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GUEST EDITORIAL

In July, 1991, a group of people gathered in a lecture theatre situated on the Albury-Wodonga campus of LaTrobe University. The local organisers had managed to provide an excellent venue, a fabulous sunny day and a sumptuous afternoon tea, rural style.

This gathering had assembled with a view to exploring some important issues facing professionals working with rural communities. It was an opportunity for those there to share and learn about what people were doing in the region.

Albury-Wodonga was once known as the National Growth Centre and it can be described as a middle-sized rural community on the Murray River and the Victorian/ N.S.W. border. There are many smaller population centres which combine to form this vibrant and colourful region of rural Australia.

This particular volume contains four of the six papers presented at this colloquium.

In the first article, Patten Bridge presents an overview of the region and explores the meaning of "rural". He identifies the challenges facing government bodies attempting to establish community based projects in rural settings. The principles identified are at the core of effective community work.

Suzy Gattuso and Ros Shepherd identify one role that academic institutions may take in supporting community change. The article describes the establishment of a partners’ support group for Vietnam Veterans.

The third article identifies one cohort of the State wide program engineered by Robyn Robinson; the Peer Support Program for Ambulance Officers. In this article, I describe the work of David Temple, the Peer Support Co-Ordinator for this region, and the training program led by Robyn for the mental health workers of the project.

The final article highlights the immense difficulties associated with being young and rural. Cathy McGowan graphically describes the problems that she has as a professional who is trying to facilitate change for this markedly invisible group in our community.
Other presenters, who were unable to prepare a paper for publication, but who participated eloquently on the day, were Sherie Brooks and Delwyn Goodrick.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the authors for their contributions. I would also like to thank the Board Committee, and especially Heather Gridley and Adrian Fisher, who supported this rural venture.

I hope that readers can gain a feel for this region from the papers that follow. If contact addresses are required for any authors, please write to me at the address below.

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LaTrobe University Albury-Wodonga Campus
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Wodonga 3690

James Butterworth's contribution on the rise of the organic food movement also fits the rural theme and has been included with the Wodonga papers (Ed.).
A PEER SUPPORT PROGRAM IN TRAUMA COUNSELLING FOR EMERGENCY WORKERS

Anna Shadbolt
Division of Nursing
LaTrobe University, Albury-Wodonga Campus

In 1990 several psychologists responded to a request from Dr Robyn Robinson from Social Biology Resources Centre, Melbourne, for applications from health workers in rural Victoria who would be interested in being trained in trauma counselling for emergency service personnel, initially for the Victorian ambulance service. This was not just another training course, but rather, it was an attempt at slowly changing the structure and the thinking of an organisation from within.

The program provided an opportunity for the "outsiders" - the mental health professionals - and the "insiders" - the emergency personnel - to work together. It gave all parties the opportunity to learn more about the nature of stress and trauma, and how it relates to working in the emergency services, while also establishing a type of sorting out of whose role it is to do what, and on what terms the "outsiders" would be allowed "in"! This provided the beginnings of the ground work for establishing regional teams for this project.

A Community model of intervention aims at working WITH the organisation. As a community psychologist questions that are asked include:

What is the organisation asking for and how can I work within the organisational framework?

The structure of the training program provided a forum for the answering of these questions.

Background
The aims of the trauma training program were twofold:

1 The author would like to thank David Temple, Peer Support Co-Ordinator, North East Region, Victorian Ambulance Services. David assisted in the presentation of information of the local program. She would also like to thank Dr Robyn Robinson.

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Peer Support Program

(a) to establish a specially trained resource group who could join the Victorian Ambulance Crisis Counselling Unit, to provide counselling to ambulance officers.

(b) to form a statewide research group which aimed at further developing knowledge of both the preventative and remedial aspects of management of trauma. This group would also work towards disseminating this to the broader professional community. (Robinson, 1989)

The Program leaders comprised staff from mental health and emergency service backgrounds, including:

* Bouverie Family Therapy Centre
* Vietnam Veterans Counselling Service
* State Emergency Service
* Victoria Police
* Ambulance Service, Victoria
* United Fire Fighters Union

The purpose of the Program was to develop strategies and techniques to lessen the impact of critical incidents and to assist in the recovery process of the emergency worker. A major risk that emergency personnel face is an acute stress reaction to a Critical Incident.

The Training Program

Participants were presented with detailed information about the stress response and the impact of Critical Incidents on the individual. The information presented included:

1. **EDUCATION**

   (a) **The symptoms of the stress response**

   (b) **Critical Incidents**

Critical Incidents are extraordinary events that cause extraordinary stress reactions. Some of these are identified by Mitchell and Bray (1990) and are listed in Table 2.

Mitchell and Bray (1990) report that 85% of emergency personnel have experienced acute stress reactions after working at one of the incidents listed in Table 1. Most recover within a few weeks, some take several months, and 2 to 4% develop profound effects or post traumatic stress disorder.
Table 1: Stress response symptoms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PHYSIOLOGICAL</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>dizziness, digestive problems, sweating, trembling, pain, nausea, irregularities of heart beat, diarrhoea, loss of appetite, heightened sensitivity to sound.</td>
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<tr>
<th>BEHAVIOURAL</th>
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<tr>
<td>fatigue, restlessness, apathy, sleep disturbances, isolating self from others, increased use of alcohol or tobacco, overuse of black humour, absence from work, avoidance of television or newspapers, acting differently.</td>
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<th>COGNITIVE</th>
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<tr>
<td>nightmares, flashbacks, focusing on event, inability to remember event, difficulty concentrating, fear of recurrence of the event, difficulty making decisions, mental confusion, fear of going mad, unable to understand own reactions.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
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<tr>
<th>EMOTIONAL</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>anxiety, fear, panic attacks, anger, frustration, irritability, depression, guilt, helplessness, vulnerability, numbness, withdrawal, disorientation, paranoia.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Adapted from Robinson, 1989, 5.1)

Table 2: Critical Incidents found to cause stress reactions in emergency personnel.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CRITICAL INCIDENTS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>* Death to a fellow worker in the line of duty.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Serious injury to a fellow worker in the line of duty.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Working on a person who is a relative or close friend and who is dying or in a very serious condition.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Suicide involving a fellow emergency worker.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* A disaster.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* A very violent person who has threatened the emergency worker.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Contact with dead or severely sick, or injured children</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Taken from Mitchell & Bray, 1990)

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Post traumatic stress disorder is defined by DSMIIIR as the development of characteristic symptoms following a psychologically distressing event that is outside the range of usual human experience. The stressor producing this syndrome would be markedly distressing to almost anyone (DSMIIIR, 1987, 247). Robinson (1989) emphasises that this stress response needs to be seen as reflecting "normal" human behaviour and not necessarily a flaw in coping mechanisms.

2. INFORMATION

Participants were provided with information about the organisational structure that would support their work in the field. The goals of each level were also highlighted.

