 ($577 - 769 per week) ............................ 5
$40,000 - 49,999 ($770 - 961 per week) ............................ 6
$50,000 upwards ($962 upwards per week) .......................... 7

Thank you for completing the questionnaire.
THE DEMAND FOR COMMUNITY CARE AMONG THE ABORIGINAL POPULATION OF COWRA

Ian Gray
Sociology Department
The Faculties
The Australian National University

with comments by

Carol Cutler
Co-ordinator
Cowra Neighbourhood Centre

and

Lorraine Jeffries
Aboriginal Trainee in Social Welfare
Cowra Neighbourhood Centre

January, 1988
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This project was undertaken by the Cowra and District Home and Community Care Committee with financial support from a Commonwealth Employment Program grant. The grant funded the tasks of questionnaire distribution, administration and collection. This work was carried out by Lorraine Jeffries, working in, and with support from, the Cowra Neighbourhood Centre. Thanks are due to Lorraine for her very successful work, to the Committee as a whole for arranging funding, and to Carol Cutler and the Neighbourhood Centre for providing accommodation and support.

Thanks are also due to the 59 Aboriginal people of Cowra who took the time and trouble to fill in the questionnaire.

I would also like to acknowledge the work of those who helped to set up the larger survey, carried out in 1986 and reported on earlier, of which this project is an extension. Those people, acknowledged in my earlier report, included members of the Home and Community Care Committee, as well as Dr Stephen Mugford and Mr Mark Ramsay of The Australian National University and Mr Jim Millwood of the Department of Community Services in Canberra.
Background to the Survey

This survey is an extension of a random sample survey carried out by the Cowra and District Home and Community Care Committee in late 1986. That survey counted only a small number of Aboriginal people, insufficient to permit analysis of the situations of Aboriginal people in the area. As the Committee was aware that Aboriginal people have special problems, but was unaware of the frequency of those problems, it sought to extend the survey by administering the same questionnaire to people who consider themselves to be Aboriginal.

Background to the design of the questionnaire and the objectives of the larger survey in the context of the Home and Community Care Program is described in the report on the larger survey, entitled "Report No. 1, To the Cowra and District Home and Community Care Committee, THE DEMAND FOR COMMUNITY CARE, by Ian Gray, September, 1987". The format of this report largely follows the earlier report. Analysis in this report is less detailed because the sample is smaller, 59 respondents compared to 870 respondents to the larger survey. The Aboriginal survey was administered between May and July 1987.

It is important to note that the sampling procedure for Aboriginal people was different from the sampling procedure for the earlier survey. In the earlier survey the questionnaire was offered to households selected at random and individual adults at random within them. In the Aboriginal survey, a questionnaire was offered to every Aboriginal family in Cowra township and then individual adults were selected at random within each family. Aboriginal families were found with help from the Aboriginal community. In a few cases distribution to families meant that more than one questionnaire was completed in a household, because members of more than one family were present.

A relatively large number of single parent Aboriginal families complicates comparison between the two surveys. 21 of the 59 families who were selected and responded were single parent families, in which only one person could be selected. As the probability of a single Aboriginal parent being selected is not the same as the probability of all other Aboriginal adults being selected, the sample cannot be considered to be random. Inferences cannot be drawn to the Aboriginal adult population as they were to the total adult population of the area in the earlier report. This report contains no estimates of numbers of adults as the earlier report did.

Estimates of the Aboriginal population would have necessarily been few in any case, because the relatively small size of the sample would have made it difficult to draw inferences to the Aboriginal population. This is so despite respondents to the survey representing more than one third of the adult Aboriginal population in Cowra Shire, which the 1986 Census put at 154 people (aged 20 years and older).
References will be made in this report to "Erambie", the Aboriginal settlement about three kilometres from the centre of Cowra. Often referred to as "the mission", Erambie was first settled in the 1880s. It survived government assimilation policies, and since the mid 1970s, its people have established their own administration and control over their land. Until the mid 1970s, virtually all Cowra Aboriginal people lived at Erambie. In the mid 1980s about half live at Erambie. Readers wanting further information on the history of Erambie and its people should consult "Down There with Me on the Cowra Mission: an oral history of Erambie Aboriginal Reserve, Cowra, New South Wales", by Peter Read, published by Pergamon Press, Sydney in 1984.

Some particularly striking comparisons will be made in this report, but these should be viewed with the difference in sample size and the bias in the sample of individual Aboriginal adults in mind. There is no bias in the sample of Aboriginal families, because it was virtually a census. They were all offered questionnaires and all but 3 returned them completed. That is, the response rate was 59 returned out of 62 distributed.

Comments by Carol Cutler and Lorraine Jeffries are included in the text, printed in italics. These comments provide explanation and expansion of the survey findings.

**Chronic Health Problems and Disabilities**

40 of the 59 respondents to the Aboriginal survey reported one or more chronic health problems or disabilities. That is almost two thirds, compared to under half of the larger sample. 34 indicated one or more physical problems and 15 indicated one or more emotional or mental problems. Table 1 shows the incidence of reported specific health problems and disabilities among the Aboriginal respondents. These are the numbers of Aboriginal families in which the problems were reported to occur at least once.

Although it is not possible to draw precise comparisons, there is a suggestion that while incidence of arthritis/rheumatism and asthma is similar among Aboriginal and other populations, incidence of heart disease, diabetes, depression and anxiety is higher among Aboriginal people. The relative percentages of respondents indicating certain health problems in each survey are illustrated in Figure 1.
Table 1
Reported Chronic Health Problems and Disabilities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem</th>
<th>Number of respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Blindness</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deafness</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning problems</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dementia</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Epilepsy</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple Sclerosis</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arthritis/rheumatism</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heart disease</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diabetes</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arthritis/rheumatism</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heart disease</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diabetes</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asthma</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depression</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anxiety</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcoholism</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drug abuse</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 1
Percentages of Respondents in Random Sample and Aboriginal Surveys Reporting Selected Health Problems

Our experience indicates that alcoholism is a more serious problem than these figures suggest.
There have been a number of alcohol related deaths among Aboriginal people in Cowra this year. Drinking is a big problem among black as well as white children. (C.C. and L.J.)

Mobility Problems

Three respondents indicated low mobility by scoring zero on a mobility index. That is, they indicated that they had no use of a motor car, were unable to get to the shops alone, were unable to get to and participate in their favourite recreation activity and could not walk 100 metres without tiring. 20 respondents gave positive responses on all four items. These items correspond to questions 23, 28, 29 and 30 of the questionnaire in Appendix A (page 354). Table 2 shows the number of negative responses to each question.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem</th>
<th>Number of respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No use of motor car</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unable to get to/participate in favourite recreation alone</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unable to walk 100 metres without tiring</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unable to get to shops alone</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The 28 who had no use of a motor car were spread among all age groups, half of them being under age 40, and five being 60 years of age or older. Of the 870 respondents to the larger survey, 72 had no use of a motor car. Four of the 14 respondents to the Aboriginal survey who reported difficulty walking were aged 65 or older.

Mobility problems appear more frequent among respondents to the Aboriginal survey than among the random sample survey respondents. The relative percentages of respondents indicating mobility problems in each survey are shown in Figure 2.

Many Aboriginal people, especially the elderly, live at Erambie which is three kilometres from town. There being no public transport and few shops nearby, they are dependent on family and friends for access to most town facilities. Mobility problems are worsened by distance, rather
than physical disabilities. (C.C. and L.J.)

