



families commission / blue skies fund
kōmihana ā **whānau**

strengthening rural families

an exploration of industry transformation, community
and social capital

COLIN G GOODRICH & KAYLENE A SAMPSON
UNIVERSITY OF CANTERBURY, CHRISTCHURCH

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

SUMMARY	5	6.3 Age	18
1. Introduction	7	6.4 Households – composition and income	18
1.1 Report outline	7	6.5 Industry and work	18
2. Aims and objectives of this study	8	6.6 Voluntary contributions	19
3. Contextualising change – industry transition in South Westland	9	6.7 Summary	19
3.1 The decline of forestry	9	7. Families’ stories	21
3.2 The growth in the dairy sector	10	7.1 Middle-aged family	21
3.3 The growth in the tourism sector	10	7.2 Young township family	22
3.4 Summary of background changes	11	7.3 Rural empty nesters	23
4. Approaches to understanding social capital in rural families	12	7.4 Ex-forestry family	24
4.1 Qualitative field interviews	12	7.5 Middle-aged township family	25
4.2 Determining respondents	12	7.6 Single mother	26
4.3 Clarifying the process	12	7.7 Township empty nesters	28
4.4 Analytical framework	12	7.8 Newcomer young family	29
4.5 Supporting secondary data	12	7.9 Older farming family	30
4.6 Reflection on process	12	7.10 Younger farming family	31
5. What is social capital?	13	7.11 Semi-retired family	33
5.1 The structure of social capital	13	7.12 Mid-life entrepreneurs	34
5.1.1 Networks and ties	13	8. Central themes emerging from the stories	36
5.1.2 Trust	14	8.1 Families and social capital	36
5.1.3 Reciprocity	14	8.1.1 Use of networks and ties	36
5.2 Social capital as an analytic tool	15	8.1.2 Trust and families in community	37
5.3 Social capital and rural families	15	8.1.3 Reciprocity and the family	38
5.4 Social capital – between families and communities	15	8.1.4 Community attachment and participation	39
6. Community profiles	17	8.2 Fitting work around family and community life	40
6.1 Population characteristics	17	8.3 Gendered contributions	40
6.2 Gender and ethnicity	17	8.4 Aligning family and community needs	41
		9. Concluding comments	42
		10. References	44

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Whataroa and Hari Hari: Dairy units and production 1970–2007	10
Table 2: Gender and ethnicity 2006	17
Table 3: Percentage of community engaged in voluntary activity	19

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: The West Coast region	9
Figure 2: Population change 1991–2006	17
Figure 3: Percentage of population not living at same residence five years ago	17
Figure 4: Age 2006	18
Figure 5: Household composition 2006	18
Figure 6: Household income 2006	18
Figure 7: Whataroa – employment by industry 1991–2006	18
Figure 8: Hari Hari – employment by industry 1991–2006	19
Figure 9: Changes to hours worked per week 2001–2006	19

Summary

Rural community researchers are increasingly interested in the degree to which aspects of social organisation and local ‘culture’ have a bearing on social outcomes. The rapidly expanding body of literature in this area has drawn on the work of Robert Putnam (1993) among others. Putnam contended that social wellbeing depends on the quality of community social structure and organisation, or **social capital**. Civic participation, reciprocity between individuals and groups, social networks, kin and non-kin ties, leadership and sufficient trust to enable individuals to act collectively for a shared objective, have all been identified as measures of social capital.

‘Social capital’ is not a new concept in New Zealand’s public policy discourse. To date, however, most of the discussion has been focused at the national level. Almost all of the measures used to define social capital have been established to meet the statistically robust methodologies of agencies such as Statistics New Zealand or for the purpose of national-level policy formation. While this approach has considerable merit, we suggest that statistical frameworks offer only partial answers when investigating regional and localised responses.

Using mainly ethnographic techniques, this project has used a social capital perspective to understand how rural families adjust to changes in the social and economic landscape. We have sought to understand how rural families participate in the accumulation and utilisation of social capital in their communities to bring about balance between paid work, community commitments and family life.

To meet this broader aim we have explored two specific objectives: Firstly, we examine the relationship *between* family and community, in order to understand how rural families draw upon, and contribute to, stocks of social capital. To do this, we have conceptualised families as ‘units’ and have investigated the contribution of social networks, civic participation, voluntary engagements and various other formal and informal arrangements to their social wellbeing. Our focus of analysis is the interchange *between* family and community rather than *within* the family unit.

The second objective, which directly builds upon the first, was to examine rural family wellbeing in the context of change in industry. Industry and policy changes have brought job losses in one sector and

rapid expansion in others, creating personal and collective dilemmas for some rural families. This changing economic and social landscape, and the dilemmas families *and* communities are facing, form the backdrop against which we have examined ‘social capital in operation’.

Combined, these objectives provided us with the opportunity to explore some of the mechanisms, approaches and strategies used by families to achieve balance between paid work, community commitments and family life in an environment of industry change.

Although some scene-setting material from Statistics New Zealand is incorporated into the report, the data that mainly enables us to address the above issues are contained in stories obtained from 12 South Westland families, using a sequence of unstructured and semi-structured interviews.

Several key themes emerged from the families’ stories regarding how they have responded to change and the role of social capital in facilitating this response:

- **Families’ sense of attachment to community:** The capacity to build networks and social arrangements that facilitate participation in the generation of social capital grew for families as they developed their own sense of attachment and belonging to place.
- **The importance of social networks in supporting families:** The social networks and ties developed by families have been shown to be a critical asset for accessing the social and physical resources that promote family wellbeing.
- **The social norms of trust and reciprocity:** Trust, as a precursor to reciprocity, has allowed families to support others, and be supported by others. Apparent in many ways, from the social monitoring of children to the levels of trust demonstrated toward others in the community, high levels of trust and reciprocity have enabled families to ‘get ahead’ in the context of significant change.
- **Balancing work, family life and community participation:** In the face of changing social and economic circumstances, families indicate the necessity of working actively to achieve more balance between these aspects of their daily lives. One strategy for finding this balance is prioritising the allocation of time. In particular, the alignment of family and community

commitments and the picking up by women of many family contributions and obligations have helped in finding this balance.

As public policy continues to debate social capital, we would suggest that this study provides useful lessons for agencies attempting to facilitate social capital at the local level. The social responses observed highlight the importance of local initiative and control of the processes required to amass social capital. Conversely, attempting to create social capital through policy directives has limitations. As a resource of the collective, social capital is expressed in the everyday lives of individuals, families and communities. Hence, at best, policy directives can facilitate access to

resources, by fostering bridging opportunities and providing financial and technical or advisory support. In the interest of family wellbeing, such support should necessarily come with 'no strings attached'. The level of self-determination afforded to the community is likely to be critical in the success of any external initiative to assist in the generation and maintenance of social capital. Furthermore, agencies taking approaches that embrace the norms inherent in social capital itself, such as trust, reciprocity and mutuality, will be better able to take the community along with them. In their absence, the direct involvement of the apparatus of government is likely to be totally counter-productive to the establishment and facilitation of enduring social capital.

1. INTRODUCTION

Just on half a century ago, Hannah Arendt (1958) published *The Human Condition*. Her thesis contended that three types of action are required to be “fully human”. The first two, engagement in family life and paid work, are clearly necessary for human existence. One cannot argue that the nurturing of kin, and the endeavours to procure resources to aid human survival are not essential. The third action she called the *vita activa*, or public life; a life that is actioned in jointly-built civil spaces. Within these spaces as human beings we are capable of debate; we share actions; we resolve collective dilemmas (Arendt, 1958). Arendt reminds us that the absence of, or equally over-attention to, any one aspect of the human condition is likely to be problematic.

A half a century on from the publication of Arendt’s thesis, public policy continues to debate aspects of *vita activa*, or public life. The *vita activa* is played out in all manner of ways, be they responding to local issues (such as natural disaster relief or redeveloping a local park) or meeting the challenges arising as a consequence of external or global forces (such as the expansion or loss of a core industry, a change of government or sector restructuring). Whatever the issues, the question still arises of how best to collectively proceed. How do individuals, families and communities continue to struggle to perform their own social balancing acts while building, responding to and sharing in the accumulated wealth of public ‘goods’? In this study we take a social capital perspective to examine how rural families living in two small and relatively isolated communities have attempted to resolve this problem.

Robert Putnam defined social capital as “those features of social organisation, such as trust, norms and

networks that can improve the efficiency of society by facilitating coordinated actions” (Putnam, 1993 p 167). Using Putnam’s definition we have examined the features of social life and aspects of the social structure that help rural families negotiate the effects of rapid social and economic change. In Westland, the closure of the indigenous timber industry alongside rapid growth of the dairy and tourism sectors constitutes such change. A social capital perspective has allowed us to shed some light on the ways families bring about balance between the various aspects of the three actions defined by Arendt as essential to “the human condition”; that is, paid work, community commitments and family life. Finally, we reflect on the contribution of this balance to rural social wellbeing in general.

1.1 Report outline

Section 2 details the specific objectives used to meet the aim of this study. Section 3 contains a brief overview of the historical and social context in which change has come about for two Westland communities, while Section 4 details our methodological approach to examining such change. In Section 5 we define some of the features of the structure and functions of social capital and canvass the findings of other rural research adopting this theoretical perspective. The next two sections present the findings from this work: Section 6 builds a quantitative picture of the two communities of interest, drawn largely from Statistics New Zealand Census data; Section 7 provides qualitative details of the experiences of 12 families responding to change within their communities. Then in Section 8, we discuss some of the central themes emerging from this research, and consider their implications in Section 9.

2. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THIS STUDY

This project has used a social capital perspective to understand how rural families adjust to changes in the social and economic landscape. We have sought to understand how rural families participate in the accumulation and utilisation of social capital within their communities to bring about balance between paid work, community commitments and family life.

To achieve this broader aim we established two objectives:

- To explore the relationship between family and community in order to understand how rural families draw upon, and contribute to, stocks of social capital. To do this, we have conceptualised families as 'units' and examined the contribution of social networks, civic participation, voluntary engagements and various other formal and informal

arrangements to their social wellbeing. Our analysis is pitched at the interchange between family and community rather than within the family unit.

- To carry out an examination of rural families' wellbeing in the context of industry change. Industry and policy changes have brought job losses in one sector and rapid expansion in others, creating personal and collective difficulties for some rural families. This changing economic and social landscape, and the problems families and communities are facing, form the backdrop against which we have examined social capital in operation.

This approach has provided us with an opportunity to explore some of the mechanisms, approaches and strategies used by families to bring about balance between paid work, community commitments and family life in the context of industry change. This change, along with a historical overview, is detailed in the next section.

3. CONTEXTUALISING CHANGE – INDUSTRY TRANSITION IN SOUTH WESTLAND

The West Coast region of the South Island of New Zealand is a strip of land extending from Karamea in the north to Jackson Bay in the south, spanning about 550 kilometres (Figure 1). Bounded by the ocean to the west and rugged mountain terrain to the east, it is rich in gold deposits, coal and indigenous forests (Weaver, 1998). The communities of Whataroa (population 405 in 2006) and Hari Hari (population 351 in 2006) are situated in the central part of Westland district, just north of the tourist destination of Franz Josef Glacier.