(a) The Victorian Ambulance Crisis Counselling Unit (VACCU) aims at minimising the impact of acute stress reactions. The regional peer support teams are one component of a multi-faceted service which is available to ambulance personnel and their families.

(b) Regional Peer Support Teams Peer support teams consist of specially selected and trained personnel who work under the clinical guidance of Dr Robyn Robinson. These peers operate on a voluntary basis with Ambulance Service assistance in the provision of resources and training time as required. The team includes peers and mental health professionals working together. They undertake and provide training as necessary, to assist emergency personnel to understand the need for and availability of Psychological Support Services.

Peer support members offer 24 hour availability. Robinson and Murdoch (1991) identify their functions as:

(i) The provision of crisis intervention and basic counselling for staff and their families.

(ii) The provision of appropriate referral to mental health professionals where necessary.

(iii) To participate in CISD teams with mental health professionals as required.

(iv) To assist in field education about psychological support services.

(v) To undertake and maintain training and supervision necessary for effective operation of their role. (Robinson and Murdoch, 1991)
Personal Reflections following completion of Training Program

This training program challenged the notion of professionals going in and fixing up the problems in organisations. The emphasis was self-help with professional back up. Through the establishment of the self help program, in the form of the peer support program in the ambulance service, an opportunity for social change within the organisation was being established. Those from within the organisation would be the change agents.

When training was complete each participant returned to their own corner of rural Victoria. The success of the project is reflected from the local story. To illustrate this, a summary of the program in North Eastern Victoria follows.

The North East Region Peer Support Team - A Rural Example

The North East Region team began operations in mid 1990 following the successful introduction of a Liaison Officers program in late 1989.

David Temple, the regional Peer Support Co-Ordinator, outlines some of the problems in the establishment of the local team:

(a) Doubts from longer serving officers - we didn't need it before, why now?

(b) Doubts about confidentiality of the peer support system.

(c) Organisational constraints:
   * Management may hold different views about the program.
   * Resources restricted

(d) Geographic isolation in some rural areas. This adds further strain on limited resources.

These problems illustrate the extent to which community intervention needs to be targeted at the local level. The importance of support and participation from within the organisation is also highlighted.

Future Plans at the local level:

(a) To expand team membership throughout the region.

(b) To increase involvement of local health professionals.

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Peer Support Program

(c) To expand the acceptance of the program from within the Service.

(d) To implement education programs for Service personnel on stress related matters and CISD requirements.

Community Intervention in Rural Settings

The model which Robyn Robinson used in establishing this program is one that has relevance for work in rural communities. It is one of empowerment, and recognition of the fact that a "community", whether it is an organisation or a small town, is best placed to identify what it needs. Assistance may be required to identify how these needs may be met, but the control stays with the "community". This is the major strength of this program - it is reliant on the organisation for its survival. This strength, however, may also be considered by the professional as its major weakness, because through client empowerment, the professional loses control.

REFERENCES


CO-OPERATIVE WAYS OF WORKING IN COMMUNITIES
WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR YOUNG PEOPLE?

Cathy McGowan
Rural Consultant

This paper is about young people in rural communities. To begin with a word picture.

It was Tuesday this week and a young person was found dead outside the local railway station. Accidentally run over by a train. The local paper ran the story. It was a small article. They talked about the train driver and the passengers. A little bit further on and it said something that is still in my heart. The young man (he was just 20) had committed suicide. He was from Castlemaine and there were no "suspicious circumstances".

The theme I wish to address in this paper is "Co-operative Ways of Working in Communities" and my topic is: "What does it mean for young people?" What does it mean for society where there are no suspicious circumstances when a young man of 20 is found dead outside a major regional railway station? Part of the answer lies in discovering why young people in rural communities are invisible, and why they rarely use mainstream services.

First, it is important to define what is meant by "rural". If you are in Melbourne or Sydney, anything outside the metropolitan area is rural. Albury-Wodonga is certainly rural. But if you live in Albury-Wodonga, you don't really think of yourself as rural. Instead, it is the Corryong and the Beechworth communities that are rural. And for those people who live in Corryong and Beechworth, they rarely think of themselves as rural. Sometimes perhaps, but mostly it is the farmers who are rural. Those who live in smaller isolated "rural" communities. Rural in the context of this paper refers to small towns and communities of less than 3,000 people.

My background is rural. I grew up on a dairy farm and went to school in Beechworth. At 14, I left my home community to continue my education. An experience common to many rural young people.

Working as a rural community project officer in 1991, I undertook some research on behalf of the Country Education Project looking at the issues facing young people from rural communities who left school without completing year 12.
This research indicated that many young people leave their home community either in search of work or education. For instance with the Corryong community in North East Victoria, of the young people who left school between their 15th year and their 19th year, over 75% are known to have left their home community. In Apollo Bay, there is a different experience. Many of the young people stay in their home community even after they have left school. It may have something to do with the surf!

Interestingly, young people in Robinvale, North West Victoria, where there is a very high Greek, Italian and Tongan population, also tend to remain in their home communities. However the rural experience is predominantly one of young people leaving.

For workers new to rural community work it is often very difficult to locate young people. Either they are not there, having left, or have disappeared into the landscape. They become invisible and rarely use mainstream services.

Where do they go? Those who leave, mostly head to large regional centres or capital cities in search of work. Those who stay live at home with parents, the lucky ones have a job, and the others are under employed in the family business (farming) or simply unemployed.

Transport

For those who stay "home", perhaps one quarter of the total population of young people, transport becomes one of their major issues. Particularly for those who are too young to get a driver's licence.

Those who leave usually have the advantage of accessibility to public transport. This is a rare commodity in most rural communities. Local taxi, school bus and perhaps mail buses are the common form of "public transport". The private car is a necessity for long term survival.

In Victoria, as opposed to NSW, young people have to be 18 before they are allowed to drive. For the many young people who have not got a licence, transport is a big problem. Even for those who are old enough, getting access to a car is often very difficult.

Lack of access to transport has big and important ramifications for those of us who provide services and work with rural young people. Co-operation, particularly in matters of transport is upper most when young people are
organising a way of getting into town, to go to a sporting event or entertainment. They find a friend with a car and hopefully licence and share the petrol costs.

A story to illustrate the consequences of lack of reliable transport. In Wodonga, I am involved with the Wodonga College of TAFE, and they have recently received a substantial amount of money to work with young unemployed rural people. This is great. It is also a lot of money. Some colleagues were discussing with the Director of the TAFE College about how he was going to spend the money. His reply was to run courses in Wodonga. On first hearing this sounded ideal. However he did not appreciate that rural, young people, who are unemployed, find it most difficult to get to Wodonga, or even if they can get there, finding accommodation when they get to Wodonga is extremely difficult.

If you want to do rural, TAFE, you go out. You go to where they are!

Transportation is the first and accommodation the second co-operative activity which needs to be understood when working with young people.