Figure 2
Percentages of Respondents in Random Sample and Aboriginal Surveys Reporting Mobility Problems

Social and Emotional Isolation

Five respondents to the Aboriginal survey were living alone. Two were living alone and had no close relatives. This implies that they were socially isolated, but does not confirm either isolation or loneliness. The survey took a more direct look at social isolation by asking questions about relationships. Responses to these questions were grouped to form indexes, as explained on page 11 of the "The Demand for Community Care":

"An expressive relations index was used to measure loneliness. It was constructed using questions on close friendships, personal acceptance and sharing of interests to indicate availability of emotional contact. The questions are numbers 12, 13 and 14 of the questionnaire in Appendix [A, page 354]. An instrumental relations index was used to indicate potential availability of practical support. It was constructed from questions on acquaintance with neighbours, availability of someone to do small domestic favours and local organisation membership, questions 10, 11 and 15 of the questionnaire in Appendix [A, page
A friends and relatives index was used to indicate potential availability of friends and relatives. It was constructed from three questions on friends and relatives living nearby, questions 3, 5 and 9 of the questionnaire in Appendix A, page 354. People who are most isolated are of most concern to the Committee. Such cases were indicated by zero scores on the indexes.

Table 3 shows the incidence of zero scores on each index.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Index</th>
<th>Number of respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Expressive relations</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instrumental relations</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends and relatives</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 suggests that isolation may be comparatively rare among the Aboriginal population, but practical help is not always potentially or actually available.

Of the 10 who scored zero on instrumental relations, three were aged 60 or older. One of those who scored zero on instrumental relations scored zero on expressive relations. Six of those who scored zero on instrumental relations scored the maximum three points on the friends and relatives index.

Responses to the questions on networks of friends and relatives may add some detail to this picture. Figure 3 shows the frequencies of responses to question 3 on the questionnaire, being "Of all your relatives, roughly how many live within about thirty miles (50 km) of your home". While only two respondents said they had no relatives in the district, half said they had just a few.
10 respondents said they had no relatives to whom they felt particularly close. All of the 10 were aged under 55. Almost half (22 respondents) of those who had close relatives, had contact with them about once per day. Contact frequency of those who had close relatives is shown in Figure 4.

Five respondents said that they had no good friends living nearby; three of the five were aged 65 or older. 27 respondents said that they were unable to see their friends as often as they liked to. 22 of the 27 were aged under 60. Isolation is not confined to the elderly.
People in town stay close to contacts at Erambie. They tend to call on other Aboriginal people for help. If they can’t get to Erambie at least once a day, they feel isolated. They feel a need to have some contact with their family at least once a day. They get on well with neighbours, but they also need family contact. Even those whose families have never lived at Erambie associate closely with people at Erambie. (C.C. and L.J.)

Household Incomes

Almost half of the 52 respondents who answered the income question reported household income for 1985-6 below $5 000. The distribution of income level among respondents is shown in Figure 5.
Of the 59 respondents, 25 reported that there had been unemployment in their household for one month or longer during the 12 months prior to the survey. 40 said that they had not completed school.

As mentioned above, 21 respondents were single parents. Thirteen single parents reported incomes below $9,999 for 1985-86. All but one of the single parents were female. Their ages ranged from the 18 to 24 years age group to the 60 to 64 years age group. Ten were under the age of 40 years. Nine had never married, six were separated, one was divorced and five were widowed. Four had no children under age 16. The remaining 17 had 32 children under age 16 among them. All had close relatives. 11 had contact with close relatives at least once each day, three once per week, four once per month and three once per year.

Housing Problems

Standard of housing and domestic facilities were measured by responses to six questions, grouped to form an index like those used above to measure mobility and social and emotional isolation. The index was described on page 17 of "The Demand for Community Care":

"Difficulties related to standard of housing and domestic facilities have been measured by six variables. The variables are possession of, or having the use of, a telephone, a car, a washing machine, adequacy of heating, adequacy of cooling and difficulty with home maintenance, corresponding to questions 20, 23, 24, 25, 26 and 31 of the questionnaire. These items
have been used to form an index on which each respondent could score a maximum of six points."

33 respondents scored four or fewer points on this index. Numbers of respondents who did not have each of the five domestic facilities on which information was sought in the questionnaire are shown in Table 4.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facilities lacking</th>
<th>Number of respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Telephone</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Car</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washing machine</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adequate heating</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adequate cooling</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

16 respondents said that they had difficulty maintaining their home. Five of those sixteen received no help from outside their household to maintain their home. Among the 11 who received help, five received it from a voluntary or professional service, while sources of help for the remainder were roughly equally distributed among family, friends and relatives.

24 respondents reported that they were not happy with their present accommodation and were not planning to stay in it indefinitely. The most common reason given for discontent was being too far from town (11 respondents), followed by not being close to family, feeling insecure and accommodation being too expensive (seven respondents each), and the home being too small (six respondents). 13 respondents said they were staying in their present accommodation because alternatives were too expensive and five said alternatives were too far from family and friends. 10 said that they would be happy stay if given help. The most popular forms of help were home maintenance (7) and transport (5).

Some of those not intending to stay in their present homes were expecting to move into new houses to be built by the [Aboriginal operated] Koori Housing Company. Six families were expecting to move into those houses. (C.C and L.J.).
Child Care

The survey measured demand for child care using an index, as described in "The Demand for Community Care", page 23:

"Respondents scored points on the index for having a child in their care, having a child under age 5, and where they had a child in their care, having had a period of time during the last 12 months when both marriage partners worked outside the home, that period of time being longer than one month, and both partners having worked full time during that period. Respondents could therefore score a maximum of 5 points. Single parents were given 4 points, unless they had a child under age 5, in which case they were given 5 points."

25 respondents scored four or five points on the child care index. This figure has been influenced by the number of single parents. Among those parents who scored four or five points there were 19 children aged five and under and 41 aged under 16.

The survey also sought respondents perceptions of the availability and quality of child care, along with a range of other community facilities to be discussed below. The question (number 1 in the questionnaire in Appendix A, page 354) asked respondents to think about facilities available to people in their area. Responses to the question on child care are show in Figure 6, and responses to the question on children's playgroups are shown in Figure 7.
Care for the Aged and Disabled

Six respondents reported that a member of their family or household needed care due to illness, disability or age. Three of those six received help with care of the aged or disabled person(s), two from a voluntary or professional service and one from family. 31 respondents said that it was likely or very likely that some time in the future they would help to care for an aged parent or relative.

*These figures do not accurately indicate the demand for home care; nor do they indicate the extent of service provided by the Aboriginal Home Care Service. The number of Aboriginal Home Care clients fluctuates around 10. In our view an underestimation could have arisen because Aboriginal people may have felt that the question was not relevant to them since arrangements are made by Aboriginal people for care of the elderly and disabled. The distinction between family and voluntary/professional help does not apply because the Service helpers are often related to the clients. (C.C. and L.J.)*

Perceptions of Availability/Quality of Community Facilities

Questions the same as those asked about child care and children's playgroups were asked about playgrounds, sports fields, parks, meeting rooms, shops and schools. Responses are shown in
Figures 8 to 13.

Figure 8
Perceptions of Availability/Quality of Playgrounds

Number of respondents

- Not available
- Need improvement
- Adequate
- Good

Figure 9
Perceptions of Availability/Quality of Sports Fields

Number of respondents

- Not available
- Need improvement
- Adequate
- Good
Figure 10
Perceptions of Availability/Quality of Parks

Number of Respondents

- Not available: 17
- Need improvement: 13
- Adequate: 13
- Good: 11

Figure 11
Perceptions of Availability/Quality of Meeting Rooms

Number of Respondents

- Not available: 30
- Need improvement: 12
- Adequate: 9
- Good: 4
Figure 12
Perceptions of Availability/Quality of Shops

Number of respondents

Not available
Need improvement
Adequate
Good

Figure 13
Perceptions of Availability/Quality of Schools

Number of respondents

Not available
Need improvement
Adequate
Good
Conclusion

The survey has highlighted some problems which afflict the Aboriginal Community. It has revealed evidence of health problems which might not be expected in other communities. It suggests that standards of living judged by income levels and domestic amenities are low. On the positive side, there is no evidence that loneliness is common, nor is there evidence of people lacking friends and relatives nearby, although there is evidence that some of the single parents lack family support.