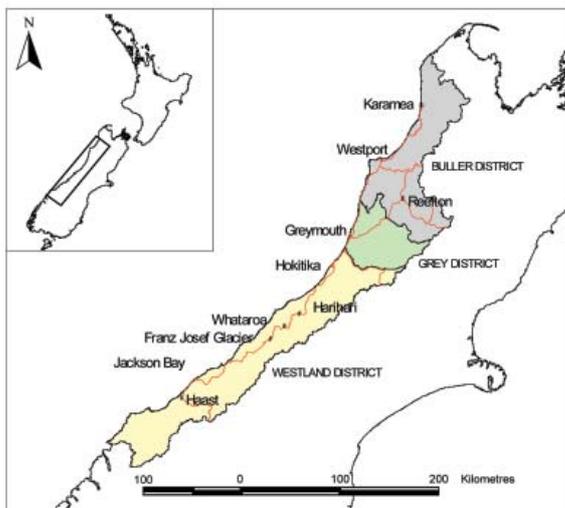


FIGURE 1: The West Coast region

Both Whataroa and Hari Hari have a history built largely upon timber felling and processing, and dairy farming. Somewhat atypically, their economies were not subject to the ‘boom and bust’ cycles that have marked much of the West Coast’s relationship with natural resources and economic growth. This has come about largely because of the absence of gold and coal mining and the associated ‘rushes’ they have historically created (Maturin, 1981).¹ Instead, the local economy has experienced steady and continual growth, starting with the farming by the earliest settlers and then later,

timber extraction and milling. As early as 1906 settlers were bringing portable mills into the area, cutting away the bush and opening up farmland (Berry, circa 1986). Hari Hari and Whataroa were small communities of about 400 people until the 1950s when the sawmilling industry expanded. With this expansion the New Zealand Forest Service (NZFS) and the Ministry of Works and Development expanded their presence in the area, providing more local employment opportunities and encouraging steady population growth.

The timber industry in particular became a significant contributor to the social and economic wellbeing of many of the West Coast’s rural communities (Bennett, 1980). Growth occurred as a result of declining timber stocks in North Island indigenous forests and increased demand following the post-World War II housing boom (Peat, 1987). Whataroa and Hari Hari² were well positioned to receive a good share of this prosperity.

3.1 The decline of forestry

A decline in the forestry industry began in the late 1970s with some amalgamation and rationalisation in the timber processing component of the industry. When the state sector was restructured in the late 1980s the NZFS district office and staff were relocated from Hari Hari to Hokitika, 120 kilometres to the north. This resulted in the loss of about 45 forestry jobs (Pawson & Scott, 1992). The next major event in the decline of the forestry industry was the loss of the timber processing mills in both townships (in 1991 for Hari Hari, in 1994 for Whataroa). At this time, mill workers were laid off and the local communities were forced to find ways of absorbing the ongoing effects of the decline of the timber industry. A small proportion of the timber workers moved on, but most stayed, mostly taking up less well paid opportunities in the growing tourism and farming sectors. This lack of outward migration marks these communities as different from other rural resource communities experiencing similar industry closures (Sampson, Goodrich, & Taylor, 2007). The final step was the complete cessation of logging on Crown-owned land, as the status of the North Okarito and Saltwater Forests was shifted from production to conservation management. By the time the decision was implemented in April 2002, fewer than 20 people were directly employed in felling, hauling or processing

¹ Alluvial gold attracted many to the area in the 1860s and 1870s. Although thousands of fossickers worked beach sands along the nearby coast, these two areas were mainly places to pass through. Some of those early gold seekers took up land and began farming.

² Most of the growth in forest-related jobs occurred in Hari Hari where, as a response to this growth and the other jobs and businesses it supported, the population had increased from 423 in 1945 to 693 by 1976 (Bennett, 1980) and facilities in the township expanded to accommodate the needs of this growing community.

timber (Sampson, 2003), a far cry from the vibrant timber industry operating in Westland in the 1970s and 1980s.

While these events are not the only ones that contributed to the indigenous timber industry decline, they mark significant turning points for many people whose social and economic lives had been intrinsically linked to the local forestry industry. It must be noted that while the local timber industry never directly employed more than a third of the total workforce in either community, it was seen as an iconic and defining industry. As such, forestry was of huge importance as a contributor to the sense of local identity (Sampson & Goodrich, 2005).

3.2 The growth in the dairy sector

While the forestry industry downsized, the farming sector has undergone considerable adjustment and growth. Drystock farming has almost entirely ceased as drystock farms have been converted to more lucrative dairy units. The increase in dairy units and growth in peak production in Whataroa and Hari Hari can be seen in Table 1.

TABLE 1: Whataroa and Hari Hari: Dairy units and production 1970–2007

Year	Number of farms	Mean peak production per unit (litres)/per day	Total peak production per unit (litres)/per day
1970	45	1,333	60,000
1986	50	3,000	150,000
2002	21	4,667	280,000
2007	20	5,790	364,000

There are currently 33 dairy farms in Hari Hari and 30 in Whataroa. As Table 1 indicates, the number of farm units has increased markedly since 1970. However, in the last five years this rate of increase had slowed, with the addition of only three farms. Milk production figures reflect the shift to more intensive farming practice. This is illustrated in Table 1, where the volume of milk production has increased from 4,667 litres to 5,790 litres (or around 25 percent) per dairy unit per day over the same five-year period. A breakdown of peak production figures for the 2006–2007 season shows

Hari Hari producing 178,500 litres and Whataroa producing 186,300 litres.³ In brief, the growth in dairying has been marked by farm conversions from drystock to dairy, farm amalgamations, larger herds and intensification of production. These changes have generated the need for more labour units, both seasonally and year round. The farming community reports that these changes have necessitated working longer hours.

3.3 The growth in the tourism sector

Consistent with the broader Westland pattern, tourism has emerged alongside dairying as a growth industry. Tourist numbers specific to the research area are not available, as the figures collected by the Ministry of Tourism are for the West Coast region as a whole. The wider West Coast figures show that visitor numbers have risen steadily since the 1960s (Narayan, 1995) with significant increases in tourists since the 1990s (Simmons & Fairweather, 2001). Regional data from the Ministry of Tourism tell us that total visits to West Coast Regional Tourism Organisations are forecast to rise from 1.91 million in 2006 to 2.26 million in 2013, an increase of 18.8 percent (358,100) or 2.5 percent pa (Ministry of Tourism, 2007). Figures supplied by the Department of Conservation (DOC) for the use of the Franz Josef Glacier⁴ access track show an increase of 25.6 percent between the 2000/01 season and the 2006/07 season, with 367,747 walkers recorded in 2000/01 and 460,450 recorded in 2006/07.⁵ It is not known what proportion of tourists visiting the region walk the access track but the increase in walkers is assumed by DOC to reflect the overall increase in visitor numbers.

While this growth in tourist numbers has been particularly important for the established tourist towns of Franz Josef and Fox, Whataroa especially has also benefited from the establishment of tourism businesses in the area. In addition, some local women have obtained employment in Franz Josef, mainly in low-skilled service positions.

While there is no causal relationship between the emergence of tourism and the loss of large-scale forestry and sawmilling in the area, the emerging patterns of community composition and change nonetheless reflect these two recent adjustments.

³ Leo McIntyre, Westland Milk Products, pers. comm., 2nd May 2007.

⁴ It is assumed that virtually all of the tourists who visit Franz Josef pass through Hari Hari and Whataroa.

⁵ Ian Singleton, Department of Conservation, Franz Josef, pers. comm., 17 November 2007.

Tourism and related employment opportunities in Whataroa have expanded as the town benefits from the overflow effects of the boom in tourism in the Franz Josef area. Whataroa and Hari Hari have also had to manage increasing pressures on their infrastructure from the seasonal effects of the tourist industry. Moreover, the demographic profiles of both communities have altered, not only in respect of population size but also of its composition.

The recent rapid increase in visitor numbers in the general area has created both seasonal opportunities and costs, particularly for Whataroa, because of its proximity to the glacier tourist centres. One way that Whataroa businesses have benefited is by providing accommodation to the overflow of tourists from Franz Josef. According to one hotel operator, when accommodation facilities are full in Franz Josef, many tourists return to Whataroa, and take up accommodation there. It is only when Whataroa and Franz Josef facilities are completely full at the height of the summer tourist season, that visitors will make the 40-minute journey back to Hari Hari to seek accommodation.

Although tourism is providing local employment opportunities, Simmons and Fairweather (2001) suggest that tourism is not an entirely 'smokeless' industry, particularly in sparsely populated regions such as Westland, where public goods, hospitality and amenities are increasingly drawn upon. Moreover, seasonal pressures are not only a product of increased tourist numbers but also of the increase in transient workers required to service them. In the case of Whataroa, seasonal pressure on permanent accommodation is a consequence. Many of Whataroa's residents commute to Franz Josef for employment. Whataroa has become a dormitory town, accommodating the overflow of permanent and seasonal workers employed in nearby Franz Josef.

Aside from accommodation facilities in the Whataroa township, other infrastructure has also come under pressure. One resident health worker who has serviced the area on and off over the past decade commented on the pressure that growth in local tourism has placed on medical facilities and services. Growth in transient populations has resulted in a corresponding increase in use of medical services, with growth in both seasonal and overall demand on facilities. A local health worker suggested that over the summer season, casual and once-off consultations had almost trebled since 1999. This was over and above the usual caseload, and was beginning to represent a real strain on the medical services and resources, many of which are provided by the voluntary sector. Other infrastructure problems that have emerged include waste management issues (including problems with solid waste and waste water) and pressure on water resources (Simmons & Fairweather, 2001).

3.4 Summary of background changes

This historical and social overview has highlighted aspects of industry change that have affected the region over the past few decades. The social and economic adjustments that have occurred in consequence include the following:

- loss of the forestry industry and associated employment
- industry intensification (dairy farming and tourism)
- growth in seasonal visitor numbers
- growth in seasonal employment opportunities
- increased inward and outward migration
- increased pressure on housing and infrastructure
- longer working hours.

4. APPROACHES TO UNDERSTANDING SOCIAL CAPITAL IN RURAL FAMILIES

4.1 Qualitative field interviews

The majority of the data for this research was gathered through face-to-face interviews. We conducted in-depth, semi-structured interviews with residents of the two communities. The participants included both those born locally and newcomers. The interviews were conducted during two fieldwork visits. The first visit involved systematic semi-structured interviews which took up to two hours to complete. 'Gap searching' and preliminary analysis was done prior to the second field visit, at the mid-point of data collection. The second field visit allowed us to systematically follow up on issues that arose during the first round of interviews and to fill gaps that became apparent in the data. Interviews were conducted jointly by both researchers, and data recorded manually on an interview schedule.

4.2 Determining respondents

We used a combination of snowball and purposive sampling to recruit over 30 participants⁶ living in various familial arrangements and social locations. Snowball sampling involves an initial 'key informant', who is likely to indicate a number of potential respondents. From the first few interviews, potential new respondents are identified, and the process is repeated. In this way the sample grows like a rolling snowball. This sampling technique was selected because we were confident of the relative homogeneity and apparent density of social networks within the two communities. However, as we were keen to include a variety of family types, and as we were interested in the views of newcomers as well as longer-term residents, we also included an element of purposive sampling in our sampling frame. This involved basic monitoring of our 'respondent list' to ensure we were gaining the views of a cross-section of members of the community.⁷

4.3 Clarifying the process

At the time initial contact was made, respondents were informed of the broader research design, and

made aware of the intention of a 'follow-up' interview. After initially agreeing to participate, each respondent was provided with an information sheet setting out an overview of the research process. The information sheet also set out our obligations with respect to confidentiality and anonymity and included the contact details of both researchers. Before the interview began, respondents were reminded that at any time they could choose not to answer any questions or terminate the interview if they felt so inclined.