Accommodation

The reality for most young people is to use their family networks to find accommodation. It is having an auntie or an uncle, or someone else's auntie or uncle whom you can go and stay with.

Occasionally young people make use of shared houses. However, in most instances, it is important to know somebody who is already in a shared house before you can access it yourself. Not always easy in a new and strange city. There is also a sub culture which goes with shared accommodation. Once introduced, contacts can be made and a room found.

Another example illustrates how some young women over come the accommodation problem. I was talking to a young woman about this accommodation problem, expounding the sub-culture theory and extended family network theory mentioned above, and she looked at me and said:

"No, Cathy, you have got it all wrong. You don't stay with families or uncles or aunts when you come to Albury-Wodonga. You find a good looking fellow, and move in."

As a joke, this was acceptable. However, the reality for many young women is that they actually set up de-facto relationships when they come to town because that gets them accommodation. It is a different form of bargaining, successfully
used to cover accommodation cost. And it seems to be quite acceptable for a first year university student, or a TAFE student, to be living with a boy/girlfriend. I suspect however that the implied conditions of some of these "contracts" would provide us all with fascinating research opportunities. It may turn out to be a very expensive bed and breakfast arrangement.

Communications

The third topic to cover is that of communication, in particular the telephone. Telephones are an important part of the lives of young people, particularly in the country.

If you live in the country most telephone calls are STD calls. STD calls are charged on a time basis and tend to be expensive. For instance, it costs 90 cents to make a telephone call from Corryong to Albury-Wodonga. That is, 90 cents for 3 minutes. From then on it costs more. For any young person living at "home" in the country, and wanting to access services from there, they have to have access to a telephone and preferably one that someone else is paying the bills for (i.e. parents).

As a worker or service provider, if you happen to be on the end of a beep beep telephone call, the polite thing is to say, "Excuse me, are you ringing STD? May I ring you back?" Allowing your company or employer to cover the costs of the call and not the young person. 008 numbers are being used more frequently and are an effective way of overcoming this problem area.

The second aspect of the communication issue is that of access to mass media. T.V. reception is poor to non existent, and the radio reception in rural areas I am familiar with, can be very poor. For example once out of Myrtleford, the car radio goes static and by the time you get to Bright it is almost non existent.

For workers relying on mainstream media to communicate with not only young people but anybody out there, this lack of good media can create many problems. Particular if workers and service providers assume access to the same form of media as in urban centres.

Key Contacts

Having briefly discussed some of the issues facing young people in rural communities, I would like to address some useful ways workers have successfully developed to get around these problems.

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How can we work co-operatively with people whose environment may be so different from ours? The key is "When you don't know, ask". In rural communities, however, the real skill is finding who is the "right person" to ask. The problem for the young people is their invisibility. They are often difficult to locate including the mainstream "able" young people. When you try to look for specific groups, such as those with disabilities, they are difficult to locate.

The skill is to find out who are the key contacts in any community and to work through them. This is important when working with young people, particularly young women. For example, when I was working in Yarram in South Gippsland, I was talking to the policemen about crime rates in the town:

"Oh yes, we have got the twenty young fellows that hang around the street outside the clock tower"...... "that's where the kids are".

He knew who they were, he knew their names and probably their genetic make up. As we were chatting I thought about his comment and realised he had said young men (he was 45-50ish). "Were there any young women there?" A look of shock passed across his face and he said "Young women. Oh, yes, there are young women there, but I don't know them".

The reality was that there were 20 young men and for each of those young men there was at least one young woman. However all he had actually seen were the young men. And, the only group he was knowledgeable about were those young men who played footy and who drank. He had no experience at all of the young women. The sad thing for this community was that no-one else did either.

On one level the young men were visible, but only because they played sport and came under the observation of the policeman. For the other young men, outside that set, there was little knowledge, and even less of the young women.

Community Health Centres, Adult Education Centres, some teachers and some clergy may be linked into young people's networks sometimes even a local coach may provide a useful introduction or "in".

Value of young Peoples Experience:

In another article in this edition, Patten Bridge referred to the necessity of reflecting on the need to value young people's experience. It is not only adults who have important experience. It is young people's knowledge of the school, of education, of entertainment, of transport which we must seek. They spend their lives living it, they know the issues.
Cooperative Ways of Working

If we are to work in a co-operative fashion with communities, and particularly with young people, we must ask them and listen carefully to what they tell us.

Involve Young People

Patten also mentioned the importance of authentic participation. How do you conduct authentic participation with people you cannot find, and who have not got transport. You don’t know where they live and sometimes they are very intent on remaining invisible. It keeps them safe.

Finding the people in the communities who have local information and using them, is the first step. Surprisingly it is often parents and teachers. Getting them to give you that information is an important first step, as is winning their trust.

The third point Patten made was the need to support and challenge learning systems. When he mentioned this I thought of young people and how much they need our support. They are usually quite happy to do the challenging and they know what to challenge. They know what does not work. However the ability to be supportive in the challenging is sometimes difficult.

If that is all they are asking of us, it is important for us to actually hear and know that they want the support, but not the advice. To then give them what they are asking for, to work with them is the skill.

Referring to other articles, particularly in regard to the Vietnam Veterans there are questions such as: What about the youngsters? What about the teenagers of those families? How do we get a youth group going so they get to learn about their experience of violence so it comes out of the system?

The point made about the self esteem, the power and the assertiveness which applies to the hidden group of women, also applies to young people. The gender stereotype. If gender stereotypes live anywhere they live in rural Victoria, and it is a mistake to ignore them.

Getting our services into schools, to sporting clubs church groups, but not necessarily setting up new youth services (as there are already mainstream services operating.) Infiltration can be a much more effective strategy for co-operative working styles.

I would like to address the role of adults and service providers in working co-operatively with young people. We need to work together to improve access to public transport in North East Victoria so that the people themselves can access the services already in existence.
If we could look collectively at accommodation and address this issue, we would be undertaking co-operative, community work with and for young rural people.

The third point is to improve communications and mass media access in rural areas. If we could improve the systems already in operation this would allow people to access us in our work places and our education places. If they cannot come to us, then we must go to them.

I would recommend a book called "The Youth Agenda" published by the Victorian Government. It has some excellent information in it about young people and about the issues that affect young people and has good information about employment, accommodation and other issues. It is probably one of the most comprehensive publications about rural young people in Victoria. [Information Victoria, (008) 136762 have copies.]

With transport, appropriate accommodation, communication channels and good will, that young man from Castlemaine may not have killed himself in Wodonga.

The answer lies in working together.
WORKING IN SMALL RURAL COMMUNITIES

Patten Bridge
Hume Industry Development Centre
Wodonga College of TAFE

"There is an important distinction between government acting to meet a need for people and government acting to create an enabling setting within which people can be more effective in meeting those needs for themselves.....It almost invariably requires fundamental reorientation in the purposes, structures and operations of government bureaucracies away from direct service delivery or resource management to local capacity building and support."