The results should be interpreted with caution. The survey was designed to collect information on problems defined in the "European Australian" context. Situations which may be problematic for Aboriginal people may not appear so to others, and vice versa. The presence of family members may imply different potential for care in different cultural contexts. Solutions available in one situation may not be available in the other. Meanings of physical and emotional closeness may differ. The comments by Carol Cutler and Lorraine Jeffries have helped to clarify these issues. Users of the results should be wary of imposing their own conclusions.
Appendix C

The Cowra Area Study
Report No. 4

[No. 3 was a project I arranged in Cowra for Melinda Kiesling, a B.A. Hons student. Her report was entitled "Well-Being in a Small Sample of Rural Elderly".]

To the Cowra Branch of the New South Wales Farmers' Association

FAMILY FARMING AND SOCIAL VALUES

Ian Gray

Sociology Department
The Faculties
The Australian National University

May, 1988
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Synopsis

The report discusses the findings of a project which sought to explore relationships among three variables which add a subjective element to farm decision making in time of economic difficulty. The variables are family backgrounds of farm couples, strength of their attachment to farming through traditional values and beliefs about farming, and plans and desires for their children. The report discusses the design and implementation of the research, followed by the findings of interviews, first in general description, then with a focus on the key elements of the research problem. No evidence was found to support the proposed relationship between backgrounds of farm parents and expressions of values. Two sets of values are located and specified. The proposed relationship between values and generational succession was tested and modified, yielding some support for a proposition that farm couples with strongly rural, rather than business, farm values feel responsibility to pass the farm to their son(s) more often than do other farm couples.
Acknowledgements

This report is a product of a joint effort between farmers in the Cowra district of New South Wales and staff and students of The Australian National University (A.N.U.) in Canberra. Among the farmers special thanks must go to Peter Wright and Ian Ousby for setting up the project.

The interview schedule was designed and interviews carried out with help from Raphael Chapman, Carolyn Ho, Deborah Lupton, Ronia McDade, Diane Parry, Peter Stenhouse, Bill Webster, and Sonia Welklyj, all being students in the unit "Strategies of Sociological Research" taught by Dr Frank Lewins in the Sociology Department, The Faculties at A.N.U. Thanks are also due to Dr Lewins, Dr Stephen Mugford and Evelyn Hogan at A.N.U. for their comments on the interview schedule and drafts of this report.

I also wish to thank the farming couples who invited us into their homes and shared some of their experience of the farming life with us.

Ian Gray
Introduction

This paper reports on a project in which sociology students at The Australian National University were set the task of formulating and carrying out a research project on subjective aspects of the "rural crisis". The "rural crisis", which received much press coverage between 1985 and 1987, is a controversial term, not so much because there could be any doubt that some farmers were suffering a financial crisis, but rather because the long term effects on the rural economy were difficult to assess. The task for this project was to explore the subjective motivations which guide decision making in time of crisis, and hence develop an understanding of farm family responses to economic difficulty.

The subjective element is constituted by the values and beliefs to which farm families adhere, and which motivate their decision making. These values and beliefs are often indicated by statements in the media, such as Anonymous (1985). They have also been the subject of research, such as that by Craig and Phillips (1983).

In the context of the rural crisis, farm families who found themselves to be in difficult financial circumstances and still retained some prospect of "hanging on", had to ask themselves how much they wanted to stay in farming compared to whatever alternatives may have been available. For most farm parents, regardless of their immediate financial prospects, there is or will be a question of how to advise their children about futures in farming. While the economic prospects are important, they are not the only factors which motivate decision making. The family farm is a unique enterprise. It is a place in which the generations are nurtured; it is a tradition and a lifestyle, as well as being a potential livelihood. This study will focus on such non-economic factors, as they may enter the thinking of farm families.

The study explored these non-economic factors by means of interviews with farm couples. The couples are not intended to be representative of all farm families, nor of any group of families. The study is intended to explore the effects of ways of thinking of a non-random, small sample of Cowra area farmers, rather than find the average characteristics of the farm population.

The interviews sought to develop an understanding of the meanings which people attached to the aspects of farming which were important to them. Hence the interviews were detailed in nature and few in number. 16 interviews were carried out. Their duration ranged from one and a half to three hours. Interviewers were equipped with a schedule of questions to ask. They added annotations when further information, which could aid interpretation of responses, was offered. Sometimes the meanings which respondents attached to questions were as important as their responses to the questions.

The report begins with a brief outline of the way the project was formulated in terms of problems
for research to tackle. This part of the project drew on the work of several writers. An annotated bibliography has been included as a substitute for detailed discussion of this background literature. Knowledge of the literature is not necessary to gain an understanding of the research results. However, readers who are interested in the field of research on family farming are encouraged to browse the annotated bibliography. After the background outline, the report discusses the design and implementation of the interview schedule. It then reports the findings of the interviews, first in general description, followed by focus on the key elements of the research problem, and finally an assessment of the main factors in the subjective element in decision making and relationships among them suggested by the research.

**Formulation of the Research Project**

The formulation of a research project is a process of defining objectives and finding means of achieving those objectives. In this project our objective was to explore the subjective element in farm family decision making. Such a broad statement of the objective is insufficient guidance to specification of the information to be collected, how to collect it, and what to do with it when it has been collected. To obtain such guidance it is useful to set up a "model" of how this subjective element that we want to explore works in the farm family decision making process. This model is no more than a guide, like an early explorer's map. It will be used to find a starting point, to be modified as the project develops.

A model sets out hypothetical causes and effects. The effects are what we want to explain, in this case decision making behaviour. The causes are to be found in the thinking of individuals or families. In this case a model would suggest that a strong attachment to farming among farm families may cause more families to hang on in farming than an appreciation of economic conditions would lead one to expect.

In this research project we are asking why people hang on. To say that it is because they want to is the obvious answer but it tells us very little about what is happening in Australian agriculture. To find a cause of people hanging on we would ask: what is it about some people that makes them want to hang on, what is it in their own life histories that has led them to have the particular set of values and beliefs that makes them want to hang on?

It was our intention in this project to look for values and beliefs which are characteristic of farmers and farm families as a whole, rather than to explore the varieties of personalities among farm families. Naturally people and families vary. Some people have more tenacious and persistent personalities than others. Across this individual behaviour, however, group characteristics can be identified. The traditional set of values and beliefs is one of those group characteristics. It is the one our hypothetical model proposes as a cause of farmers hanging on.
The objectives of the research, tentative at this preliminary stage, are then to find out if those farm families who retain traditional farm values appear likely to hang on longer than others, and to identify the source of those values in the group which espouses them.

The search for the source of traditional values suggests extending the model by proposing that farming couples in which both husband and wife both came from a strong family background in farming are more likely to retain traditional values. This adds another link to the causal chain by locating a hypothetical source of values and beliefs in the family of origin. Our model proposes that those farming couples who come from a strong farming background are likely to retain traditional values and hence hang on longer than others. This offers two tentative propositions to test:

1. **farm couples who both have strong family farming backgrounds are more likely than others to retain traditional values, and**
2. **farm couples who retain farm values are more likely than others to hang on in difficult times.**

The first problem that testing this model poses is one of finding the means of comparison among identifiable groups. That is, we are confronted with the problem of identifying these groups and then comparing them. The search for a solution to this problem has two phases: a design phase and an implementation phase.

The design problem is essentially one of measurement: how to measure family backgrounds so as to separate couples from strong farm backgrounds from others; how to measure the strength of traditional values and so separate those who espouse them from those who do not; and how to measure tenacity so as to compare those who tend to hang on and those who do not. The implementation problem is one of finding subjects suitable for interview, and who can as a group be subjected to measurement.

Measurement demands that there be variation within the group so that contrasts and comparisons can be made. It will later be seen that lack of variation within the farm families studied in this project led to several modifications to the model being tested.

Implementation of the project was constrained, as are all research projects, by logistics. All necessary information had to be gathered in a small number of interviews; each couple could be interviewed only once and all interviews had to be carried out during the month of September, 1987. The interview questions had to be, as far as possible, applicable to each farming couple interviewed, and had to be of a non-sensitive nature.