4.4 Analytical framework

The analytical framework used in the analysis of qualitative data was based on grounded theory (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). Central to this methodology is the application of comparative analysis, where concept indicators are compared across cases in order to establish core concepts. Constant comparison and repetition of response helps confirm and validate the concepts. The two-part process of data gathering, outlined above, particularly suited this analytical framework. Emergent results were triangulated with the supporting quantitative data, as discussed below.

4.5 Supporting secondary data

To support the qualitative findings, quantitative profiles of the two communities were constructed. This allowed us to establish a clear picture of their socio-demographic composition and the changes to it that had occurred over time. Our major source for this was Census data obtained from Statistics New Zealand.

4.6 Reflection on process

Of considerable interest to us was the extent to which, through the process of engaging with our participants, we became aware of the social capital we ourselves were generating and drawing on. The trust and rapport that we developed with respondents during the first field visit frequently led to a high-calibre interchange,⁸ often about quite personal matters. As a female/male interview team we could also often elicit information from respondents that we might not have been otherwise able to obtain. We believe this rapport contributed immensely to the quality and the richness of the data gathered.

⁶ While we interviewed many families, this report contains 12 'stories' that are illustrative of the themes in the discussion/analysis. We generally interviewed husband and wife together. Occasionally, couples were interviewed separately.

⁷ It is important to impress here that no statistical inferences are being drawn from the qualitative data and therefore representative sampling is a 'non-issue'.

⁸ To give an example, when one respondent was contacted to arrange a follow-up interview, she suggested if she were running late we could just "let ourselves in and make a cup a tea".

5. WHAT IS SOCIAL CAPITAL?

The term ‘social capital’ refers to those features of social life that operate between individuals to enable them to address issues they share in common. The term social capital originated in an attempt to understand how co-operation can be facilitated to resolve some of the difficulties of collective action. Popularised foremost by the extensive empirical research of Robert Putnam, social capital entered the fields of academia and public policy in earnest in the 1990s. In his study *Making Democracy Work: Civic traditions in modern Italy* (1993) Putnam explored the social variables associated with social civility and social and economic development as means of ‘making democracy work’. Focusing mainly on civic participation, voting patterns and newspaper readership, he argued that expressions of civility or civic virtue were played out through voluntary or joint social actions, and in the process provided opportunities to develop and use social bonds and networks. Putnam defined social capital as “those features of social organisation, such as trust, norms and networks that can improve the efficiency of society by facilitating coordinated actions” (Putnam, 1993 p 167).

While Putnam focused upon the collective aspect of social civility in an analysis rooted firmly in the traditions of political science, sociological contributions to social capital had already begun to appear. The French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu is credited with having introduced the concept of social capital into sociological discourse as early as 1985 (Portes, 1998). Bourdieu argued from the standpoint of individuals. While he considered social capital in similar terms to Putnam, he focused on the benefits that would accrue to the individual from purposive engagement in the shared social realm and from the deliberate construction of, and participation in, social networks. Like Putnam, Bourdieu gave considerable attention to the contributions of social capital to the accrual of, and its exchangeability with, other forms of capital, especially economic capital (Bourdieu, 1986).

More directly, James Coleman (1988) explored the relationship between social capital and the accumulation of other forms of capital, particularly human capital. In defining social capital, Coleman employed the theory of rational action to argue that

individuals have control of certain resources, of which social capital is one. Coleman is clear that from rational choice, individuals act collectively, and in doing so generate social capital that in turn can be used as a resource to facilitate productive activity. He further argues that social capital “inheres in the structure of relations between actors and among actors” (Coleman, 1988, p98). In effect, the functional aspects of social capital are embedded in the social structures of everyday life, and embodied in relationships among people.

Irrespective of whether benefits accrue to the collective or the individual, or whether the focus is on the accumulation of economic capital or human capital, there is consensus regarding the productive capacity of social capital. Like other forms of capital, social capital is a resource that represents a kind of ‘currency’ which can be ‘traded’ or ‘transferred’. By maintaining the social relationships and structures in which social capital is embedded, individuals, families and communities can realise some of these benefits, and thus resolve some of the issues they face in common. What are the mechanisms by which this is done? How is the idea of social capital expressed in the everyday lives of individuals, families and communities, and what features of the social world facilitate its accrual and use? To answer these questions we will first elaborate upon some of the features of social capital as it is theorised by Putnam, Bourdieu and Coleman, among others.

5.1 The structure of social capital

5.1.1 Networks and ties

Common to the many definitions of social capital is an emphasis upon collective social activity that relies upon networks of social ties. Social networks comprise a combination of family, close friends and more socially distant acquaintances. According to Granovetter (1983) close friends (between whom there are strong ties) have frequent and overlapping contact within the social cluster or group, forming a “densely knit clump of social structure” (p202). On the other hand, acquaintances (connected by weak ties) are often diverse and heterogeneous in experience and social location, and not known by all within one’s social circle; and engagement with them is often much less intense and frequent.

On the premise that everyone possesses both close friends and acquaintances, and that each of us has unique networks, weak ties are useful. Weak ties provide 'social bridges' or connections between densely knit social clusters. This allows access to other sets of social experiences, and provides exposure to potentially different kinds of resources; thus weak ties bridge or connect different parts of the social system. In contrast, those with few weak ties will be confined to the relatively homogeneous views, information and resources of their immediate social world (Granovetter, 1983). It follows, then, that strong bonding ties allow individuals to "get by" while weak bridging ties enable them to "get ahead" (Woodhouse, 2006, p86). With an excess of strong ties and few weak ones, relatively successful individuals may carry a burden. This burden involves having to share their success, knowledge, wealth and other resources with the many members of the recipient group, thereby undermining their own position and relative social and economic advantage (Woodhouse, 2006).

In building social capital, both the strong ties of close friendship and family and weak bridging ties with acquaintances are important. Both allow co-operative social action. Weak ties give potential access to a different set of resources, be they ideas, things or people that may be necessary to address issues or resolve problems. On the other hand, strong ties or clusters provide networks imbued with social memories of successful collaboration, which function as a kind of 'cultural template' for future collective action (Putnam, 1995a). It is through this co-ordinated and collective action, rather than the activities of individuals working in isolation, that social capital can be accrued (Onyx & Bullen, 2000). Social capital is thus both a feature of the social structure and a shared dimension or resource of society, rather than an attribute of individuals (Lochner, Kawachi, & Kennedy 1999).

5.1.2 Trust

Social norms are an aspect of the networks that facilitate the accumulation of social capital. Norms are embedded in social relations, and provide social control by regulating informal behaviours, obviating the need for formally established and institutionalised social sanctions (Coleman, 1990). The social norm represents willingness on the part of the individual to "take risks in a social context based on a sense of confidence that others will respond as expected and will act in mutually

supportive ways, or at least that others do not intend harm" (Onyx & Bullen, 2000, p24).

Trust is an important component in the accrual of social capital. Unlike economic exchanges, 'transactions' involving social capital are more obscure and less certain than straight market solutions. One must simply trust that investment in social capital will pay off. Having feelings of trust towards others furthers the development of social capital because it leads to co-operative and collaborative behaviours, civic-mindedness and reliance on others, and encourages reciprocity and mutuality. Trust is also a critical component in healthy risk-taking (Cox, 1995). New ideas, stepping 'outside the loop' and the confidence to run with creative solutions to collective problems undoubtedly benefit from trust.

According to Onyx and Bullen (2000, p25) "trust allows collaboration to occur in the absence of sanctions and rewards". In 'high-trust' societies, where social capital is also high, the incidence of crime diminishes alongside the need for formal policing (Putnam, 1995b), and spending on law and order is also reduced (Cox, 1995). In the absence of trust, societies retreat to higher levels of institutional regulation, and more demand for law and order ensues.

5.1.3 Reciprocity

Reciprocity is a social norm that features in discussion of social capital. It is apparent in those informal social arrangements whereby an individual provides goods or services to others in need, with a common expectation of mutuality; that is, an expectation that at some time in the future this act of goodwill will be reciprocated (Coleman, 1990). Reciprocity has two aspects. The first relates to direct returns or exchanges between individuals or families, eg exchange arrangements for childcare or collection of an absent neighbour's mail. In a direct exchange, the obligation of reciprocity has been satisfied, albeit in a different currency. The second aspect of reciprocity involves the expectation of mutuality from the wider collective. In this case, individuals or families may give time or services to the community for such things as community 'betterment' projects, beautification or improving facilities or a community celebration. Although the recipients of this kind of 'giving' are somewhat more diffuse, nevertheless a reciprocal benefit is derived; through the act of giving to the wider community, individuals become involved in the place they live in. In doing so they develop some

stocks of social capital with the wider social collective, which they may draw on when the need arises.

Two important provisos must be made regarding the fulfilment of reciprocity in the concept of social capital. The first is that it does not involve market transactions in the sense of fee for service. Money may well be involved in the form of a donation or payment to a third party for the provision of a service that benefits the first and second party, or the community as a whole; but the idea of reciprocity transcends the notion of market exchange. The second proviso relates to the temporal elasticity of repayment. Reciprocation may happen almost immediately after the initial act of goodwill, but this need not be the case. Indeed, repayment may never happen at all; what is important is the idea that should one need to draw upon one's stock, the 'capital' is there.

Like trust, reciprocity is not always obvious, as expressions of it often come with uncertain time horizons. Like social norms, it is embedded in social relations between actors; and both feature heavily in theoretical discussions of social capital (Coleman, 1990; Cox, 1995; Putnam, 1993; Portes, 1998).

5.2 Social capital as an analytic tool

The advantage of using social capital as an analytic framework rather than concepts such as community, neighbourhood or moral economy, is that it provides three relatively uncontested components – networks, trust and reciprocity – upon which to base analysis. We draw the reader's attention to the distinction between the concept of social capital and indicators of it (such as expressions of trust or reciprocity). We believe this is paramount in the application of this framework. For us the conceptual elements of this analytic tool provided clarity of insight into community and family practices.

5.3 Social capital and rural families

Rural communities provide an excellent context in which to examine social capital. Partly in response to the effects of geographic isolation relative to urban centres, rural communities are frequently drawn upon to provide voluntary support for many aspects of community. Rural places generally have a high rate of community attachment and voluntary participation is also high (Ryan, Agnitsch, Zhao, & Mullick, 2005). Relationships in rural places are embedded in dense networks of close ties, which have been shown to foster

the high levels of social capital linked with successful rural community development (Woodhouse, 2006).

Families have been the focus of analysis of social capital in rural and urban communities. Hofferth and Iceland (1998) suggest that social capital (such as seeking mediation for disputes, or picking up rubbish in a public place) is generally stronger in rural than urban places. While citing the benefits of strong kinship ties in the rural context, they nonetheless indicate that rural families may suffer from a deficit of the weaker (and wider) ties that afford wider social network opportunities to urban family units. Weaker ties are considered to be generated between unrelated individuals. They are generally more numerous and diverse than kin or family ties, and more likely to elicit reciprocal social arrangements, than family or kin ties. Indeed, the findings of Hofferth and Iceland (1998) support the earlier work of Granovetter (1983) who also concluded that kin ties, although valuable, cannot parallel the heterogeneity and breadth of the 'weak' ties afforded by non-kin social relations.

Onyx and Bullen (2000) undertook a large empirical study of social capital in five Australian communities. They found strong differences between rural and urban centres in the patterns of responses and the nature of the social capital generated. More participation in community, trust and safety, and neighbourhood connections were found in rural places – all features of societies with predominantly dense networks and close ties. Hence they argue that in rural places considerable social capital is generated in the form of bonding. On the other hand, in urban centres, more social proactivity (measured by social agency) and social tolerance of diversity were observed. Tolerance of diversity and more expression of social agency are indicative of more bridging social capital and the presence of weaker social ties (Onyx & Bullen, 2000).