Korten 1984

What are Small Rural Communities?

Most Victorians (about 70%) live in Melbourne or Geelong, about 10% live in the major regional centres, the Ballarat’s, Bendigo’s, Wodonga’s, Wangaratta’s, and about 8% live in small country towns (population between 200 and 5,000). The other 12% live in non urban (farming) areas (ABS Statistics 1986).

It is interesting to note that the small country towns make up 261 of the 300 urban centres in Victoria (populations above 200). They are spread throughout the state and together with the non-urban population make up a fabric which supports not only the rural industries, but also a culture and a way of life that is totally different to that supported by the major regional and metropolitan centres.

Rural Victoria is going through a difficult period. There is a significant shift of population away from small country towns into major regional centres. The economies of many small country towns are in strife. There are high levels of unemployment and in particular limited opportunities for young people. Personal stress levels are high. Many of our farming systems are showing signs of strain and land degradation is an increasing concern. In short the whole ecology of Rural Victoria is under a great deal of pressure.

This is of concern to all Victorians who have traditionally relied heavily on rural areas to provide export income, recreational opportunities and a viable alternative to urban living.
Rural Service Delivery- A Challenge For Government

The Victorian State Government supports a range of programs in rural areas which are coordinated and managed at a community level by local management committees. Examples of this type of program include The Rural Enterprise Victoria Scheme, The Community Landcare Program, The Neighbourhood House Program, and the Centres for Further Education.

This 'Community based' approach to program funding has been generally well received by both the government officials charged with service delivery, and the rural communities where these programs are operating (DORET Report, 1989; McDonald, 1990). It seems that the advantages of this approach are the perception that it allows for:

- greater local autonomy and ownership
- increased flexibility to meet local needs
- opportunities for collaboration between local resources.

In addition, this model of service delivery has the potential to be cheaper than conventional approaches (Cheers, 1987; Dixon, 1989). It has the effect of shifting the focus away from governments doing things for people, towards government providing a supportive framework whereby people can do things for themselves. At a time when the spotlight is being focused on reducing levels of Government expenditure this is a considerable advantage.

To illustrate this approach, I would like to focus on one of the programs I have worked closely with in the Upper Murray.

Corryong and the Rural Enterprise Victoria Scheme

For those people who have not made a trip up to Corryong in the Upper Murray, go soon. It is a fantastic place. It has all the features that we would almost call cliches for small country towns. It is isolated, traditional, particularly beautiful and it offers a lifestyle that is quite distinctly different from that which is experienced in an urban environment.

Corryong has been on a population decline since the wind down of the Snowy Mountains Scheme. It still however acts, because of its isolated nature, as a service delivery point for most of the surrounding industries. Five years ago the local Butter Factory closed down which created a crisis in the town. Twenty full time jobs and the last remaining substantial employer had gone.
The local response was to ask, "What are we going to do about this?" A group was formed to look at various different options for attracting new industry and developing existing opportunities in the region.

One farmer started growing mint to take advantage of a market opportunity. We import virtually all our mint oil from overseas, and Corryong has a suitable climate for a high quality product.

Other farmers recognised that they could use their traditional beef grazing flats for growing lucrative grass seed crops. A seed cleaning enterprise was developed as a value-added enterprise.

The local baker decided that he could profitably double the size of the bakery by presenting a range of different product range to the public.

A woman decided that she would like to start a fabric shop and, whoever thought a fabric shop would survive in Corryong? Through her enthusiasm, it is now up and going and is a successful enterprise in the town.

Somebody else decided there was a place for a local coffee shop and a place to sit down in relative comfort away from the pubs. They started to tap in on tourism as well. The motel was upgraded and the Man from Snowy River Country Annual Festival was born.

When we are working in small rural communities it is easy to assume that people are in some way not capable of determining their own future. What this Corryong example shows clearly is the sense of ingenuity and willingness from people in small country towns to get on and do things for themselves. It has been stimulating to see a town like Corryong have a face lift over the last ten years, and see the sense of pride and self worth develop in those people who had a vision for where they wanted Corryong to go and were prepared to make that work.

The Corryong group are now receiving support through the Victorian Governments Rural Enterprise Victoria Scheme. The Scheme allows them to:

- employ a local 'facilitator' for the program
- link into a statewide network of similar groups in other small country towns
- have access to a central resource and information base in Melbourne.
The Role of Government

So what then is the role of government in such circumstances? There is obviously an important role for Government to support those people who do not have the capacity to look after themselves, but there is also an incredibly important role for government to know how to work with communities that are trying to do things for themselves.

There is a range of tensions confronted by both outside workers and local people involved in participative projects in country areas.

For instance, the tension between how much government support there should be and how much local autonomy there should be. Examples of similar tensions include:

- Need For Community Profile and P.R.
- Sensitivity To Overselling in Small Country Towns
- Local Factors Inhibiting Change
- External Factors Inhibiting Change
- Protecting What is There
- Taking a Risk on the Future
- Achieving Results
- How You Go About It
- Experienced People on Committees
- New Faces On Committees

Each of these factors are important and there needs to be a balance between them. What this points out is that there is scope for each person to draw their own conclusions about where the balance for each of these tensions lie. I have a particular view of these things based on my own values and experiences and so do each of the people that I work with. There is a richness in knowing that we can have different values, and different perspectives, and still get to a position which is workable and heading in a direction that we want to be going in.

Research Style

As we challenge ourselves to work 'with' rather than 'for' people, we are recognising the need for alternative ways of learning about the changes confronting rural communities. That means we are challenging our traditional notions of research and looking at alternative forms of inquiry, such as action research.

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These developments are particularly exciting given the recent development of tertiary campuses in several rural locations. We have an excellent opportunity to introduce students to these forms of collaborative inquiry which will challenge the way our traditional research has been conducted.

Some Principles

In conclusion, there are a few principles which I see as relevant to our work with rural communities.

The first is the appreciation that local knowledge is valuable. Too often we come in as professionals with a vision that we know how things should be going, and do not value the understanding and knowledge that the locals have about how the whole town works. I may be a specialist in a particular area but have a lot of trouble gaining an appreciation of how the whole community fits together and it is extremely important for me to understand that limitation.

Secondly, we need to talk about authentic participation. Many communities are sick to death of being involved in ‘token’ consultations. Too often we have asked people for their opinions as part of an appeasement process rather than a genuine process of involvement.

Thirdly, we need to be able to support, resource and challenge the communities in their endeavours. We need to be able to listen to their concerns and work at a structural level on the issues that may be political or external to the particular communities. We must not assume that local activity means that communities can solve all the issues with which they are being confronted.

In summary, outside workers have a legitimate role in introducing new ways of looking at local problems. The task here is for the worker to find the balance which challenges the local groups thinking without taking away the ownership for decisions. This does not mean directing the group but rather helping to create an environment in which people can help themselves.