These factors led to a further development of the research design before interviews were carried out. It was not possible to develop a means of measuring the propensity to "hang on".
Ambitions and plans for children were therefore substituted for "hanging on," on the basis that decisions about children's futures are important to farming parents, and are decisions on which subjective and economic factors may all have a strong bearing. The importance of generational succession to farm families, and the strength of values attached to it, is well illustrated in the literature, including Anonymous (1985), Rogers and Salamon (1983) and Symes and Appleton (1986). The second proposition in the model therefore became:

2. farm couples who retain farm values are more likely than others to want their children to continue in farming.

The project sought to explore relationships among three variables, being background of farm parents, strength of their attachment to farming through traditional values and beliefs about farming, and plans and desires for their children. The interview schedule was designed to seek information on each of these from each couple.

As the number of interviews was to be small and hence variation would be small, additional variables related to those in the model were included for measurement in the interview schedule. For example, beliefs about responsibilities of parents were sought as well as indications of desires for children's futures, in case all respondents either wanted their children to stay on the farm or to leave farming altogether. Indeed there was very little variation in desires for children, and beliefs about responsibilities were used, bringing further modification to the model. This will be discussed in detail below.

The sample was designed to control some sources of variation. This was done by identifying two groups and seeking to interview representatives from each of them to obtain a starting point for comparisons. We sought couples who had a weak farming background, so as to be certain in our small sample of 16 to be able to observe the effects of family background. We anticipated that such couples would be hard to find. When economic prospects for farming look bleak, one might expect that new entrants would be scarce, and more likely to be corporate than family farmers. As will be seen in the discussion of results, our anticipation of a scarcity of couples with a weak farming background proved correct. It necessitated modification to the model, as will be explained below. Control was also sought by interviewing couples who had young families, to whom planning for the futures of their children was a matter of interest. This was rather more successful.

The Interview Schedule

The interview schedule used several methods to measure the variables in the model. While family background can be ascertained with straightforward questions, the more abstract variables, like desires for children's futures and traditional farm values required more complex
Appendix C

measurement. This section will describe the questionnaire and explain how questions were derived.

Questions 1 to 3c) seek to ascertain the degree of involvement of each parent in farming or related activity in their youth. Questions 4 and 5 indicate the involvement of each parent's siblings in farming, with allowance for their ages. Questions 6 to 10 expand the background of the parents into the history of the farm they occupy. Questions 11 and 12 allow exploration of the effects of off-farm work, identified by some writers as a growing feature of the modern farming lifestyle (Barlett, 1986).

Question 13 sought details about children so that we could make sense of the discussion about plans for their futures. Questions 14 to 23 asked interviewees to state their hopes and aspirations for their children, as far as those hopes and aspirations are aimed at farming. Allowance is made for differential attitudes to futures of sons and daughters.

Questions 24 to 27 seek parents' attitudes to raising children on the farm. These are the first questions which attempt to measure values attached to farming. The remaining questions draw on the work of Craig and Phillips (1983). Questions 28, 29, 31, 34, 35, 36 and 37 look for attitudes to the role and prospects for family farming in the local and national economies. Questions 30, 32, 33, 38, 39 and 40 probe deeper into the values behind the motivation for family farming.

Finally, because of the involvement of the Farmers' Association in the project, it was important to have an indication of Association membership among people interviewed. The last question adds to the general description of the sample.

Findings I:
Description of the Sample

Parents
The sample consisted of 16 farming couples, in which the husbands were aged between 27 and 48 years and the wives between 28 and 47 years. Median ages were 34 and 33 years for husbands and wives respectively. Five husbands and three wives had lived in the Cowra district all their lives. The mean period of residence in the district was 26 years for husbands and 16 years for wives. 12 husbands were members of the Farmers' Association, and eight of the 12 said that they attended meetings regularly.

Farming backgrounds are very prominent in the sample. All but two husbands and six wives grew up on a farm. Only one couple stated that neither partner grew up on a farm. Five couples
consisted of husband with and wife without farm background, and one couple consisted of wife with and husband without farm background. Only two respondents (both wives) had had no exposure to rural life in their youth. All others who had not grown up on a farm had either spent some time, such as holidays, on a farm, or had a father with an agriculture related occupation. Exposure to rural values in youth is therefore almost universal across respondents.

Many respondents had siblings in farming. 15 husbands and 13 wives had at least one sibling. Among the husbands eight had at least one sibling on a farm, and among the wives five had at least one sibling on a farm.

All but one of the husbands had learnt farm skills on a farm. In most cases this meant his family's farm, except for the couple who had no farm background, in which case skills were acquired on their own farm, and the couple in which the wife had a farm background but the husband did not, in which case the husband had learnt on his parent's in law farm.

10 couples said that their farm had belonged to the parents of one partner; in only one case had it belonged to the wife's parents. Six said that the farm had been inherited by their parents (one of those was the wife's parents); meaning that for six of the 16 couples, they were at least the third generation of their family to operate their farm. Four husbands had lived on their farms throughout all their lives. No wives had done so. The one who had inherited her parents' farm had spent a short time living elsewhere.

Three husbands worked off-farm, all in agriculture related occupations. Eight wives worked off-farm, most in professional or semi-professional occupations in Cowra. No husbands indicated any likelihood of their off-farm work becoming an alternative career. Four of the wives indicated a likelihood (in one case certainty) of their off-farm work becoming a career.

Children
One couple had one child, five couples had two children, six had three children, two had four and two had five. The ages of children ranged from a few months to 21 years, with all but three of the total 47 aged 15 or younger and all but eight aged 10 or younger.

Of the 27 children considered by their parents to be old enough to have learnt farm work, 22 were said by their parents to have done so. Only three children were said not to make a useful contribution to farm work. Hardly any parents were able to state planned careers for their children. Two couples said that they had one child (son) who seemed likely to choose a farm career, but it seemed unlikely that he would take over the farm. Only one son was said to be likely to take over a farm. Among the three couples who said that their son(s) were not going to take over their farm, almost all individuals said that they had at some time in the past hoped that their son(s) would take over the farm, except one wife who had not felt so. Every respondent
either agreed or agreed strongly with the statements in questions 24 to 27. That is, all husbands and all wives felt that the farm environment is the best place to bring up both sons and daughters.

The sample shows characteristics which the literature on family farming would lead one to expect. In line with the research design, the sample consists of families with, mostly young, children who are likely to confront possibly difficult decisions about the children's succession to the family farm. Among these couples, movement away from a farming career for themselves appears unlikely, judging by the incidence of and approach to off-farm work, but futures for their children in farming are uncertain.

Virtually all couples had a strong background in farming. This will make testing of the first proposition, being "farm couples who both have strong family farming backgrounds are more likely than others to retain traditional values", difficult, as the "others" group to which comparison can be made will be small. However, while the prospects for comparison have diminished, the relatively large number which we have hypothesised to exhibit traditional values offers an opportunity to explore those values in more detail.

**Attitudes to the Role and Prospects for Family Farming**

Among the seven questions used to measure these attitudes (questions 28, 29, 31, 34, 35, 36 and 37) opinion was divided on all but one, being question 34: "The replacement of family farms by large corporate farms would have desirable economic and social consequences for the nation - do you strongly agree . . . ?" No couple agreed with this statement, indicating consistent value attached to the institution of the family farm.

There were three questions to which there was only one dissenting response. One couple disagreed with the statement that "Australia's economic prosperity is more dependent on agriculture than on any other part of the economy"; another couple agreed that "a depression in agriculture will not have much effect on the rest of the economy"; and another couple agreed that "farming rather than industry will not remain the economic base for this district for very long".

There was widespread disagreement over economic prospects for young couples in farming, the likelihood of replacement of family farms with large corporate farms and the desirability of farming remaining the economic base for the district. No couple agreed with both of the statements that economic prospects were good and that family farms would be replaced. Of the 14 who expressed opinions on both only four disagreed with both. This suggests that many of those people who see bad economic prospects also anticipate corporate farms taking over if those conditions persist, and conversely many of those who see good economic prospects do not anticipate corporate farm takeover.