5.4 Social capital – between families and communities

Stewart-Weeks and Richardson (1998) have adopted a different approach to build on current knowledge about social capital and families. They undertook a qualitative examination of the role of social capital in the wellbeing of 12 Australian families living in various social and physical locations. They draw a very important distinction regarding the purpose of participating in the social behaviours that accrue social capital. On

one hand, they suggest social-capital-generating behaviours are engaged in directly to improve the prospects of the family unit. On the other hand, individuals may focus their civic activities with the intention of amassing shared public 'social goods' for the good of all, from which families (and individuals) will invariably derive benefits (Stewart-Weeks & Richardson, 1998).

This distinction is critical in any examination of social capital and families. Recent studies have tended to focus on the first of these two purposes; that is, how social capital is generated and then deployed within the family unit for the family's wellbeing. For example, Offer and Schneider (2007) examined the role of children in the generation of social capital for the family, concluding that children can act as conduits in the wider community in the building of networks upon which parents may eventually draw. Furstenburg and

Kaplan (2004) and Furstenburg (2005) discuss "family-based social capital" to explore how it is generated and accumulated within families. They identify the improved long-term social welfare of children as a consequence of growing up in 'social capital rich' families.

It is not our intention to add to these debates about social capital within the family. Rather, our interest is in the second aspect alluded to by Stewart-Weeks and Richardson (1998); that is, how families amass shared 'social goods' in the spaces between families and communities for their own wellbeing. Cox (1995) takes a communitarian approach in her examination of social capital, arguing that families are the building blocks of communities. Our focus is on the way social capital becomes the 'social glue' that holds communities together, so that families, the building blocks of community, can function in optimum social health.

6. COMMUNITY PROFILES

This section details the composition of the two communities of Whataroa and Hari Hari. It includes basic social demographics as well as some of the variables that may help us interpret social capital. All of the data in this section have been provided by Statistics New Zealand, and come from the last four Censuses. We have included time-series data where they have been available and we have considered it to be of use to this study. In addition, when we have considered it useful, we have provided a contrast with the New Zealand-wide situation. One final point: throughout this profile and the report that follows, we have preferred the term ‘communities’ to townships, as our ‘communities’ are not synonymous with townships. They include the inhabitants of the surrounding farmland areas as well as township residents. We also use the term ‘research area’ to indicate the geographical area covered by these two communities, rather than the area of research interest in a more abstract sense.

6.1 Population characteristics

According to the 2006 Census Hari Hari had a population of 351 permanent residents, and Whataroa, 405. Over 15 years the populations of both communities have dwindled, partly as a direct and indirect consequence of the decline of the indigenous forestry industry.

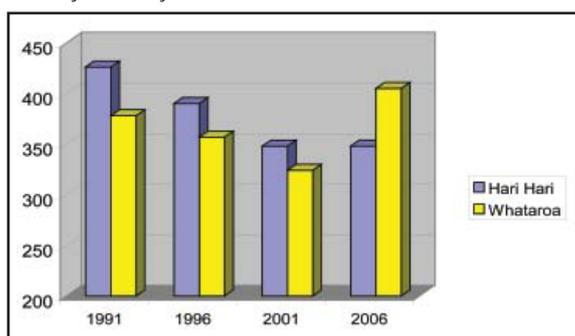


FIGURE 2: Population change 1991–2006

However, since 2001 this pattern of decline has changed. In particular, Whataroa has seen an increase in population over the last five years. The distribution of population numbers and change can be seen in Figure 2.

Recent growth in tourism and the dairy industry are factors contributing to this increase in population. As

these industries have expanded, increasing numbers of workers have come into the area to take advantage of the employment opportunities that have emerged. An examination of the numbers of people living in the research area who had been living at the same residence for less than five years reveals a pattern of change over time. This is illustrated in Figure 3.

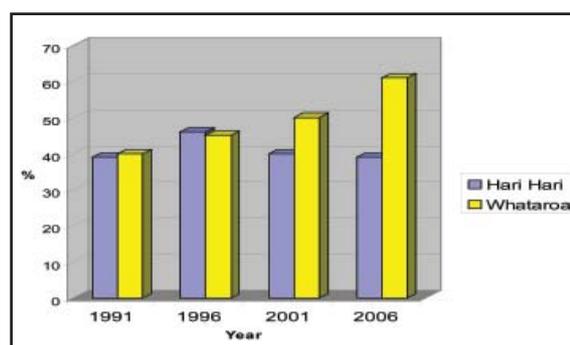


FIGURE 3: Percentage of population not living at same residence five years ago

While this cohort includes those who have shifted residence within the community, nonetheless a proportion of it must be classed as ‘newcomers’. There is a particularly steep intake of newcomers into Whataroa in the last five years.

6.2 Gender and ethnicity

There is a higher proportion of males living in the research area than in the rest of New Zealand. In fact, males are over-represented in these two centres even compared with rural centres elsewhere in New Zealand (Statistics New Zealand, 2002). According to Table 2, in 2006 Hari Hari recorded 55 percent of the population as male and Whataroa recorded 56 percent. Both figures are well over the national distribution of 49 percent males. In the research area Pākehā/Europeans are also over-represented and Māori are under-represented. According to the 2006 Census, there are no Pacific people living in the area.

TABLE 2: Gender and ethnicity 2006

	Gender %		Ethnicity %			
	Male	Female	Pākehā	Māori	Pacific	Other
Hari Hari	55	45	71	8	0	21
Whataroa	56	44	83	6	0	11
NZ wide	49	51	65	14	7	14

6.3 Age

A large percentage of local residents are 'of working age' (Figure 4). In Whataroa the single largest cohort is the 25- to 44-year-olds, whereas in Hari Hari it is the 45 to 64 age cohort. A comparison with the rest of New Zealand reveals that both of these age cohorts are over-represented in their respective communities. Consistent with the argument that there is a high proportion of 'working age' people living in the research area, the 65+ cohort is under-represented compared with the rest of New Zealand. Although it is speculative, this may suggest that a proportion of residents choose to retire outside the area.

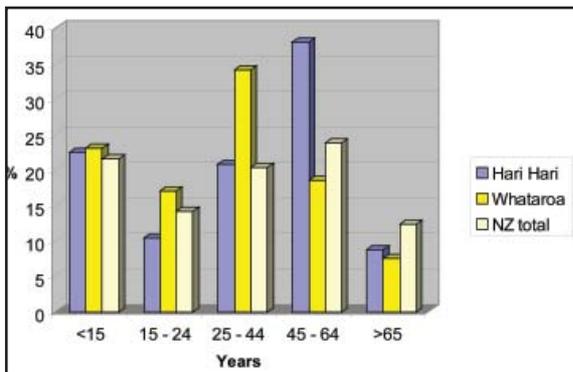


FIGURE 4: Age 2006

6.4 Households – composition and income

The majority of all New Zealand households, including those in the research area, are classed as single-family households (Figure 5). In Hari Hari the proportions of 'one-family' and 'one-person' households closely resemble the national distribution. Whataroa, on the other hand, has a much larger proportion of 'one-person' households than either Hari Hari or the national average. In the light of the large number of 25- to 44-year-olds residing in Whataroa, one might assume this proportion of households is inflated by the over-representation of this age group.

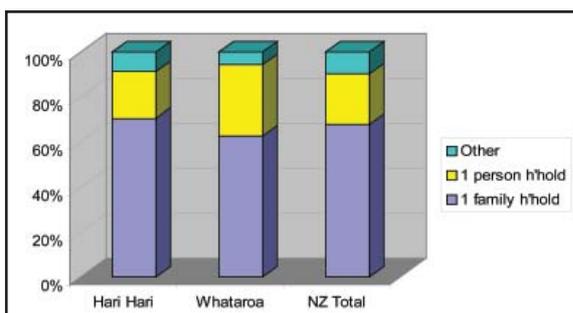


FIGURE 5: Household composition 2006

With more one-person households in Whataroa, one might expect generally lower household incomes than in Hari Hari and New Zealand as a whole. As can be seen in Figure 6, a large proportion of the Whataroa community report household incomes of between \$30,000 and \$70,000 (around 50 percent of the total). In contrast, the community of Hari Hari has a much larger proportion of household incomes of over \$100,000 (22 percent); and the upper two income bands in Hari Hari together account for around 37 percent of the population.

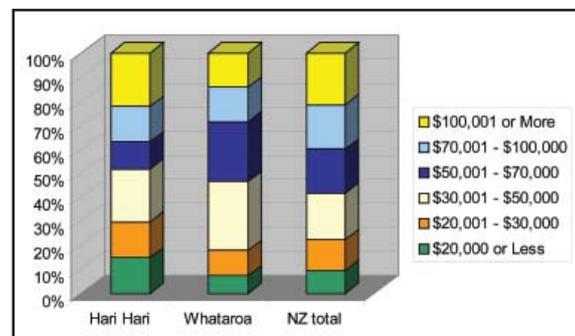


FIGURE 6: Household income 2006

6.5 Industry and work

As already described, local industry has undergone dramatic changes in recent decades. As a consequence of changes leading up to the Government's redesignation of Crown-owned indigenous land to conservation status the local timber industry has all but disappeared. As Figures 7 and 8 illustrate, aside from a small amount of milling of timber off private land, the forestry and related industries that were once significant contributors to these two communities have almost completely gone. The loss of these industries was felt earlier in Whataroa than Hari Hari. At the same time, however, as the number of cows and production has increased, the proportion of the total population employed in agriculture has not changed. There have however, been shifts from drystock to dairying as well as intensification.

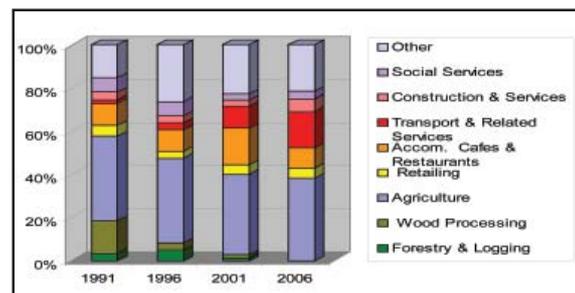


FIGURE 7: Whataroa – employment by industry 1991–2006

This shift has generated more direct and indirect employment opportunities than the lost industries. The neighbouring tourist towns of Fox and Franz Josef have also undergone solid growth, some of which has fed into the Whataroa community. Whataroa has become a dormitory town providing housing and staff for this industry. While the figures do not account for ‘tourism’ *per se* (there is no specific tourism occupational category), the ‘accommodation, cafes and restaurants’, ‘transport’ and the ‘retail’ sectors are all indicators of growth in tourism and related activities. Combined, the increase in the tourism sector and the growth in dairy farming have provided economic refuge for some of those affected by the closure of indigenous production forestry.

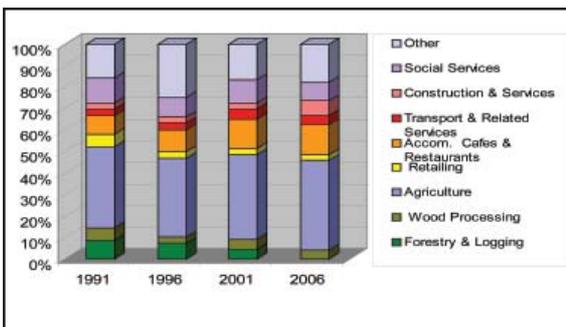


FIGURE 8: Hari Hari – employment by industry 1991–2006

The changes to industry drivers have also been accompanied by increases in hours worked. Figure 9 details the extremely high proportion of people in these two communities who report working more than 60 hours per week relative to the New Zealand totals.