References


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Cairns Workshop on Social Change

Can Psychologists contribute to the reconciliation between Black and White Australians? In the Year of Indigenous People, the Australian Board of Community Psychologists and the New Zealand's Division of Community and Applied Social Psychology have organised a conference in Cairns as a satellite activity of the APsS Annual Conference.

The workshop starts in Brisbane on the 2nd of October. A two day "Peace Train" trip will take participants to Cairns. On board activities will include experiential learning, key presentations and social change through information exchange.

A camp will be held from the 3rd to the 5th of October at the Yarrabah Aboriginal settlement. The evening of the 5th and day of the 6th will be spent in debriefing in Cairns. While this concludes formal activities, further cultural activities are being arranged for the following three days.

Dr. Art Veno and Ms. Val Pollock are the organisers and they can be contacted at:
Cairns Workshop,
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ACADEMIA AS A CATALYST FOR CHANGE IN A RURAL COMMUNITY

Ros Shepherd and Suzy Gattuso
La Trobe University, Wodonga

In 1982 the Vietnam Veterans Counselling Service (VVCS) was set up to assist Vietnam veterans and their families with their health and social problems.

This year - 18 years after the last of the soldiers returned home - the first self help group program for women partners of veterans (Vets) in Victoria was initiated by a student of LaTrobe University at Wodonga - Ms Ros Shepherd - assisted by a lecturer, Ms Suzy Gattuso.

This paper is about that group, about some issues relating to such women's groups in the context of a masculinist construction of "the Vietnam experience", and about the work of students and staff in the Division of Community Social Sciences, LaTrobe University, in linking the university with the community to facilitate change.


"But for the partner of a Vietnam Veteran, the war is still a fact of life; his war still goes on and on ... and so does hers. The veteran's partner is isolated, living with a man who shuns family and friends. She is painfully aware of his lack of trust in anyone. She stands by him through one job after another. She lies terrified in the dark, listening to the unintelligible murmurs and cries haunting his sleep. She feels the anger and frustration which ferment from the depths of his soul. And she is overwhelmed with guilt; guilt for not being able to help her mate, guilt for failing to make his world serene and complete. She does not yet realise that you cannot give of yourself when there's nothing left to give.

The vet will not tell her about Vietnam, and it seems there is no one she can talk to about what is happening. She feels unappreciated, isolated and may perceive herself as different from other women; a woman with different problems and different strengths" (McGeorge, 1980).
The Vietnam partners group

In May, 1991 eight women came together with a common purpose - to deal with their own concerns about living with a Vietnam veteran (vet) and to give support to other women partners of vets. They met with a woman who shared many of their experiences through her own partnering of a vet and a woman who knew little about the Vietnam experience but much about working with women's groups. Together an objective was formed - to create a self help group of women bonded together in a common goal of empowering women affected by the experience of partnership with Vietnam veterans. This group continued with other women based on the support established in the initial group and advocated with the VVCS for services for women.

The group sessions focussed on:

1. Information Exchange - e.g. what happened in Vietnam and when the men came home;
2. Knowledge - e.g. what was known about post traumatic stress;
3. Gender Issues - e.g. rights and responsibilities women wanted in relationships;
4. Support and Affirmation - e.g. the owning of competence in the ways women lived their lives;
5. Challenge - e.g. of the exclusion of women from information and services.

Although we would see the masculinist construction of the Vietnam experience as an important buffer for men rejected by their community and as an embarrassing reminder of an ill-gotten political nightmare, the group was encouraged to challenge, subtly, the construction that this was not an experience that affected them in any way (i.e. that if they had problems it was nothing to do with the vets or Vietnam). We took the opportunity in having a guest speaker for the group a woman Vet - a nurse who had repeatedly entered the combat zone - who was able to share her experiences including how her war service was denied by the government and her long fight for the recognition and rights accorded male veterans.

A concern we had in setting up the group is captured in the words of Candida Williams (1987): how can womens support groups in this context operate?

without placing the women in an adjunctive position relative to the men ... reinforcing the supportive/nurturing roles to which women are traditionally conditioned? (p. 182).
Certainly women expressed motives in the first meeting of being there partly to learn more about how to help the men or their children (e.g., to learn how to manage partners’ mood swings). We did not devalue these feelings but facilitated women’s increased awareness of the stresses they experienced in traditional roles. Assertiveness and self esteem became a focus of the group, growing out of women’s expressed concerns about affirming self while nurturing others.

Rationale for a self help group - the place of the professional

The group was set up with the explicit goal of facilitating change through mutual support. Uljar and Hendron (1990) state that self help groups have the following characteristics:

1. Members comprise people directly and personally affected by an issue, condition or concern
2. Groups are controlled by these members
3. Mutual support is an explicit or implicit function of the group

The last criterion was certainly seen as a crucial factor for the members and is itself a vehicle for change:

To some, the term 'mutual support' conjures up images of passivity ... this ignores the political nature of self-help as a social change agent (Uljar and Hendron, 1990, p. 9)

Uljar and Hendron also point out that the relationship between professionals and self help groups is often an uneasy one; certainly the authors saw themselves as bringing some professional skills to the process of group formation and bonding. In this respect they operated in line with Uljar and Hendron’s criteria for an empowering relationship, one in which the professional is a:

Facilitator or catalyst, assisting groups to establish by putting people in touch with each other and supporting them.
Resource person, providing practical and information resources, support and back up.
Consultant, on particular campaigns, activities or group projects (p. 12).

The ideas of community psychologists such as Stephanie Riger (cited in Heller et al., 1984) were also influential in planning for the group: the concept of stress and...
Shepherd and Gattuso

a contextual approach to understanding people's reactions to stressors is a useful model in community programs.

The stress related to being a woman in a sexist society is augmented in caring for a partner who is, in the words of one analyst of the veteran's stress reaction, 'developmentally arrested' (Williams, 1987); the woman experiences role conflict in nurturing a partner whose emotional demands compete with those of her children. Feelings of frustration and helplessness engendered by these experiences often lead women to seeing themselves as bad or mad - blameworthy for not being able to alleviate the male's distress or defective in some way for letting it get to her, concepts that are reinforced by society, generally, in the face of women's stress reactions (Levine, 1983). Such stress reactions may be acute in the enmeshed relationships of families of veterans (Paulmeno, 1987).

The University in the Community

The project described in this paper is an example of a relationship between community and university which exists in the Division of Community Social Sciences at Wodonga.

The University's role as a catalyst for change in communities is an ancient and honourable one, and historically students have been the nexus for the relationship. Students bring with them a grounding in the issues, conditions and concerns of the communities in which the university is located. They also bring with them their roles as "insiders" in groups and networks and the unique knowledge such membership brings. This student connection with community is probably even more valuable in rural areas where one is an "outsider" for at least several generations!

Community workers are advised to work with influential individuals and groups in facilitating change in communities rather than try to take on roles better performed by others. Students in the Division have been able to give effect to their programs for change with the support of university staff and their teaching of relevant skills.