These responses paint a picture of pride and pessimism. They indicate value placed on the
institution of the family farm, and a view of farming as important to the Cowra district and the nation. They also suggest that some farm couples do not see a bright future for family farming, both in terms of prospects for individual families and prospects for the institution of family farming.

Values and Motivations Behind Family Farming

Values and ideals associated with family farming were measured by questions 30, 32, 33, 38, 39 and 40. On the surface there was inconsistency in answers to all questions among couples interviewed. A close look reveals trends among answers to questions 38 and 39, the questions about government intervention and self reliance.

Seven couples disagreed with the statement that "farmers should be completely independent from government in their decision making." But all of those seven added the qualification that only minimal government regulation was necessary. Some mentioned control of use of pesticides, the excessive use of which was at the time threatening meat exports and gaining much publicity. This indicates persistence of an ideal of independence.

The emphasis placed on self reliance was a striking feature. Ten couples agreed with the statement that "farming, more than any other occupation, calls upon people to use their initiative and self reliance". Of those ten, five strongly agreed. Five couples disagreed with the statement. But each of the five who disagreed made the point that farming, rather than not calling on self reliance, does so without making more such demands than do other forms of business. One believed that to claim greater self reliance for farmers would be elitist. Those who agreed with the statement pointed to the uncertainties of working with the environment and isolated location making it impossible to use urban services. All couples saw farming as demanding of initiative and self reliance. Some saw a unique kind of self reliance, and others saw as it as closely related to the business demands of agriculture.

Responses to questions 38 and 39 were more consistent than was obtained to question 32 which sought agreement/disagreement with the statement "farming is a more satisfying occupation because it involves working with and understanding nature". Four couples disagreed with this statement and one expressed no opinion.

Question 40 sought to discover the features of farm life which were most important to people in farming. Although responses varied greatly, some trends can be found. Again self reliance was prominent, being one of the two features of those listed which no respondent found to be unimportant. The other was "being your own boss". These two features also attracted the largest numbers of "most important" responses, four and eight respectively, accounting for 12 of a total of 19 "most important" responses.
"Financial return" and "opportunity to set up children in a business" attracted the most responses of "not important", being 11 to each. Seven respondents replied "not important" to both of these features. Of those seven, only two (a couple) gave negative responses to question 22. That is, they felt that it was not a farm couple's responsibility to give their son(s) the opportunity to take over a farm. The other five, who felt that financial returns and business opportunities were not important but still felt that children should be given opportunities to enter farming, also felt that self reliance and "being your own boss" were the most important features of farming.

Along with the other evidence described above, this suggests that the attributes of farming which are most often valued are those which may be common to all small businesses (like "being your own boss"), rather than those which are unique to farming (like "being part of a rural community" and "working with and understanding nature"). This should be qualified with acknowledgement that to some respondents the unique feature of being part of a rural community was important, as was the opportunity to work outdoors, and, as stated earlier, all respondents believed that a farm was the best place to raise children.

In a small scale study such as this it is not possible to estimate the relative frequency of these views across the farm population. Rather, this study offers an opportunity to look for evidence of trends. The greater consistency of positive indications of value attached to the subjective lifestyle aspects of farming as independent business, rather than farming for the sake of living and working on the land, offers evidence of a trend.

Findings  II:  
Testing the Propositions  

Farming Background and Farming Values  
As stated earlier, testing the proposition that "farm couples who both have strong family farming backgrounds are more likely than others to retain traditional values" is made difficult by the presence of some farm background in every couple. Nevertheless, we can consider the one couple in which neither husband nor wife grew up on a farm, and those in which only one partner grew up on a farm. We can also use some other variables, specifically farm inheritance from the previous generation and proportion of siblings in farming. The two groups of values and attitudes, those related to roles and prospects for family farming and those expressing motivation for family farming, will be considered separately.

The couple in which both partners did not come from farm backgrounds gave responses in line with the general pattern described above. There was no evidence of their taking a non-traditional view of farming. They did not see desirable consequences of take over by large corporate farms, and felt that family farming would continue. The husband allotted greatest importance to "being
your own boss". They differed little from the trend in values and motivations, but did lean more towards the uniquely rural aspects of farm life. They strongly agreed that "farming is a more satisfying occupation than most because it involves working with and understanding nature" (question 32). The husband said that work outdoors was very important to him. He was one of only four respondents to rate it as more than just "important". Evidence of this couple's motivation being closer to the uniquely rural aspects of traditional farm values might be expected. They had chosen farming over other forms of business. There is no evidence that they do not adhere to the independent business oriented ideals.

This does, however, suggest a weakness in the proposition that people with a strong farming background are more likely to adhere to traditional farm values. Indeed, it suggests that new entrants in farming may hold those values just as strongly. One might suggest an explanation in terms of the motivation required to set up in farming rather than some other business against the widely acknowledged odds.

The six couples in which one partner did not grow up on a farm look much like everyone else. Their responses contain occasional deviations from what one would expect from people with a positive view of the role and prospects for agriculture, insufficient to suggest that they are any different to other respondents. They are among those who offered negative responses to the values and motivation questions, but are not especially prominent among them. Again among this group "being your own boss" and "opportunity to be self reliant" were the most important features of farming.

The only point of systematic difference between this group and other respondents was in the "not important" response to "being part of a rural community". This group contributed all six such responses. This indicates a point of contrast between the no-farm-background couple and this group in terms of deviation from the uniquely rural aspects of traditional farm values.

There is, therefore some suggestion that proposition 1 cannot be sustained. This may be in part because, as stated above, newcomers to farming are likely to have high ideals and strong motivation, and because the values behind the motivation are not necessarily uniquely rural but are rather those of a business ethic.

It may be worth considering a proposition that those couples who inherited properties retain traditional values associated with their continuing attachment to family land. However, such a proposition is not supported by responses to question 22: "do you feel that it is a couple's responsibility to give their son(s) the opportunity to take over a farm?" The only negative responses (two) to that question came from respondents who were on inherited farms.

Moreover, there is no evidence that those who were on inherited farms had different views on the
role and prospects for family farming, except for the inconclusive point that the only two couples who did not agree that "Australia's economic prosperity is more dependent on agriculture than on any other part of the economy" (question 29) had not inherited their farms. However, the four couples who agreed that "economic prospects are good for young couples in farming today" (question 28) had, perhaps not surprisingly, inherited their farms. Those who inherited their farms, and may hence be relatively free of indebtedness, may be more optimistic. This is not carried through to the values and motivation questions. Those who are optimistic, and all others who had inherited farms, gave a similar variety of views in response to the values and motivations questions as other couples.

The proportion of siblings in farming could also be used as a surrogate for family background in farming, so that we look for evidence that those couples who have siblings in farming also retain traditional values. However, the interviews offered no evidence that this would be so.

The number of siblings in farming ranges from none to eight among the couples interviewed. Eight couples had none, and among the smaller numbers of siblings, three had one and one had two. In each of these cases the farming siblings represented fewer than half each couple's total siblings. In the other four cases at least half of each couple's total siblings were in farming.

When these last mentioned cases are compared to all others they look similar, although they may be more optimistic. The only deviation from this was one couple who felt that farming should not remain the economic base for the district. The optimism may be related to three of the four having inherited their farms.

On values and motivations there was no clear trend to differentiate them from other couples. Like other couples they all placed greatest importance on "being your own boss" and "opportunity to be self reliant". The only evidence that they might be more traditional is that they are the only group identified so far in which all agreed with both the statements in questions 32 and 39. That is, they all agreed that farming is more satisfying than other occupations because it involves working with nature, and they also all agreed without qualification that farming calls on self reliance more than any other occupation. This contains a hint, without conclusive evidence, that this group has more specifically rural values than do others.

The survey offers no evidence to support Proposition 1, nor to support any of the surrogate propositions considered above. The survey has not found a "cause" for traditional values. The first link in the causal chain remains to be discovered. The data suggest that it will not be found in family backgrounds, or at least not only in family backgrounds. The weak evidence of association between traditional values and siblings in farming suggests that the search might usefully be directed to the family and community situations in which farm people interact. Family background would be associated with those situations, but appears unlikely on its own to
offer explanation for retention and maintenance of traditional values.