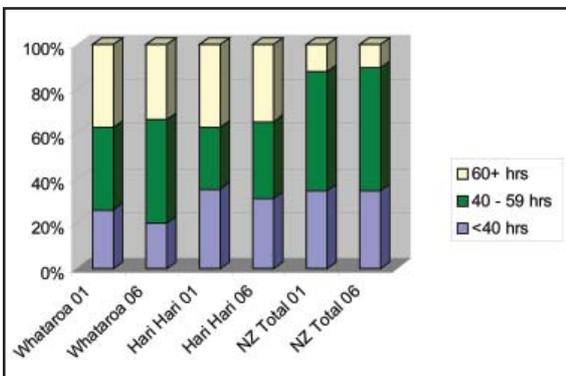


FIGURE 9: Changes to hours worked per week 2001–2006

Compared with the national distribution of those in the cohort who worked 60+ hours per week, Whataroa and Hari Hari report three and a half to four times the proportion of the employed community working these longer hours. Both Whataroa and Hari Hari also indicate a growth in those working 40 to 59 hours per week, and a corresponding drop in the proportion of those working less than 40 hours a week, between the 2001 and 2006 Censuses.

6.6 Voluntary contributions

While the Census database offers a limited range of variables for measuring civic engagement, one measure that has been routinely used is that of voluntary contribution to community. A direct implication of increasing working hours is potentially diminished time for participating in voluntary aspects of the community. As is shown in Table 3, and consistent with rural places elsewhere, voluntary participation in both communities is higher than the national average. New Zealand-wide, around 14 percent of the population reported participating in voluntary work ‘through an organisation, group or Marae’. In both Whataroa and Hari Hari, participation was considerably higher, although a reduction in participation can be observed from 2001 to 2006.

TABLE 3: Percentage of community engaged in voluntary activity

	2001	2006
Hari Hari	21.3%	19.8%
Whataroa	21.2%	17.1%
NZ Total	14.8%	13.8%

6.7 Summary

Both Whataroa and Hari Hari have had decreasing populations over the past 15 years. The most recent Census, however, has revealed a shift in this trend, with a halt in the decline in Hari Hari and an increase in population in Whataroa. This turning trend can be attributed to changes in industry, with growth in tourism and dairy expansion contributing to the influx of seasonal workers.

Whataroa and Hari Hari have high proportions of working-age people. These communities are also predominantly male and Pākehā/European, with fewer

than half the expected number of Māori (indicated by the national distribution). It may be that this gender distribution endures in response to employment opportunities, as rural employment generally favours males. Whataroa in particular has a high proportion of single-person households, a further characteristic of towns supporting seasonal employment. Its closer proximity to the local tourist towns, which means it can provide accommodation for these workers, enlarges this demographic.⁹

Hari Hari presents as a slightly older community, with fewer one-person households than its neighbour. Given its higher proportion of one-family households, it stands to reason that household incomes are likely

to be higher. One reason for this is that in the research area, like rural places elsewhere in New Zealand, many couples work the family farm in partnership. With the long working hours reported, and the increase in working hours observed between 2001 and 2006, it seems that 'working the family farm' may be an increasingly intensive and time-consuming pursuit. In addition, industry change has created casual, ad hoc and seasonal employment opportunities for many people. With changes to the drivers of local industry and the associated community responses and adjustments, it is not surprising that the proportion of those able to give voluntary time to local organisations and community groups has declined.

⁹ This cannot be conclusively shown by using the Census data, however, our qualitative fieldwork corroborates this assumption.

7. FAMILIES' STORIES

This section tells the stories of 12 families living in the area. They were chosen as they represent a cross-section of the family types that we interviewed, ranging from newcomers to long-term residents. We have purposely sought out families with children at home, and older families whose children have left home, single parents, and families that live in the township as well as rural. We sought the younger voice as well as that of older people. We have also tried to represent states of employment: those working for themselves, those working for others and those who have retired. This sample has allowed us to tap into the richness and breadth of community.¹⁰ These families have provided the stories that represent the themes explored in our discussion and analysis. The stories are outlined below.

7.1 Middle-aged family

This couple has lived in the area for around 25 years. They are married with teenage children. He came from elsewhere to take up a post with the NZFS. As a young woman, she came to this place from elsewhere in the South Island to follow seasonal employment opportunities. Local extended family networks are limited for this family. None of his relatives live in the South Island, but local contact with extended family occurs through her sister's family. They live in the area, which enables the families to have a considerable amount of contact.

Negotiating the impacts of industry change has formed a significant part of the experience of this family. As the major breadwinner, his first shift came when he moved from paid employment in the NZFS to self-employment in a timber-related industry. Early in this enterprise, and before the children were born, she worked alongside him. At the height of its success he describes his business as one that could sustain many families. However, the nation-wide cessation of indigenous logging affected not only those working in the forest but many people who worked in timber-related industries as well. They feel life has been a particular struggle since the closure of the indigenous forestry industry:

We haven't had a prosperous year since the forest closed. It has been difficult to get work. We have had to seriously rethink our means of survival.

Throughout their working lives, this couple says, they have had to be multifaceted and prepared to diversify. A level of self-sufficiency has been critical for their survival, in response not only to the closure of the forestry but also to the general shifts in opportunity that have characterised their subsequent working lives. In periods of particular economic hardship, the family headed out of the region to pick up unskilled labouring jobs elsewhere. As an avid gardener she reminds us that:

...as long as you can grow your own veggies, make bread, milk the cows, and fish, there'll always be something to eat. And my sister's family have been invaluable over the years, she sends meat up from the farm, it's a sharing of resources... you know.

With few extended family members living in the area, the strong kin-ties between her and her sister's family are important. Through resource-sharing this family has managed to buffer themselves during economically difficult times. However, she points out that sharing of 'resources' is not just confined to kin, but extends to the wider community. In the past at Christmas time they hosted lunch for those people in the area who do not have family nearby. She tells us how important it is to be sensitive to other people's needs. They also frequently participate in informal neighbourhood barbecues where families along their stretch of road socialise.

With sporadic employment dogged by uncertainty, he has very little time available for formal community involvement. While he acknowledges that many local organisations seeking volunteers are worthwhile, he reminds us you can just end up doing too much. He illustrates this point with the local St John Ambulance, which relies heavily on volunteer support. Volunteers are called away on long shifts and required to travel large distances to assist at roadside accidents and tourism-related callouts. According to him, while it is important, this kind of contribution does not always directly benefit local families, despite the significant drain upon the time resources of local people. On the other hand, he tells us that:

...when I am called on by a neighbour or a friend to contribute in any capacity toward something going on around town, I really am almost always happy to contribute.

¹⁰ Because of the nature of our project we actively sought families with children – living with them or not. We did not seek single people or couples, although we acknowledge that they contribute differently to social capital. Likewise, we did not purposely seek out ethnicity as a variable. Some of our participants may well have identified as Māori. However, this was neither raised by them nor explored by us.

In contrast, she has more time to contribute to formal organisations. She is particularly active in the community association, and over the years has supported some substantial community projects. She spoke of her desire to build on the sense of pride in this town and to work to build shared projects; things that everyone from the children to the elderly can participate in and continue to enjoy.

She is also actively engaged in local sports. She saw her own children's involvement as an opportunity to get herself involved; an opportunity to give something back, and to participate in her children's out-of-school activities. She also sees her involvement as an opportunity to get together with people. The social life of a small town, as she described it, is one where:

...most of the local people realise that you have got to be friends with everyone. It's not like in a big city where you can surround yourself with people like yourself. It has taken 20 years of bumping into some people to really get to know them.

This imperative to remain 'friendly' and get along with all sorts of people in such a small community is a theme that has arisen repeatedly throughout these stories.

7.2 Young township family

She is in her late 20s and has lived in the area for almost all of her life. Although she was born 'away'¹¹ her parents both came from the area, and returned shortly after her birth. Many of her aunts, uncles and cousins still reside in the area. She has grown up and has had almost all of her schooling in the area (with the exception of a short stint away to complete an educational qualification). Before having children she did some work in the hospitality side of the tourism industry. Currently she is a full-time mother, and takes care of most of the chores associated with the domestic side of family life. Her husband was born and raised in the area and has extensive family living locally. He is not directly employed in the timber industry, but works in the related area of agricultural support. Their household consists of the couple, a sibling of them and their two children. Combined they have an extensive family network which they draw on readily. For her, "this place is a great place to have been brought up, and to now bring my own kids up in".

She explains that her upbringing was based on the belief that family were always there to make provision, to pick up the shortfall when needed: "If you have got nothing, you've got everything, if you have family". Within her family of origin, she recalls that immediately after her father's redundancy as a consequence of forestry decline, her mother began commuting to the neighbouring town for work. As a result she and her sister would spend many afternoons after school at her grandparents' house:

It was pretty tough for me and particularly my parents back then. But you know, even if you are on 'the bones of your arse', family will help you out.

This value regarding 'family' is practised in her way of life. She does not consider it unusual that her sister, for whom she does most of the cooking, cleaning and domestic support, lives as part of her household.

Her days are largely defined by the time she spends doing things for and with her children. She is very involved in the community playgroup and sees this time as an important part of her week. Her involvement has allowed her to meet other mothers with similar-aged children, something which she thinks brings value to both herself and her children. One such connection with another mother has resulted in a strong friendship (that is, a strong bond). This friendship allowed her to take part in the development of a new after-school sporting opportunity for the local children. She is now involved in the sports club providing administrative and fundraising support. She comments that:

Funds are hard to come by and people in small places respond with; 'Oh gosh, not another fundraiser!' because people are sort of exhausted. It's not easy to get things going. But people now see how it's good for the kids, and see how it's working.

Nonetheless, she is adamant that this involvement is essential to enable the children to travel elsewhere for competitions. She is also very positive about the way the club is growing, and being supported by many of the recent newcomer families among others.

With the influx of new workers into the area she sees the potential for division but quickly remarks that generally newcomers and seasonal workers have managed to fit in. The single men, whom she refers to as 'the drifters', tend to fit in easily. They have the flexibility to attend the pub in the evenings and can

¹¹ The term 'away' is used by Coasters to describe people who come from outside the region.

socialise quickly with other locals. She then reminds us of some of the more odd characters who have moved into town recently. She starts off by suggesting that one man in particular:

...must have fitted in because he is still here...
 Actually, there is a lot of talk when someone new or different comes to town. And recently there have been some very 'different' people coming in. But even if some [local] people don't like the way they do it, they just have to move on... You have to resolve things in a place like this because you see these people every day and so you actually need to fix things up in small places, you just have to, because there is not a big pot of people.

She is an example of a person whose family has been affected by the changes in local industry for at least two generations. The fact that they are still living in the local community is testimony to the strength of family, the support of community and their attachment to the place.

7.3 Rural empty-nesters

They are married, in their mid 50s, with two adult children. Their children were born and raised in the area but have moved away for employment opportunities elsewhere. She came to live in the area when she was eight. Although she is one of several children, now only her brother and his family are living in the area. He, on the other hand, was born and raised here. Once he had a large extended family living locally, and when they were bringing up their children assistance with childcare was common among the extended family: "When [their children] were still here all the cousins were living in each other's houses. It was great for the kids, they were like brothers and sisters." More recently, however, he has been left with the responsibility of caring for his ageing parents on his own. He explains it really is a bit of a strain caring for them. I call in every few days or so, but I have to do it. Both believe that, in their absence, others in the community would step in and fill the gap. Currently, a friend in town helps by taking his ill parent to doctors' appointments in Christchurch (a 10-hour return trip by car). Despite this confidence in community, she remarks that this is not somewhere where she would like to grow old.