Ideas for change do not uniquely, as some city people believe, originate in metropolitan settings. As an experienced worker in a rural community, it is that distance from ideas circulating in professional networks in the city that encourages one to be more resourceful and imaginative; for example it promotes a crossing of disciplinary boundaries in the way one works. Perhaps it is easier to be a community psychologist in the country! Workers in rural communities do have good ideas but the human resources to implement change may be lacking; country...
areas are often seriously under-resourced (city bureaucrats also believe country folk are better at making do!).

One of the ways a university can be responsive to the community in which it is located, is to act as a catalyst or facilitator of the ideas of change agents. Direct consultancy by staff is one way but the work of students has, I believe, a great impact on the development of a psychological sense of community. The involvement of students in community is part of a vibrant education:

Rather than the academic, detached experimental role model ... the need [is] for us to develop in ourselves and our students the psychological sense of community that can only come from involvement in it (Rappaport, 1977, 391).

And involved in it they are!

REFERENCES


THE ORGANIC FOOD PHENOMENON:
EXAMINING THE PRODUCER/CONSUMER RELATIONSHIP

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Increasing public interest in, and demand for organic food (in essence, food grown without the use of synthetic fertilisers and pesticides) raises a host of social and psychological questions as to why a significant trend is occurring away from conventional ideas and modes of farming practice. We know, for example, that due to increasing concerns about health, many consumers are concerned enough about the use of synthetic chemicals in conventional food production to alter their buying behaviour in favour of organic produce. What is not yet fathomed, however, is whether reasons for purchasing organic produce can be decomposed into a wider range of more specific factors; whether consumer concerns concord with the motivational or philosophical stance of organic farmers; and, if the phenomenon reflects a generalised social movement or is simply the consumer enjoying freedom of choice purchasing something "new". Before continuing, some basic definitions are provided.

Organic and Conventional Farming

The term "conventional farming" used here, commonly refers to farming methods that utilise synthetic fertilisers and pesticides. The relatively recent (post World War II) introduction of agricultural chemicals on a massive scale has generated enormous increases in productivity (Rushefsky, 1980). Reganold (1989) argues that organic (that is, traditional) methods were abandoned not because they did not work, but because they could not compete with this new, technologically advanced, capital intensive, large scale, and highly mechanised form of agriculture.

Organic farming is denoted in a widely recognised definition as:

"... a production system which avoids or largely excludes the use of synthetically compounded fertilizers, pesticides, growth regulators, and livestock feed additives. To the maximum extent feasible, organic farming systems rely upon crop rotations, animal manures, legumes, green manures, off-farm organic wastes, mechanical cultivation, mineral-bearing rocks, and aspects of biological pest control to maintain soil productivity and tilth, to supply plant nutrients, and to control insects, weeds, and other pests" (United States Department of Agriculture, 1980, p. 9).
The National Association for Sustainable Agriculture Australia Ltd. (NASAA), further defines organic farming as "A system of agriculture able to balance productivity with low vulnerability to problems such as pest infestation and environmental degradation, while maintaining the quality of the land for future generations" (NASAA, 1990, p. 3).

Within this paper, "organic" is used as a generic term encompassing forms of agriculture considered as alternatives to conventional agriculture (including biodynamic agriculture and permaculture).

In light of both the increasing global demand for organic food and perceived legitimacy of organic food production, it has been suggested that changing societal values are a primary antecedent of decreasing confidence in the conventional food supply (Alvensleben & Altmann, 1987). To illustrate, Foster and Miley (1983) claim that present trends indicating that organic agriculture is becoming more viable are due to increasing public recognition that food production is an environmental and social concern as well as an economic concern. For example, expanding interest in "safe" or "residue-free" food, indicates that organic food can no longer be regarded as a fringe product. As such, organic producers are currently responding to an expanding market niche (Foster & Miley, 1983; Harvey, 1990; Kewley, 1990).

In Australia, Shoebridge (1991) contends that most people show interest toward organic food and that production will soar within the next decade. To provide a recent illustration of broadening market potential, the Uncle Tobys Company now supplies Organic Vita Brits through mainstream food distribution outlets. Internationally, there is also increasing demand for 'clean' Australian produce, and Australia is well placed to develop a prosperous organic food industry (Harvey, 1990).

Responding to this demand, and to the current disparity between demand and supply, a number of institutions have been established to assist development of the organic food industry. The recently inaugurated Organic Council (WA), for example, has a central goal of developing recognised communication channels between different interest groups such as NASAA and the Department of Agriculture. This, in turn, is intended to facilitate responses to change within government bureaucracies, remove conflict between groups within the organic industry, and promote understanding of organic agriculture in the community. The Organic Council also deals with other practical concerns such as the development of marketing strategies and infrastructure, certification of organic farms, and contribution to the debate on sustainable land management.
On this last point, issues surrounding organic agriculture are presently interwoven with those of sustainability. Blakely (1991), for example, argues that society is beginning to see the failure of its successes. More specifically, economic hardtimes are exposing the need to rethink many implicit assumptions and have revealed the prevailing development process as unsustainable. Consequently, Blakely argues that "sustainability" needs to become a new societal norm within the cultural learning process.

Espousing a similar line of thinking, Campbell (1991) argues that, across the board, there exists a massive imperative to change or improve farming systems, and that this stems from the realisation that present systems may jeopardise the future productive base. As a result, attitudes and priorities are changing. Thus, while organic farming may still be viewed as a radical shift in method, concerns for sustainability currently traverse all farming systems.

Reasons for Research

As a practical response to the increasing demand for organic food, the aim of the research was to establish a psychological perspective on the organic food consumer. At this time, there is a dearth of research examining the consumption of organic food from a consumer point of view. As a consequence, basic psychological issues such as reasons for purchase, and attitudes toward organic food still require comprehensive analysis. This situation can to some degree be rectified by assessing reasons for purchasing organic food in preference to conventional food, as well as examining potential differences between organic and conventional food consumers. Amongst other things, this entailed moving the scope of the research beyond the point of purchase to examine prepurchase ideas.

To explain further, consumer-oriented research is warranted because the bulk of the literature has been concerned primarily with arguing the case for or against organic farming. Moreover, in being narrowly focussed on the landholder, research has confused organic production with organic agriculture, thereby missing the social context of organic agriculture (Campbell, 1991; Foster & Miley, 1983). As will be discussed below, however, some existing literature has examined the motivations and values of organic farmers and the degree to which these are shared within the organic farming community.

The Organic Farmer

To gain an understanding of the organic phenomenon, it was necessary firstly to consider the philosophies, beliefs, and motivations of organic farmers. To this end, the research dealt with any possible relationship between producer and consumer
by attempting to establish whether reasons for farming organically are shared by consumers as reasons for purchasing organic food.

According to Dlouhy (1983):

"The choice of production methods is fundamentally a question of philosophy, intimately linked with our culture" (p.53).