Farm Values and the Next Generation
The testing of Proposition 2, "farm couples who retain farm values are more likely than others to desire their children to continue in farming" requires that a group with strong farm values be compared to another to see if they differ systematically in terms of plans and desires for their children. Evidence considered so far indicates that it is difficult to find in this sample a group which has stronger traditional values than others in the sample, just as it was hard to find a group which had strong farm family backgrounds, because nearly all respondents displayed those characteristics.

Nevertheless, there are ways of approaching the problem. The group in which each couple has at least half of its siblings and siblings-in-law on farms shows consistent evidence of strong value attached to farming. They offer a starting point, and at a conceptual level, a surrogate link between the two propositions. The problem can also be approached from the opposite direction. That is, by defining groups in terms of hopes and plans for children, and looking for evidence of differences in values.

This analysis should be prefaced by a reminder that it is constrained by the consistency of response across all groups to questions on plans and hopes for children. It is necessary to use a variable which discriminates between those who have traditional hopes and plans for children and those who do not. But so few had definite plans and so many had had such hopes that the prospects for these variables making the necessary discrimination are ruled out. There is, therefore, no opportunity to consider the effect of values on plans and hopes because all couples were in some ways "traditional" in terms of plans and hopes. The study has confirmed the existence of these values but cannot in the way originally intended observe their effects on decision-making. Hence it is necessary to use a more abstract variable than either decisions, plans or hope.

Normative views of passing the farm on to a son, indicated by responses to question 22, offer a substitute variable, though a weak one because all but two couples responded positively to it. This variable describes how respondents think of what they and others like them feel that they should do. Using this variable translates Proposition 2 into "farm couples who retain traditional farm values are more likely than others to feel that they should give their son(s) the opportunity to take over a farm".

This hypothesised norm could be just another of the values and attitudes attached to farming life. This is essentially what this part of the study is now trying to find out. If passing the farm on to the next generation is valued, along with self reliance and independence, it would add a
non-economic factor to decision making. However, question 22 was expressed in terms of
couple's responsibilities in order to seek evidence of something stronger than value attached to
generational succession. It implies something more imperative.

Generational succession is expressed in terms of sons rather than daughters because of evidence
that handing down farms to daughters is a much less likely scenario for most couples who have
sons. No respondent had ever hoped that a daughter would take over the farm. Seven of the
eleven couples who felt that it was their responsibility to give their son(s) the opportunity to take
over said that this would not apply to daughters.

Returning to the latest version of Proposition 2, the question implied in testing the proposition,
using the group in which each couple has at least half of its siblings and siblings-in-law on
farms, is: does this group consistently feel that it is their responsibility to give their son(s) the
opportunity to take over the farm? The answer is negative; one couple felt it was not a
responsibility for them. This approach offers no evidence to support the proposition.

The reverse approach, looking for traditional values among those who do not feel this
responsibility, offers a little more. As there are only two couples in this category, it is possible to
make a detailed examination of them, in order to help speculation about how they might be
different from the others.

The first couple gave strong expression to the business ethic values, weaker expression to the
uniquely rural values and were pessimistic about the economic future of farming. They had both
hoped that their son would take over the farm, and the father felt that they should provide a
"fall-back", but it might better be in something other than farming. Both husband and wife
believed that the farm had provided the best place for raising their family. They agreed that most
farming couples persist "in order to provide their kids with the opportunity for a life on the land"
(question 30), but implicitly suggested that those couples were mistaken. They emphasised that
their generation was different from the previous one. They considered "opportunity to set up
children in a business" (question 40) not to be an important attraction to farming. When asked if
he had ever hoped that his son would take over the farm, the husband said "we were expected to
be back home". Generational succession had been taken for granted.

Their economic pessimism was accompanied by value attached to family farming. They strongly
disagreed that economic prospects in farming are good for young couples (question 28), they
strongly disagreed that replacement of family farms would be economically desirable (question
34), but agreed that this was likely to occur if current conditions persist (question 35). They felt
that the Cowra area needs economic diversification for the sake of economic stability, but
expected that farming would remain its economic base.
They emphasised self reliance, strongly agreeing that farming makes more demands on self reliance than other occupations. The husband rated "being your own boss" and "opportunity to be self reliant", and the wife rated "opportunity to be self reliant" as the most important attractions to farming (question 40). They disagreed with the statement that "farming is best left in the hands of the families who have been farming for generations" (question 33), explaining that the farmers we need are those who have business skills. They agreed that "farming is a more satisfying occupation than most because it involves working with and understanding nature" (question 32) and both attributed some importance to "being part of a rural community" (question 40). But these uniquely rural aspects were not expressed as strongly or consistently as the business ideals of farming.

The other couple who did not feel it was farming couples' responsibility to give their son(s) the opportunity to take over a farm were less pessimistic, but shared strong business ideals and a softer expression of uniquely rural values. They too had hoped that their sons would take over the farm (question 16), and agreed that "the majority of farming couples persist in order to provide their kids with the opportunity for a life on the land". Again like the first couple, they felt that the "opportunity to set up children in a business" (question 40) was unimportant. Both these couples had inherited their farms.

This couple was not so pessimistic as the first. They agreed that "economic prospects are good for young couples in farming today" (question 28), but added "one condition: that the debt load isn't too high". They felt that replacement of family farms would be bad (question 34) but did not anticipate this occurring (question 35).

They resembled the first couple in emphasis on the values of the business side of farming. They disagreed with the statement that "farming is best left in the hands of the families who have been farming for generations" (question 33). They believed that these people lacked aggression: "farmers need to have aggressive personalities in order to be successful and children who inherit farms do not necessarily have this". They felt that farmers are not called upon to use their initiative more than people in other occupations (question 39). They gave greatest importance to "being your own boss" (question 40).

They were among the four couples who disagreed with the statement "farming is a more satisfying occupation than most because it involves working with and understanding nature" (question 32), with the husband commenting that "any person who likes their job would say the same thing". This suggests that this couple held no special position for farming in relation to other occupations, but valued the opportunity to be in business for themselves. Although they felt that among "the majority of farm couples" (question 30), there was a generational succession ideal, for them it was a matter of seeing their children into a career, and one could conclude that as they did not see farming as necessarily special or different from other businesses, there was no
imperative that their children be given the opportunity to farm.

These two cases raise the question: are there couples who see something special in farming, or perhaps something special in the family farm itself, who would provide a contrast? This suggests a further refinement of Proposition 2. It suggests that the farm values associated with feeling responsibility to passing the farm on to the next generation are those which are attached to the features of farming which are specifically rural, rather than those associated with a business ethic. Proposition 2 would then become: "farm couples who retain rural rather than business oriented farm values are more likely than others to feel that they should give their son(s) the opportunity to take over a farm". Evidence to support this proposition would have to be in the form of indications that those who have business oriented values tend to not feel such responsibility (as was indicated by the two cases described in detail above), while those who have rural oriented values do feel such responsibility.

Unfortunately it is not feasible to test this latest version of Proposition 2 because, as noted above, there was a trend across all respondents to express the business oriented ideals more strongly. However not all did so, and those who expressed the rural oriented ideals more strongly, as the proposition suggests, felt responsibility to hand their farm on to their sons. There are three relevant cases. Each will be described in detail.

The answers provided by the first of these three couples consistently followed the traditional pattern, except that they disagreed with the statement "farming is best left in the hands of the families who have been farming for generations" (question 33). Their reasoning, however, did not refer to business skills, but rather, simply, "farming is best done by people who do it best". They nowhere placed weight on the business aspects of farming.

They had hoped that their son would take over the farm but were undecided about his future. They agreed that the "majority of couples persist in farming in order to provide their kids with the opportunity for a life on the land" (question 30). The husband added that they did so because of the lifestyle that farming offered.