She attributes part of the difficulty of drawing on non-kin relationships within the wider community to

changes in the pace of working life in the region. They both feel that this pace has increased dramatically. They suggest the change is a consequence of more intensive dairy farming practices and the rapid growth of regional tourism, both providing more jobs than locals can keep up with. She says:

We can ask people for things if we need to, but everyone is actually real busy. The whole community has changed now. It's mainly 'cos of dairying and tourism. And one bad thing is that everyone is just flat out working. We also have these neighbouring farmers who are not really community-minded people. They are just 'workers' you know, and they are transient. Some get in trouble with the cops, there seems to be a different element sneaking in, I don't know ... it was never like that before.

They are aware of the cost to family of an over-committed working life. She says that when the children were younger, drawing on non-family members for support was a whole lot easier than it seems to be now. Formerly work revolved around the family farm, which they took over when it was no longer possible for his ageing parents to continue running it. The desire for more time with the children, free weekends and a smaller mortgage led this couple to downsize the farm. Following the sale of some of the land and a stint of milking on a neighbour's farm, he has now turned to 'off-farm' agriculture-related employment. She now also works in the agriculture-related sector, and over her lifetime has worked in a jobs ranging from highly skilled to unskilled casual positions. They insist that for anyone wanting to work, there is plenty of work available in the region:

Anyone can get a job around here, anyone who wants to work. There are heaps of jobs going around in tourism and farm work. I think though the township would benefit from getting something new cranked up here.

Neither have regrets about their own employment shifts, seeing the changes as part of life's experiences.

Children are seen as providing a good opportunity to make connections and get involved with others in the community. As their children have become older they have adopted their parents' community-mindedness. An adult daughter returns to town to help run an annual

sporting event. She suggests that it is positive for children to see parents involved, modelling community-minded behaviour. Combined, they contribute to six different formal voluntary associations, ranging from local organisations to national fundraising events; but they echo the sentiments of others regarding time constraints on ability (but not willingness) to contribute:

If you need to get people on a committee you just need to get on the phone to get people in. You have to ring around to find people willing to help. Likewise if people ring you up you feel obliged to help and so you don't make any excuses. One guy in town is a real 'doer'. If he rings you, you just do it – he's a leader – he does things – he's a great action man ... and of course everyone chips in, anyone you ask will help on the day.

When asked about the demands of community involvement, they acknowledge that sometimes these can be high. They note that, despite the willingness of others to get involved, the high demand was a significant problem in small rural places:

Many people just get sick of community work – and there is only such a small pool of people to draw from but these events are what pulls community together, without them there would be no sense of community.

Further adding to the perceived burden of community duty is the recent influx of newcomers:

...now living just round the road and just sticking to themselves. These people are the sorts of people you just wouldn't ask for anything because they don't really get involved in things here.

Moreover, while this couple indicates that they generally trust other people in their community, he tells us that his wife has now started locking the house, behaviour which is rationalised by highlighting this influx.

We pressed them on how their feelings of trust might have altered in recent times. The most likely risk they perceived came from someone just driving through. Both indicated that as a consequence of increasing numbers of tourists passing through they had altered their behaviour and become more inclined to lock the car. They admit that they approach newcomers with a bit of suspicion. He reminds us that the benefit of

knowing everyone in a small community is that those who are not trustworthy can be easily identified:

We know who people are, people stick out like a sore thumb round here – if you don't know them... At first you have a bit to do with new people so bit by bit you build up trust in newcomers. Then you feel like you want to help them out.

Perhaps more than any of the other people who spoke to us, this couple signalled the passing of an era; a move away from the familiar environment in which they had grown up into an age of uncertainty.

7.4 Ex-forestry family

She arrived in the area over a decade ago. She came to visit friends, met him and they subsequently married. They now have three active sport-minded children, and their lives are defined by the full-time juggling of the children's activities with the seemingly endless search for work.

Since they came to the Coast, his family has worked around forestry, felling, milling or processing timber. It therefore seemed a natural progression for him, then in his early 20s, to move into the same industry. By the time the forestry closure took effect, he had embarked on what he considered to be a stable career, so the closure was particularly difficult. Since 2002, they have struggled to find their feet again. He has moved through a range of jobs, from unskilled to semi-skilled labouring in the farming, agricultural and construction sectors. All these positions have been temporary or casual, and have arisen as a consequence of local connections. He has relied heavily on the people he knows to find work.

She has gone further afield to supplement the family income, taking up casual seasonal work in the nearby tourist town. She tells us how this arrangement fits around other competing demands:

He's not working at the moment, other than doing a few odd jobs for a friend, and so I've taken up seasonal work in Franz again. I can get cleaning work in the motels, from nine until three. And this is great, it fits around the school hours. I also get paid per room, so I can work hard and bring in a fair bit in a short time when the work is there. It is a long distance to commute but there are lots of people who go down – we share the driving.

Sporadic employment and uncertain working hours have hampered this family's ability to get really involved in formal community pursuits:

We thought about joining the fire brigade, but then with everything going on that turned out not to happen. And when they don't have enough volunteers we think we really should get involved. And I didn't get to that recent fund raising quiz night either, we did give money though.

Implicit in their experiences is the need for immediate concerns of family and working life to take priority over wider community involvement. Their community participation seems tightly aligned to the needs of their growing family. Over the years, she tells us, she has drawn upon the relationships built through the community playgroup. As the children have grown older, social participation has shifted focus. One of the first things we notice when we walk into their sitting room is the sea of rugby jerseys drying on a rack. With a house full of children keen on rugby, washing the jerseys seems like an appropriate way to give back to the club.

Part of their motivation for staying in the area after the closure of the forestry was a value, a perception that:

...this is a great place to bring up children. We really trust people in this place with our kids. Everyone looks out for everyone else's kids. If someone does something parents will actually contact each other. And as parents we thank each other for keeping that going.

This couple has a high level of trust in their community, displaying little concern for the safety of their material belongings. Like many locals, they leave their windows and doors unlocked, and are not that concerned with locking unattended motor vehicles. However, the caveat which is the converse of trusting local people is that one must be careful what you say or do to other people; if you say the wrong thing it will get around. It is evident that social monitoring, endorsed when it applies to the children, is less welcome when applied to adults.

This couple was affected directly by the closure of the forest and they remain, some five years later, still unsettled by the event.

7.5 Middle-aged township family

This couple consider themselves to be locals, both having been born and raised in the area. They are

parents to two young teenagers and have a large extended family living in the area. Both sets of parents are alive, and many of their children's uncles, aunts and cousins live either in the local community or in the wider district.

The wife tells us that when her nuclear family needs support, their extended kin are the first port of call, and that extended family also feel they can come to them when they need to:

As the children were growing up we didn't really use babysitters, we used extended family where needed, they used us, or we just didn't go out. And if you are not well, they'll turn up with pots of soups, just anything. But it does depend on the problem. I wouldn't take a marriage problem to my family.

She says that she has no real best friends in the area, and explains that most people don't have any best friends. She recalls that over her adult life she has had only one, maybe two, very close friends apart from her husband. She explains that there are real issues of social intimacy in small places, and some problems can sometimes be very difficult to air. She reminds us again that in small rural places there is just less of a pool of people to draw on. You've got to worry about letting things out.

Because there is so much extended family here, they both see the area as somewhere they want to be, suggesting that they will retire here. But the expectations they have for their children seem different from the aspirations they have for themselves. She tells us:

I don't care if the kids come back here to live. I would like them to but if there are no opportunities then it just might not be possible.

The recognition of limited opportunities for their children is interesting, because both see plenty of opportunity in the area for themselves. He works for a local service company, having been employed in this field for over 30 years. At the height of forestry and milling in the area work was assured; but during the restructuring era he was made redundant. He shifted sideways into forestry, working in a small timber-processing operation. However, with the winding down of forestry, he was made redundant again. Local knowledge of his abilities coupled with the extensive networks he has created throughout the district in his former jobs has meant that employment offers have

continued to come his way. He is now back working in services. He remarks that as tourism has continued to grow, so too have the demands for services in the area, giving him some job security.

She has also worked in a variety of jobs, managing to pick up bits and pieces of 'unskilled' work, mostly related to the tourism industry (such as cleaning and motel work). Many of these jobs have been directly sourced through acquaintances (extended networks). She tells us that she currently does a small amount of gardening for one elderly woman, but this is almost regarded as 'charity': "I do that to help, not for the money, it's not really worth it. I am only paid the minimum [government] allowance of \$10 per hour". With her husband often on call, she comments that all of her employment has to fit around family, something of a juggle at times:

It is family first, I make sure I can be home for the kids, so my [voluntary emergency services] duty normally fits in somewhere between 8.30am and 3.00pm. I also have a very good employer in Franz. I start at 9.30am and finish at 2.00pm and on the weekends he is happy for the kids to come with me if they need to. I wouldn't take work that required me to need childcare.

Despite feeling very keen to be there when the kids come home, she is clear that it is a safe community:

...the kids can go anywhere around town and you don't need to worry. I can always trust that someone is watching out for my kids. One advantage here, if your kids get up to no good, someone, somewhere, will be looking out. It's like a big neighbourhood watch.

Indeed, both remark that trust in the community is high. They feel that being able to leave the house unlocked, and being able to allow their kids to go to the park on their own knowing that 'someone' is watching out, are expressions of the level of trust they have in this community:

You work out really quickly if someone is going to be trustworthy. Living in a small community is like a big neighbourhood watch. And of course, those people who don't feel trusted or don't fit in, really don't stick around long.

However, both noted considerable impact on the community of the recent influx of outsider farmers. He

remarks that early on, the area was mainly small-scale dairy farmers who were heavily involved in community life. "But the modern dairy farmer has no time for community, it's been like this for at least the last 15 years."

He does suggest, however, that as farm prices are now becoming exorbitant, the turnover has stopped and community is finally settling down again.

Formal involvement in the community is a substantial part of this family's daily life. Combined, this couple gives time to eight different committees, associations and clubs. Although his rostered working hours tend to preclude him from regular attendance at most things, he willingly provides ad hoc support for such things as search and rescue. Her contributions are more regular, and some of them reach into the wider district. She has worked to get an after-school activity established:

...for those kids in town who are perhaps not quite so sport-minded. I enjoy doing all this stuff for people. I get to help and I feel like I need to do it. If I didn't do that I'd surely have to do something else, 'cos I do it for myself.

Her concept of community was delightfully summed up when she related that through her involvement with the local emergency service she was able to provide assistance, in a formal capacity, to a neighbour. The same neighbour had dropped by that day to deliver a banana cake and some biscuits to her by way of thanks. No one was home at the time, but she let herself in, and left them on the bench: "It's not expected, it's just a country thing really – a barter system. We just look after each other."

7.6 Single mother

She is in her 30s. She was born elsewhere but shifted to the area when she was very young. Her parents are local dairy farmers with a long-term attachment to the region. She has held various jobs since leaving school and currently works on the family farm. She is a solo parent and a proud Mum. She acknowledges that there have been changes in the area, but does not consider that she has been affected by them, noting that there have been more changes in [neighbouring town] than here – a lot more tourists in the last five years but not a big turnover in farmers.

She lives on the family farm in a separate house from her parents and sees them every day. She has heaps

of relatives living on the Coast and lots of friends with whom she has gone to school and grown up.