While organic farmers and those presently converting to organic practices may be motivated by pragmatic concerns (including desire for profit, gaining niche market opportunities), there has also been reference to an underlying value system prevalent within the organic farming community. Chatel (1990) and Clarke (1990), for example, note that many organic farmers are motivated by a shared desire to improve the environment, and to encourage closer, more localised community links and integration.

In general, organic farmers object strongly to the reliance of conventional agriculture upon synthetic chemicals, large scale mechanisation, and the trend towards larger farm units and monocultures (Youngberg, 1978). However, according to Dlouhy (1983), organic farming not only differs from conventional agriculture in terms of method, but more importantly, draws incentive from a different view of nature and of the stature of humans within nature. Neville Cann (cited in Chatel, 1990) believes this involves as much a change of heart and mind as a change in method.

In acknowledging the wisdom of nature (and repudiating conventional wisdom), Jean (1990) argues that organic farming operations are more balanced, less disturbing, and therefore less prone to the land degradation that has occurred on many conventional farms. Indeed, organic farming involves a greater perception of working with nature, and of being in partnership rather than opposition or domination (Kaplan, 1983).

This point is further illustrated in noting that organic agriculture developed as a reaction to the inadequate knowledge base of modern science (Boeringa, 1980). According to Boeringa, all scientific knowledge is partial and, as a consequence, all scientific and technical dealings with nature are also partial. Schumacher (1973) further contends that immense risks arise from large scale application of partial knowledge. Organic ideology contains Schumacher's axiom that there is wisdom in smallness on account of the smallness or partiality of human knowledge.

The development of organic farming may therefore be seen in part as an expression of an absence of trust in the ability of science to limit ecological
disturbances. This, according to Conrad (1980), indicates that there exists a "crisis of legitimacy". Whereas organic agriculture bears many resemblances to a prescientific, intuitive view of nature; the view of nature which characterises modern science also characterises conventional agriculture (Boeringa, 1980; Dlouhy, 1983). This latter view is seen as instrumental in that it regards nature as the raw material for technical activities. Boeringa asserts that all forms of alternative agriculture wish to be distanced from this "one-sided" view, which is regarded as materialistic, technocratic, utilitarian, and anthropocentric (p. 146).

Following on from this argument, Fritsch (1980) contends that our present economic system does not grant intrinsic value to unquantifiable environmental components. Similarly, Milbrath and Inscho (1975) describe environmental problems as being essentially political problems, in that they stem from economic ideology and from the way modern civilisation consumes resources with no heed to their finite and fragile nature. In their own words, "...western, industrialized society is based on false assumptions about the natural environment". Therefore, western materialist demands and lifestyles are no longer admissible and will have to "be changed to harmonize with environmental reality" (p.8).

Notably, Youngberg (1978), and Rushefsky (1980) are of the opinion that the recent phenomenon of urban-to-rural migration has also been generated by this ideological orientation. Indeed, both organic farming and counter migration can be characterised by the need to achieve some degree of self-sufficiency and autonomy (Youngberg, 1978). Ostensibly, the objective of greater self and community independence has served to foster and maintain key aspects of the organic farming phenomenon such as localised marketing cooperatives. As such, organic farmers and consumers are much less reliant upon interdependent marketing and distribution systems (Foster & Miley, 1983).

Youngberg (1978) believes the above goals in concert give the organic "movement" a powerful ideological base. The author also notes that the behaviour of organic farmers cannot be fully understood without recognising the depth of their commitment or, in his terms, the "organic ethic" (p.232). To those who comprehend and adhere to this ethic, farming becomes a distinct way of life (Chatel, 1990; Marien, 1977; Rushefsky, 1980; Taylor & Miller, 1978).

The Study

The research objective was to gain a more comprehensive psychological understanding of the recent and growing demand for organic food. To determine prominent reasons for purchasing organic food, a consumption/decision model was developed for frequent purchasers. Utilising Multiattribute Utility Theory (MAU),
development of the model included two stages. First, issues and concerns (attributes) influencing the decision to purchase organics in preference to conventional food were elicited from interviews with organic consumers. Once identified, attributes were sorted and grouped into categories of similar content, and then systematised into an hierarchical representation of the organic food decision. Second, consumer judgements about the relative contribution of each attribute to their decision to purchase organic food were obtained.\(^1\)

The 8 attributes identified were:

* NATURALNESS
* TASTE/FLAVOUR
* HEALTH/SAFETY
* HEALTH/NUTRITION
* FRESHNESS
* STORAGE QUALITIES
* ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS
* IDEOLOGICAL REASONS

Once identified, these attributes were used to construct an hierarchical model (value tree) of the organic food decision. In order to assess the relative contribution of each attribute, stage 2 of the study involved developing a questionnaire using MAU and the model constructed, and then obtaining judgements from a separate sample of organic consumers. From the data returned, the relative contribution of each attribute to the decision to buy organics was assessed.

The attribute returning highest utility score was Environmental Effects (1.92), followed by Health/Safety (1.6). This demonstrates that concern for the environment is the most prominent reason for the decision to buy organic food. Other relevant attributes include the convictions that organic food is safer, fresher, and more flavoursome than conventional food. The attribute gauging ideological reasons was also significant. Storage Qualities and Naturalness were considered the least important attributes.

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\(^1\) The procedures used in the research are explained fully in Butterworth (1991).
Discussion

The research revealed that motivations of organic farmers (in particular, concerns for the environment) are shared by consumers, as they are the foremost contributor to the decision to purchase organic food. Additionally, a concern more expressive of self-interest, the perceived risk reduction from consuming organic food is also a prominent reason for purchase.

As environmental concern is reflected in buying behaviour, it can be concluded that there is a sufficient sharing of common interests between organic producers and consumers. This similarity of interests suggests that "the adverse producer/consumer relationship found in many economic models disappears as producer and consumer come together within the context of organic interest" (Foster & Miley, 1983, p.20). This commonality is a key finding, and also has significance when considering contemporary urban-rural divisions (Blakely, 1991; Roberts, 1991), and the need for greater urban responsibility for issues relating to sustainability (Syme, 1991).

Concern for the safety of one's health also indicates that practices used in conventional farming are regarded as presenting a significant health hazard. As conventional food is viewed as unsafe for consumption, organic consumers manifestly have low confidence in the relevant authorities to provide safe food. Regardless of whether concern about the use of synthetic chemicals is well founded (Lovelidge, 1987), the current research shows that it is motivating people to seek organic food in preference to conventional food.

Subsequent research highlighted that, in relation to their commitment to issues of food and health, organic and non-organic food consumers do comprise significantly different populations (Butterworth, 1991). The issue of confidence was the most powerful discriminant, indicating that organic consumers are less likely to be trusting of certitudes that conventional food is innocuous. In general, organic consumers have more favourable and more central attitudes toward healthy food, and perceive behavioural costs associated with the purchase of healthy food to be lower.