They strongly agreed with the statement "farming, more than any other occupation, call on people to use their initiative and self reliance" (question 39) citing the complexity of management when confronted by the vicissitudes of nature. Both husband and wife felt that being part of a rural community was more important than being your own boss. Financial returns were not felt to be important but the "opportunity to set up children in a business" was important to both of them. This couple looked to the characteristics of farming which are peculiarly rural in ways which the two couples who did not feel responsibility to hand the farm on to their sons did not.

The second couple were just as rural oriented. They followed the traditional pattern without
exception. They had both hoped to pass the farm on to their sons, but emphasised that they would not push the matter. They were undecided about their sons' futures, but added the qualification that they felt the sons would need something to fall back on.

They strongly agreed that "farming is a more satisfying occupation than most because it involves working with and understanding nature" (question 32). Although the interview schedule did not seek to explore in depth attachment to, or perceived attachment to, the farm itself rather than farming as an occupation, this couple offered hints that it was an important feature. They had inherited their farm. They agreed that "farming is best left in the hands of the families who have been farming for generations", adding that it was because "they are born into it". They also agreed that farming calls on self reliance more than other occupations (question 39) and added: "you don't have a lot of choice. It's the love of it - because you're attached to it." They were the only couple to rate "opportunity to set up children in a business" as more than just important. They rated "being your own boss" and "being part of a rural community" as equally important (question 40). This couple tends toward the peculiarly rural values, but perhaps not so strongly as did the first couple. The suggestion of attachment to the land itself, however, helps to place them among those who espouse such values.

The third couple again shows the association between feeling responsibility to sons and having rural values. To this it adds an aspect which offers a particularly useful opportunity to conclude this section of the report. This couple is the only couple to espouse strongly traditional values and to have decided that none of their sons will take over the farm. Annotations by the interviewer revealed some insights into the couple's thinking. This will move attention back to the essentially individualistic perspective with which this report commenced its discussion of formulation of the project around the human impact of the "rural crisis".

Both husband and wife had hoped and planned that their sons would take over the farm. The husband said that in his family it was just expected that he would continue the farm. They agreed that "the majority of farming couples persist in farming in order to provide their kids with the opportunity for a life on the land" (question 30). The husband added "a big proportion is just hanging on to the farm waiting for things to improve and give the kids a chance".

They said they had changed their minds because of the differential between farm incomes and wages elsewhere. They described their farm asset as a "heap of money" they were "sitting on and getting nothing from it". They had no money to expand the farm and hence were not considering a future in farming for their children now. They strongly disagreed with the statement that "economic prospects are good for young couples in farming today" (question 28), adding that young couples cannot possibly do it on their own and that the wife's parents were "still behind them".
They placed greatest weight on the rural aspects of farm values. They strongly agreed that "farming is a more satisfying occupation than most because it involves working with and understanding nature" (question 32). The husband added "it is very satisfying to plant a paddock." They agreed that "farming is best left in the hands of the families who had been farming for generations" (question 33), with the husband adding that experience is handed down, but should be balanced with new ideas. They strongly agreed that "farming more than any other occupation, calls on people to use their initiative and self reliance" (question 39), saying simply that it was a matter of survival. Like the last couple, they rated "being part of a rural community" and "being your own boss" as equally important. They were the only couple in which both husband and wife rated "being part of a rural community" as more important than "opportunity to be self reliant" (question 40).

These three couples and the two described earlier, suggest, in the contrasts between them, the way in which evidence to support the refined Proposition 2 might be gathered. This study was not set up to seek such evidence. With the constraints on the project it would have been very difficult to do so. Moreover, at the inception of the research, the significance of differentiation between the peculiarly rural and the more business ethic aspects of farming values was unknown. This study has found a path towards an understanding of the subjective aspects of farm decision making by refining the concept of farm values and suggesting propositions which may be tested. It has taken a tentative step toward acceptance of what may be an important proposition. That proposition is "farm couples who retain rural rather than business oriented farm values are more likely than others to feel that they should give their son(s) the opportunity to take over a farm".

Conclusion

Two points can usefully be made before concluding. One is that the values, attitudes and beliefs are themselves social constructions, causes of which this study has not attempted to explore, even though it looked for antecedents in the family backgrounds of respondents. The other point is that although this study has not explored the social construction of those values, attitudes and beliefs, it has located them. Discussion of these points will follow a brief summary of the findings of the report.

The report began with a brief outline of the way the project was formulated in terms of the subjective factors which may enter decisions about generational succession of farms. The project sought to explore relationships among three variables, being background of farm parents, strength of their attachment to farming through traditional values and beliefs about farming, and plans and desires for their children. It started its exploration from two propositions which were tested and refined. The report discussed the design and implementation of the interview schedule followed by the findings of the interviews, first in general description, then with a focus on the
key elements of the research problem. No evidence was found to support the proposed relationship between backgrounds of farm parents and expressions of values. The proposed relationship between values and generational succession was tested and modified, and tested and modified, yielding some support for a proposition that farm couples with strongly rural, rather than business, farm values feel responsibility to pass the farm to their son(s) more often than do other farm couples.

Perhaps the most important finding is the location and specification of farm values. Responses to question 40, in which respondents could add any factors not mentioned in the interview which they felt were important, yielded no factors additional to those already covered in the schedule. Those mentioned emphasised those already covered, such as "achieving something for yourself - not just working for a boss", "the opportunity to expand" and "good environment for kids to grow up in". The interviews showed that at least some farmers believe themselves to have an attractive lifestyle, consider their work to be important to their district and nation, and consider themselves to be self reliant.

Two sets of farm values have been identified, one set oriented towards the peculiarly rural aspects of farming and the other looking more like a business ethic. The ideal of generational succession has persisted, but perhaps more strongly among those farm couples to whom the rural aspects of farming are most important. Identification and specification of the two sets of values builds a non-economic perspective on farm decision making.

Finally, it should be borne in mind that such identification and specification does not constitute explanation. It does not say why farmers have such values, nor does it say why some have one set of values and others have another. The explanation lies beyond the objectives of this study. It lies in the history of the development of the Australian agricultural system.
Annotated Bibliography

Article about legislation to quarantine farm losses from off-farm income, giving an example of a farmer who does contract work, and ending with the paragraph: "What Mr and Mrs Street fear most is the breaking up of the family unit, with their sons missing the option of continuing farming."

Suggests that the loss of young people who in the past would have taken over family farms but now choose other careers is "the most poignant and potentially the most serious consequence of Australia's rural crisis...", based on indications that only about quarter of those who want to do so may be able to make a living on the farm.

Austin P. (1987b) "Doing it hard' no guarantee of survival", The LAND, 3 September, page 21.
Report on interview with Elders Pastoral managing director who anticipates change in the farmer role from battler to expansionist business person, and was quoted as saying that "the erosion of farm values during the past few years [is] the biggest single problem besetting rural Australia."

Found that part-time farming is becoming commonplace in all industrialised countries, and identified three types of part-time farmer in part of the State of Georgia, U.S.A., being those who grew up on the land but initially rejected farming and only returned to it when they had secure employment (the large majority), those forced to gain off-farm income due to high indebtedness and a cost-price squeeze, and those who sought to retain the family farm by having employees do most of the work.

Identifies values and beliefs which have motivated the growth of family farming and unified farm interests but have also helped to place farm interests in a position of weakness in relation to urban business.

Finds the same values and beliefs identified in Craig (1983) are common to both U.S. and Australian farming systems despite different histories of land settlement.

Duncan J. (1987) "For most, the family farm comes later", The LAND, 5 March, page 97.
Relates the stories of four young people currently choosing alternative careers but still wishing to return to the family farm.

Suggested ways in which part time farming may become more common, noting that the change to part time operation of a farm may occur at generational succession in societies where keeping the family name on the land is highly valued.

Identifies the tenuous nature of family farming and the inherent weakness of the family farmer at a time when market concentration is increasing among the big players in the agricultural economy.
Appendix C

Lindsay R. (1986) "It's tough, the hours are long, but it's theirs", *The LAND Magazine*, 17 July, page 1.
Relates the story of a "battling" couple in which the husband is employed off-farm full time, and as the title suggests, emphasises the value placed on being settled on family-owned land.