Although she did most of her schooling locally she did finish her high school education outside the Coast. On leaving school she returned to the area and had various jobs, including motel cleaning, sphagnum moss picking, tree planting and relieving milking, before working on the family farm. She had never had any difficulty getting jobs and job offers. The reason she gave for this was that “the community knows me and knows that I am a good worker”. She considered that ‘word of mouth’ was the reason for this and added that word gets round if you are a good worker. She stated that she had never had a job interview, as the jobs had just been handed to her. This was followed by a pause and the comment that ... maybe it helped because of Mum and Dad. When I first started [working] they [the people she worked for] were all friends of Mum and Dad.

She said that her parents had helped her out a lot and that she didn't think she would be here if it wasn't for them. It was clear from the discussion that she has both pride in, and a very strong bond with, her parents and she was particularly pleased with the affection they have shown toward her daughter. In response to a question about seeking help, she was emphatic that Mum and Dad would be the first port of call, although she did feel confident that she could also ask friends. If Mum and Dad were not here I could ring up anyone and they would look after me. This was then put in context; she would do the same for them, and if people did help in some way or other she would always try to return the favour: “This is just what you do ... they know I'm here and vice-versa.”

She is soon to shift to a large town in the North Island. The reasons for shifting were mainly explained in terms of the benefits her daughter would receive:

There will be a lot more things ... opportunities available to her. I like the schooling here but there are limits. She is very artistic and there is not much opportunity for that.

She also saw benefits for herself in the shift, which would provide her with new experiences. While excited about the shift, she views some aspects of the move with some apprehension. Her major concern relates to the safety of her daughter, as she knows her daughter is safe here, but cannot assume the same up there.

The trust she feels in her community was reiterated in very positive ways, in relation to help and support and also the safety of children. This was summed up with her statement “that this place is a very children-focused community”. She also found the locals up north a bit more reserved than she was used to, but did not consider this a major problem. In the longer term she sees herself wanting to come back here and take over the running of the farm.

Trust was an important element in her consideration of her community. She indicated that she generally trusted people in the district, paused for a moment and mentioned that there had been one person she didn't trust, but he's gone now. This referred to a rather unsavoury character who left town after the locals discovered his criminal background. She added that the community wouldn't put up with murderers and paedophiles in their midst. Word gets out, they wouldn't last very long, and their going is a protection for everyone. It was clear that the smallness of the community was a protection in itself; everyone knows everyone here. Giving an interesting twist to this local knowledge, she added that although she trusts everybody, she also knows who she can trust with a secret and who the gossips are, so, if you want something (to get) out you know who to tell. Her trust also extended to her not seeing the travellers and tourists moving through as a problem. She acknowledged locking her car when she left it on the main street, but allowed that she didn't lock her house at night or when she was going out. Asked whether trust had changed over the last few years, she replied that she didn't think so, although she acknowledged that there were a lot more tourists now and that they saw more new cars (cars that did not belong to locals).

She highlighted neighbourliness and small-town values when she described a visit to the town up north where she will be living with friends. She found that they did not know their neighbours, so she went and invited them to a barbeque. She explained that this is not the sort of thing they know how to do, but:

I want to know my neighbours. Down here if someone comes in for a while, even a couple of days, I will go up and have a yak just to be friendly. It's not as friendly up there, friendly, but not as friendly.

She said her friends had been overwhelmed by the friendliness of the people here. She had taken them to the pub when they visited and related how everyone had talked to them ... made them feel welcome.

She is involved in several local groups, most notably the St John Ambulance. Her explanation for this was:

I just decided one day I'd like to do something for the community. I approached them ... it was a spur of the moment decision [she has now been with them for several years].

She is also a coach and referee with one of the sports clubs, has a bit to do with another sports club, attends community association meetings, has nothing to do with the school but helps out with fundraising. (The 'nothing to do with' translates as no formal connection.) She is also a member of a local sports team and was travelling to Hokitika the next day as the designated driver.

She regards the local area as a great place to live because it is friendly, supportive and safe. She sees the community as a friendly place populated by friendly people who look after one another: "This is just the nature of the people living here. They help anyone needing a hand". Alongside the notion of a strong and supportive immediate family, the idea of a friendly, supportive community was a dominant theme in her story. While highlighting certain benefits in going somewhere else for a while ("relief from the rain and isolation"... said with a smile) she concludes: ... "I want to come back here. I want to grow old here. All my friends are here."

7.7 Township empty nesters

This couple is in their early 60s and has lived in the area for almost 40 years. They came 'from away' to take up work in a new mill in the late 1960s. When they first shifted to the West Coast it was seen as a big adventure and a chance to go somewhere different and save for a house. The job the husband came to in the mill was seen as a real opportunity. Since then, they have raised two children who are now grown up and living elsewhere.

The husband is the main breadwinner in this family. He continues to work in forestry-related employment despite having been made redundant once and having retired once. He was employed in the local mill and redundancy came with its closure. Following a short

period of retirement, and the recognition that farming wasn't really an option, he used acquaintances in the timber industry to secure a new job. This job takes him a long way out of the community daily from Monday to Friday. As a consequence, he feels he knows fewer and fewer people, has less time for himself (because of his lengthy commute) and even less time to get involved in the community:

I used to [participate quite heavily in community emergency services] – on call 24/7. We couldn't leave home on those nights. Now we just do voluntary informal kind of stuff. I'm not here a lot of the time any more to do it.

On the other hand, like many of the women in the area, the wife has more discretionary time. Her work is 'unskilled' and casual and has changed over the years to fit around the children. She has always made the time to give back to the community. When her family was younger she was involved in local sporting associations, as parent, participant and (on occasions) officer holder. Now that the children have moved away her participation in community tends to be largely ad hoc. She tells us:

People look after one another. I help an elderly lady in town who doesn't have much family around. You know, help with groceries and the like. There are quite a few people we know who would, who have helped us, people you could call on and are there if you need them. That's true of the older people [longer-term residents], not the newer ones though ... cos, you don't really know them.

This issue of newcomers and their impact on reciprocity is important to this couple. She feels that as the forestry days came to a close, the township underwent a dramatic change, in respect of infrastructure and in the kinds of people moving in and moving out. The current growth and intensification of dairy farming is adding to this change:

There are a lot of North Island farmers now. They used to be family-owned farms. If someone took you under their wing they'd look after you. But the North Island farmers stick together, sit together at the pub. We used to go every Friday night, but then we got a bit sick of the same old people at the same tables.

Despite knowing that in the vernacular 'to be local you have to be born here', she says, "I feel like I am a

local, I have been here long enough". This sense of belonging and being part of a community has been important while bringing up a family in relatively isolated rural circumstances.

This story is one of the husband following a job, a known, and the wife following him into what was for her completely unknown territory. It is a story of integrating themselves into the local community through his work and their voluntary contributions in sporting clubs and service organisations. She found it very lonely when she first arrived, and tells how she worked hard to become involved in local activities. She notes that the arrival of the children made it much easier to meet people and do things with and for the people in their community. This illustrates the importance of their children in extending family links. After some 40 years she considers that they are almost more local than the locals.

7.8 Newcomer young family

This couple provide a 'newcomer's' perspective on moving into a strongly bonded community. She is in her mid-20s and he in his early 30s. They have two young children. Both she and her husband were born and raised in a rural location in the North Island. About three years ago they decided to move to the South Island and take over working a family-owned dairy farm. While most of her extended family still live in the North Island her parents routinely visit. While visiting, her father offers assistance on the farm and her mother provides help with domestic duties, childcare support and friendship. Although two other relatives live nearer, her family has very little contact with them.

She questions whether she can define herself as belonging or being local:

Do I feel local? Umm ... it's home but I don't know. If I was single I could probably mingle more and would feel more local. But with the two kids, we really don't get out much.

She quickly puts being local in perspective by suggesting that many of the characteristics of the local people are not dissimilar to her own, other than in respect of the obvious 'length of residence'. Hence when total newcomers appear in the area she feels a stronger sense of belonging.

Getting to know others in the community has largely revolved around the family. Shortly after arriving in

the region, he was invited to join the town's rugby team to play in the 'Woodham Shield', a local annual competition between four neighbouring communities. These games are fiercely competitive and produce an intense rivalry between the competing communities. The whole family attended the match and it was both a welcoming experience and a conscious opportunity to meet local people and begin to build social networks. Both are aware of the benefits to extending invitations to more recent newcomers.

Her children have provided a ready conduit for her to begin to widen her social networks and to move into other segments of community. When she first arrived she saw the benefit of taking her children to the local playgroup, where she made a strong and enduring connection with one of the other mothers:

When we first came, playgroup was good, having children helps you to fit in and playgroup was a fantastic way for me to meet other women.

She now goes to playgroup as often as she can. She sees this as an important part of her own week and social life alongside that of her children. With no formal childcare facilities in the township, playgroup is an important place for women to meet other mothers with similar-aged children.

This family is aware of the limited opportunities available to their children. For example, concerns were raised regarding the limitations of education and after-school opportunities in small rural communities. This recognition provided impetus for her to make a major contribution toward the community. Within a few months of arriving and with the help of a few supportive locals (her growing social networks), she established a sporting club for primary school and pre-school children. This is now held weekly, making use of existing community facilities. It has been a success, attended by many families, some of them from adjacent communities. The wider networks she has developed with the friends of friends have ensured this enterprise will be sustainable. As a keen and competitive sportsperson herself, she feels that the club is really an important part of who she is. She tells us, "This is what I do, that is my life, my time, my place." Undoubtedly this sporting association provides as much for the community as it does for her.

Despite voicing concern about what the region cannot provide for her children, she still regards the community

as a good one. The friendliness and trust between locals are seen as some of the values that make it good to bring up her children here. As newcomers they are acutely aware of the need to fit in. She believes that in small communities fitting in requires tolerance and acceptance of people, of how they are. An invitation to a party at the house of acquaintances described by her husband as not my kind of people led her to suggest that when it comes to friends in small places:

Beggars can't be choosers. To survive people have to get along with each other, and you have to be a bit careful because this person is married to that person who's related to some other person. You just have to be careful what you say and you do have to try to fit in.

Along with their substantial commitment to the sports club, this family is slowly becoming involved with other community and local associations as they find their way in a new place. Notwithstanding, he is tied up full-time running the farm, and she works alongside him handling some financial aspects of the business. Both are willing to make the effort involved to make this place home for the medium to long term. They are newcomers, who tell a story of families working to fit in. By bringing in useful skills and a willingness to take on the sizeable commitment of running a sporting venture, she has made a substantial and welcomed contribution to community. This has facilitated their 'fitting in' although the family has lived in the area for only a relatively short time. She says getting a sense of being local would be being more involved. Despite this understanding of what is required to get along, and this family's clear intent to become part of this community, she still acknowledges that loneliness and social isolation are part of her current life.

She admits missing everything from her old friends to big-town shopping, but is clearly prepared to do what is necessary to contribute to the local community. This is not a case of 'putting down roots' but rather a case of 'paying one's way'.

7.9 Older farming family

This family's story is about community involvement and voluntary participation. They are clearly considered amongst the leading 'movers and shakers' in the local community, and it is apparent that they bring different, but complementary skills to this role. He is more an

'action man' (don't sweat the small stuff), while she is more inclined to provide the considered voice of reason to their voluntary activities. It is apparent that other members of the community solicit their assistance when they want things done. Although the continuing changes in the local economy appear not to have had a large impact on their daily lives, they have been important change agents in helping to move the community through these social adjustments. Neither wants to claim a lot of credit for this. Rather, as he says, it is just a case of, someone has to do it. She sums this up with, "Have a look, get involved, make a difference."