In light of the observed differences, and noting that the fledgling organic industry has the potential to become very powerful (Foster & Miley, 1983), it can be postulated that the organic phenomenon or "movement" (Higginbotham, 1989; White, 1972) does constitute a social movement (Huber, 1989). This view is reinforced with the findings that organic consumers reject the prevailing production system, have low confidence in the relevant authorities, and share common interests with organic producers.
It has been argued that social movements serve society as a form of self-criticism and self-reflection, and that this "creative regression" plays an important role in the developmental process of every complex system (Huber, 1989, p.371). In defining social movement in these terms, the organic phenomenon may be illustrative of the readaptation of the developing industrial system to its socio-cultural and natural surroundings. Thus, the immediate concerns of organic food advocates may be in restructuring, reidentifying, and reunitifying the relationship between system and environment. Current demands for sustainability are, for example, working to reform agricultural practices and the economic system, and to re-establish sustainable and resilient rural communities.

To conclude, organic farming has been recognised as an integral part of the agricultural sector, and its expansion has been identified. Endeavouring to understand this expansion, and including the consumer as an important focus for analysis, the research indicated that there are a number of reasons for purchasing organic food in preference to conventional food. In particular, the sharing of environmental concerns between producer and consumer gives credence to the view that the organic food phenomenon is definable as a contemporary social movement. The purchase of organic food can therefore be seen as being more profound than behaviour solely based upon personal health concerns or product novelty. While the data appears conclusive, additional research needs to build upon this preliminary understanding of social change and to more comprehensively examine the social movement hypothesis. The proposition (e.g., Clarke, 1990), for example, that increased interest in the production and consumption of organic food is indicative of a movement toward the more localised marketing networks, and greater self and community independence from large-scale commercial enterprise is a pertinent line for investigation.

References:


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Butterworth


Book Review


In Australia, the development ethos of the previous decade has tended toward autocracy. This is particularly so where the making of urban planning decisions have been concerned. However, in more recent times, political rhetoric has espoused a commitment to involve citizens in participatory procedures, and in the assessment of the impact of proposals upon their urban environment. To this end, Citizen Participation in Government deals with the potential for democracy in planning given the emergent development climate and the current system of government. Some of the themes examined by the contributing authors include the following:

- Do governments cynically use citizen participation as a way of defusing opposition, managing conflict or spreading responsibility and, possibly, blame?
- Does participation lend itself to "non-decision making"?
- What is the current outlook for citizen participation in government planning processes?

The book treats these questions in a balanced way by including a variety of viewpoints (e.g., psychology, law, architecture and planning). The complexities of these themes are investigated by highlighting more specific issues such as social justice in the initiative and referendum processes of direct legislation. A second approach places the issues in an efficacy framework, for example, whether public involvement facilitates real change or is simply used to shape and control the agenda of policy making by disorganising effective challenges to institutional power. Moreover, these themes are illustrated through references to case studies of particular developments at both local and state government levels. The case studies discussed fall into four broad categories:

(i) Large-scale and long-term regional planning problems where the potential for conflict is high.
(ii) Participatory methods intended to give people a role in the detailed planning and design decisions that affect them, given that the broader land-use decisions involved are already set in place.
(iii) Using participatory methods to initiate action.

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(iv) Participatory methods directed towards halting some course of action.

In Chapter 1 of the book, Martin Painter discusses the issue of power with particular emphasis on the efficacy of participation, as opposed to confrontation, for the powerless. Chapters 2 (Geoffrey de Q. Walker) and 3 (Nicola Franklin) both deal with the use of initiative and referendum mechanisms at the level of local government. In the latter instance, the argument is developed against the use of the initiative and referendum as instruments of legislation in a society which is both politically naive and inegalitarian. In contrast, de Q. Walker zealously advocates the initiative and referendum and claims that the debate highlights the age-old division between those who believe that the people are capable of self-government and those who believe that the people must be kept in order by a self-appointed elite.

An example of conflict between perceived advantages of participation from a legitimacy point of view, and its perceived disadvantages as a source of disruption to bureaucratic functioning is presented by James R. McClelland in Chapter 4. McClelland, a former Chief Judge of the New South Wales Land and Environment Court, recounts one instance where a government proffered what were touted as unusually generous rights to participate in planning decisions but, at the same time, actually made these provisions ineffective.

In Chapter 5 of the book, Geoff Syme identifies key factors in determining the appropriate planning and timing of participation programs. Referring to large-scale regional planning exercises Syme points out that the particular program needs to be attuned to context-specific components (e.g., the motives of the most powerful party in the negotiations and the goals of the less powerful participants).

Chapters 6 through 8 all report case studies of citizen participation procedures initiated by a government agency and carried out by professional consultants. Chapter 6 by Carolyn Stone deals with a case of consultation aimed at refining certain aspects of an urban expressway route and with the planning of compensatory measures for some of those affected. Chapter 7 by David Chesterman and Carolyn Stone details the participatory planning of a public housing estate on a disused hospital site, and emphasises the demonstrable effect particular interest groups had on the thinking of the consultants involved. Chapter 8 by Ross Thome and Terry Purcell deals with the use of public meetings and surveys as methods of participation. These authors argue for well-constructed surveys in some circumstances, but target public meetings for strong criticism while accepting that they remain a frequently used technique.

Both Chapters 9 (John Gray) and 10 (Terry Purcell) report cases of citizen initiated participation. In the former example, a community in Wellington, New
Zealand used a wide range of participation techniques to get a waterfront development onto the public agenda and thereafter produced a concept plan for the area. Unlike the Wellington case, Purcell gives an account of citizen-initiated moves to reverse environmentally damaging planning decisions that had the backing of powerful development companies and an acquiescent shire council.

_Citizen Participation in Government_ is concerned with the stage in the planning process at which public involvement should occur and the type of participatory techniques that ought to be adopted. However, the efficacy of these tools as well as that of public involvement more generally is discussed in the context of current theory and practice (such as Amstein's ladder of participation). The inferences drawn in Munro-Clark's concluding chapter recognise that, by and large, a worthwhile public involvement program cannot be based on fixed precepts. Rather, it must be guided by a realistic appraisal of the operative factors in the case at hand. One implication of this approach is that a public involvement procedure is more likely to have good potential for some specific type of outcome. This is also true in recognising that there will be cases where the particularities of a dispute may make participative procedures inappropriate as a means of conflict resolution.

Overall, the book's approach is somewhat rare in that citizen participation is dispassionately considered from the beginning of the introductory chapter as "an ambiguous term with positive overtones...[conferring] a stamp of approval on whatever it names" (p.13). From this point the various contributors seek to dispel any ambiguity by investigating its political content, that is, its basis in a social structure that harbours very definite power inequities. The ideological function of citizen participation is duly unpacked and examined in an effort to understand its complexities beyond simply that of "participation as panacea".

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