Argues that understanding of the farm as a family as well as a business institution is necessary to explain the growth and persistence of the small farm sector, and that interpretation in purely rational economic terms is inadequate.

Sees threat to farming from new Pastures Protection Board rating legislation, quoting New South Wales Minister for Agriculture's statement "get big or get out", and seeing the threat as confronting specifically family farming.

Compares two North American and two European farming communities and finds strong similarities in social organisation, particularly family ideals and inheritance patterns, based on the common concerns of family farmers.

Notes the decline of traditional family loyalties in which sons established themselves with family help, and the decision making role about sons' futures in or out of farming having passed from fathers to sons.
Interview Schedule

This research is intended to provide some understanding of how family background and plans for children can be important to farming couples in their decision-making on the farm. It is also intended to study attitudes of farming couples towards life on the land. I will start with some questions about both your backgrounds, then go on to talk about your children and the future, and finish with some questions about the value of farm life.

1. First I would like to ask you about your family backgrounds.

How long have you both lived in the Cowra district?

   H: ____ years  W: ____ years

2. Did you both grow up on a farm?  H: Yes, entirely  In part  No
   W: Yes, entirely  In part  No

3. If H says no or in part, ask him:
   a) Did you spend any of your childhood or youth living on a farm?
      Yes  No  go to c)
   b) Between what ages? ____ to ____
   d) What was the main occupation of the main income earner of your household while you grew up?
      ______________________

   If W says no or in part, ask her:
   a) Did you spend any of your childhood or youth living on a farm?
      Yes  No  go to c)
   b) Between what ages? ____ to ____
   c) What was the main occupation of the main income earner of your household while you grew up?
      ______________________

4. We would like to work out how deeply your respective families are involved in farming. I would like to fill out this table (show table) which will describe your brothers and sisters for each of you.

First, do you (husband) have any brothers and sisters?

   Yes  None living  go to 5
### Husband's

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</table>

**Age**

**Main occupation**

**Living in Cowra area? (Y or N)**

5. **Do you (wife) have any brothers and sisters?**

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<th></th>
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<th>None living</th>
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### Wife's

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<td>Sis 4</td>
<td>Sis 5</td>
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</table>

**Age**

**Occupation**

**Living in Cowra Area? (Y or N)**

6. **Where did you learn farming, that is, acquire the necessary skills?**

H: ________________________________

W: ________________________________

7. **How long have you lived on this property?**

H: ____ years  

W: ____ years
8. Did it belong to the parents of either of you?  Yes  Neither  
   *go to 11*

9. Whose parents?  H  or  W

10. Did they inherit it?  Yes  No

11. Do either of you now work off the farm?  H:  Yes  No
   Occupation  ______________________
   W:  Yes  No
   Occupation  ______________________

12. Do either of you see this as an alternative career which could become your main occupation some day?
   H: has already likely possible unlikely won't
   W: has already likely possible unlikely won't

13. Now I'd like to talk about your children and the possibilities for their future. Could we please fill out this table?  *(Show table)*
Now I would like to talk to you about your hopes and plans for your children's futures, with relation to farming.
14. For couples who have at least one son, and answered NO to the last question, for others go to 18.

Have you ever planned for your son(s) to take over the farm?

H: Yes No
W: Yes No
go to 16

go to 16

15. What happened to change your mind?

H: ________________________________________________________________

W: ________________________________________________________________

Go to 18

16. Have you ever hoped that (any of) your son(s) would take over the farm?

H: Yes No
W: Yes No

17. Have you ever wanted him/any of them to continue in farming at all?

H: Yes No
W: Yes No

18. For couples who have at least one daughter, and answered NO to the last question on the "children table", others go to 22.

Have you ever planned for your daughters(s) to take over the farm?

H: Yes No
W: Yes No
go to 20

go to 20

19. What happened to change your mind?

H: ________________________________________________________________

W: ________________________________________________________________

go to 22
20. Have you ever hoped that (any of) your daughter(s) would take over the farm?

H: Yes No W: Yes No

21. Have you ever wanted her/any of them to continue in farming at all?

H: Yes No W: Yes No

22. *For all those who have son(s):* Do you feel that it is a farming couple’s responsibility to give their son(s) the opportunity to take over a farm?

H: Yes No ? W: Yes No ?

23. Does this apply to daughters as well?

H: Yes No ? W: Yes No ?

I would now like to ask a number of questions which will indicate your feeling towards things which might be important to farming and farmers. For some questions I would like an answer from each of you and for others, I want just one answer from both of you. I'll indicate as we go.

24. The farm environment is the best place to bring up sons. Do you

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Husband</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>No opinion</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
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25. The farm environment is the best place to bring up sons. Do you

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wife</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>No opinion</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
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</table>
26. The farm environment is the best place to bring up daughters. Do you

**Husband**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>No opinion</th>
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<th>Strongly disagree</th>
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<td>Why?</td>
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27. The farm environment is the best place to bring up daughters. Do you

**Wife**

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<th>Strongly agree</th>
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<tr>
<td>Why?</td>
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**JOINT ANSWERS**

28. Economic prospects are good for young couples in farming today.

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<tr>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>No opinion</th>
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<tr>
<td>Why?</td>
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29. Australia's economic prosperity is more dependent on agriculture than on any other part of the economy.

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<tr>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>No opinion</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
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<tr>
<td>Why?</td>
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30. The majority of farming couples persist in farming in order to provide their kids with the opportunity for a life on the land.

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<tr>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>No opinion</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
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</table>
31. A depression in agriculture will not have much effect on the rest of the economy.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>No opinion</th>
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32. Farming is a more satisfying occupation than most because it involves working with and understanding nature.

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<th>Strongly agree</th>
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33. Farming is best left in the hands of the families who have been farming for generations.

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Why?

34. The replacement of family farms by large corporate farms would have desirable economic and social consequences for the nation.

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<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>No opinion</th>
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35. If economic conditions continue as they are now, before long many family farms will be replaced by large corporate farms.

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<tr>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
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<th>No opinion</th>
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36. Farming rather than industry will not remain the economic base for this district for very long.

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<tr>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>No opinion</th>
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37. Farming should remain the economic base for this district.

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<th>Strongly agree</th>
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<th>No opinion</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
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Why? ____________________________________________

38. Farmers should be completely independent from government in their decision making.

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<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>No opinion</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
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39. Farming, more than any other occupation, calls on people to use their initiative and self-reliance.

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<th>Strongly agree</th>
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<th>No opinion</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
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What is it about farming that does that? ____________________________________________

40. I have a list of things which you may or may not feel are among the features which make farming an attractive occupation. Please tell me how important each of these is to you. Are they very important, important or not important at all? I'll read the list, then please start by telling me which one you feel is most important to you.

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<th>V Very</th>
<th>I Important</th>
<th>N Not</th>
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<tr>
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- Being part of a rural community
- Being "your own boss"
- Work outdoors
- Financial return
- Opportunity to be self reliant
- Opportunity to set up children in a business
- Other __________________________

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<tr>
<th>Being part of a rural community</th>
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<tr>
<td>Being &quot;your own boss&quot;</td>
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<td>Work outdoors</td>
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<td>Opportunity to be self reliant</td>
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<td>Opportunity to set up children in a business</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
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Finally, I would like to ask for some background information.

40. Are you (H) a member of the Farmers' Association?

   Yes
   No  go to 42

41. How often do you attend Farmers' Association meetings?

   Regularly
   Sometimes
   Never

42. How old were you both at your last birthdays?

   H: ____ years
   W: ____ years
### ADDITIONAL SIBLINGS

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<th>Main occupation</th>
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### ADDITIONAL CHILDREN

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dau 6</td>
<td>Dau 7</td>
<td>Dau 8</td>
<td>Dau 9</td>
<td>Dau 10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Living at home? *(Y or N)*
- Age
- Occupation
- Highest education qualification
- Formal agriculture education *(S sec, T ter N none)*
- Has learnt farm work on farm *(Y/N)*
- Planned career *(occupation)*
- Makes useful contribution to farm *(N now/always P past)*


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