They have lived and dairy farmed in the area for about 30 years. He is a fourth generation 'Coaster', born further up the Coast. She came from outside the West Coast. They have three adult children, two of whom have moved away. One has stayed and works locally. They both have extended family but none living locally. He says he has a lot of relatives on the Coast but none that he really calls on.

In response to discussions about seeking family help, she indicated that if there was time to organise and get a message out, then her family would help out. Even if 'away' they would come over and help. He acknowledges that he doesn't need to ask family for assistance in the presence of so many friends but indicates that some 'family issues' might prevent his seeking such help.

Before the purchase of the farm, and while their children were young, they spent a few years sharemilking in the North Island. The purchase of their current farm and the shift south was done for the family. They agree that they brought the kids here to give them a better life, and he remarks that dairy farming was all he ever wanted to do. At an age when many might be considering slowing down a little in their working lives, they have just bought an adjoining property and are intending to substantially increase their herd. They express the hope that one of the children might want to carry on with the farm but that will be their [the children's] decision.

They are extremely active community members. Involvement in formal and informal community activities is a large part of this family's non-work life. Combined, they have been, or are currently, involved in 16 or so formal associations and organisations.

Their involvement has included engagement at the wider regional (and in one instance, national) level, to leadership in community and education associations and to participation in local sports clubs. When asked as to why they do it, the answer provided by the husband, is simple: “Because things need to be done.”

They were both extremely reluctant to discuss their contributions to the community through the array of organisations, formal and otherwise, that they have initiated, led or have worked for and with. It was only because of our knowledge about their activities gained from other people that we could begin to ‘squeeze’ much of the information out of them. Each was prepared to tell us of their partner’s ‘good deeds’ when prompted but went rather quiet as soon as the discussion was about him- or herself.

They acknowledge drawing on a wide array of social connections to address community issues. While their contribution to the community seems to be far greater than that of others, the kinds of ‘projects’ this couple become involved in benefit from the extensive networks this family has developed over 30 years of active participation. They suggest that this high level of participation brings a kind of standing in community. Likewise, they are seen as people who can be relied on to get things done. He remarks:

We are accepted because people know we don’t sit on the fence. People who are not close to us will ring up and ask us for help with problems, and they thank us.

They clearly took some quiet pleasure from the idea that others saw them as people who could get things done; but their reluctance to discuss this, and their hurried dismissal of it, suggested strongly that this was not a primary motive for being involved. In short, there was no wallowing in success. Indeed, the inclination was to dwell on issues where they felt they had not been able to bring about better outcomes or where mistakes had been made. Interestingly, the nature of the community was always discussed in terms of what others, rather than they themselves, could do:

If things [some local calamity] are really big around here, you don’t even need to ask. They just step in and do it. Living here is a great place to live. Even though one might not get on with everyone, there is recognition that in times of need, they’ll all help and if things are done you just pay it back.

They recognise that this notion of mutual assistance goes beyond just helping on special occasions:

Having to know people and, in a sense, to be forced to get involved has given us a sense of a security around family. Kids are being minded and monitored by all, kept in shape. They are a kick-arse community. Like extended family.

There can be no doubt that this couple values living in and being part of their local community. They acknowledge that it comes with a responsibility that can require hard work with no guarantee of success. What is important for them is their belief that people can make a difference.

7.10 Younger farming family

The wife is in her early 40s and the husband is in his early 50s. They shifted into the area about 10 years ago. He was born here, as was his father and his father before him. He left the area in his 20s and returned with his wife, to buy out his father on the family farm. They have two young children. He has a large extended family living locally. The family maintains links, but some parts of the family are closer than others; he turns to some members of the family in times of need. He acknowledges, however, that he is:

...not hung up on being reliant on family. Nowadays society has moved on from that. You go to the first person available. If there was a storm and I needed help [to shift the stock] I’d ring four or five people – brother, neighbours. Strong community is not based on family ties but on like-minded people. Community is a family unit without blood ties – it’s what good community is – it’s quite astounding what good community can produce.

When asked about helping others he replied:

It’s the right thing to do. You hope others would reciprocate if it were you [in need] – it’s not for the individual, it’s for the community. It’s a responsibility to help. We have to look after each other because there is no outside help. People don’t mind doing it. Voluntary assistance has probably died off a bit yet 15 people turned up to help re-concrete the cemetery.

He further illustrates this theme of helping others with images of the ‘good old days’ when hay was made in small bales and vulnerable to the weather. With the threat of rain, everybody turned up to get it into the

shed. Interestingly, no one bemoans the technological advances that mean that the limitations of the small bales are 'a thing of the past'. What is missed is the 'spontaneous' reciprocal assistance.

Although not born locally, the wife regards herself as a local because of her heavy involvement in the local community. She acknowledges there are costs to living in relatively isolated rural areas, including limited choices in employment opportunities and a lack of privacy:

Everyone knows everyone's business. It's not a perfect little community but there is something for everyone who wants to be involved. [She also notes a strength of the community by commenting that] If you want help ... get on the phone and call together your helpers. I could ring 10 people tomorrow – I always feel I am bludging, asking of people – but it generally just flows in.

She is currently involved in leadership roles in several local and regional organisations, and indicates that they involve considerable travel and time each week. She tells us:

I get just as much out of it as I give. There are no job opportunities and I need to be busy. It's like going to work – gets me out of the house. It's like a welfare system, our own welfare system. But the kids come first.

On this, the husband observes that this is no different from other (rural) places; there are thousands of these little towns. Both speak of the readiness of others to help when needed.

Although physically separated from her own family the wife acknowledges using them all the time – telecommunications makes it possible. For others without family available in the immediate area, she notes:

People without family tended to create groups to substitute for this. Quite tight groups – dairying is good like that. The share-milking fraternity see each other, live and breathe each other. I wouldn't say they are disadvantaged in this community [because of this substitution].

The lack of employment opportunities is seen as a problem, not just for the partners of people in employment but also for the children. They accepted that the children would need to leave home for higher education and employment. She comments on the

fact that the seasonal opportunities in tourism make it possible for local young people to gain work when they return home for holidays:

The glaciers have kept a lot of the farm family units together. In other places the young people have to go away because there is no work. We are isolated but there is no unemployment. The lads get summer jobs at Franz. The kids come home from boarding school and work in tourism part-time.

The husband runs the dairy farm full-time but is still heavily involved in community activities, with substantial leadership roles at the community and regional levels. He suggests that he does this because you have to [be involved]. The message is clearly that somebody has to do it, and if it's worth doing, it's worth doing well. Indeed it is clear that they both consider it important that their activities are conducted as well as possible and they take considerable pride in their achievements, both for themselves and the benefits they can bring to their community. Both indicate the value of accessing wider bridging ties with various formal organisations and associations that extend beyond the district and, in his case, beyond the region.

This couple notes the continuing need to increase the size of herds and intensify farming practices. He comments that what would have been the norm 10 years ago would no longer be economic, so there is considerable pressure to increase production and buy more land. Interestingly, he acknowledges a degree of community control over such developments when 'confessing' to milking 200 cows 10 years ago when 160 was the norm. Today you would need to at least double that (200) to get close to the average herd size; and they acknowledge that outsiders coming in have constantly raised the bar as to what is appropriate.

Meeting the new norm has meant working harder and longer, and has made it increasingly difficult to stay as involved in community. This last claim is somewhat ironic given the very large time and effort commitment that they both currently make. He acknowledged that one cannot continue like this forever and indicates he is already planning an exit from the day-to-day obligations of farming. It is clear that local dairying has been subject to huge changes over a relatively short time; and while these changes along with capital gains on their property may have improved their economic standing, they have also added to the pressures of daily living.

They saw change in the condition of wider society and observed that it has changed a lot. Nevertheless, they acknowledged many positive things about their community, commenting on the high level of trust. Both indicated a perception that "... the kids are safe ...we do lock the doors at night but that's just for the kids, the keys are in the cars and the petrol tank is unlocked."

He could remember only one dishonesty incident in the 10 years since he has been back, but considers that the large number of transients¹² coming through the area is likely to change that:

We have a high transient population. Most people think that if anything happens it would never be a local.

He notes that he has never considered the transients risky but states that society has changed a lot. This opinion echoes the common view of this community that things are not as good as they used to be. Interestingly, there is no specified time when things were better, just an evoking of some golden period in the past.

7.11 Semi-retired family

The husband has spent the best part of the last 35 years in the forestry industry, first in felling and later in timber-processing work. His wife has engaged in casual and unskilled work in the town since the late 1980s. Both consider themselves fairly much local since, while they both were born elsewhere in Westland, they moved into the area over 40 years ago. They are parents of two adult children (in their late 30s now) and a growing number of grandchildren, all of whom live elsewhere. He comes from a large family and has many relatives all over the Coast, while her family now lives beyond the West Coast region.

They recount how difficult the struggle was when the forest first closed. He tells us:

I managed to scratch around and find bits and pieces here and there. I couldn't get the dole because she was working, but I did bits of farm work, and fencing, even did some voluntary work. The trouble was as a farm hand on wet days it was not good. Can't do much on the farm in the wet.

They considered going into farming in their own right, but the escalation in rural land values had already

commenced. As owners of a township property, they had little asset value to fund a shift to farming. According to him:

In 2002, not many people were going onto parents' farms. The incoming farmers knew they were going to go, with never a plan to stay here long. They stick a big dollar value on the land; what was once \$1,000 an acre became \$3,000 an acre just in two or three years. It was North Island farmers pushing it up. But houses in town didn't do the same thing – there was no reason to. So locals like us were totally priced out of going into farming, and I am too old now to get money from a bank.

Since the closing of the forestry industry, they have acquired a section of rural land through their family, which allows them to keep a small number of livestock, grow plenty of food and kill their own meat. This has helped their adjustment to the semi-retirement thrust upon them as a consequence of the forestry closure. Semi-retirement has meant that he is not actively seeking work. Rather, work has come his way mostly via networks of family and close friends. His brother farms in a nearby valley and provides some casual employment for him. Sometimes payment comes in cash, sometimes as livestock for the farm. She continues with her casual work in the tourism service sector, but it is seasonal, and in the winter months there are times when they are both without paid work.

Despite the extra time that semi-retirement might make available, this couple is not particularly active in formal community life. When they volunteer their time, it is within two clubs that they directly benefit from. These clubs have large numbers of members from around the region, and they both give time to running them. Aside from this, they attend community association meetings sporadically – as she puts it, just occasionally, like plenty of other people do. When asked about the amount of informal assistance going on in community he tells us:

Not nowadays, a lot of people are out and away at work. If you needed something done, and you wanted voluntary help, you would have to probably ask a lot of people. You'd usually have to pay now to get things done.

This was the only time that anyone suggested that payment would be necessary to get help when it was needed.

¹² The local definition of 'transients' can include everyone from the tourists who pass through, a very small group of unemployed who allegedly grow marijuana, to the influx of seasonal workers who work on the dairy farms or in the nearby tourist towns.

A large amount of this couple's spare time is spent working on their own land, or further north with the grandchildren. They do most of their shopping in Hokitika. She suggests they would buy nothing locally as it is too expensive; increasingly the local shop is driven to charge tourist prices. They also take the opportunity to head out of town and visit grandchildren as often as they can. She suggests it is good that her family has moved away now:

There is nothing much here for young people. There are a few things like basketball and sports, but there are not many opportunities for kids here. Retired people can get on okay and be quite happy here but not young people.

For this couple it seems that everywhere else is just that bit better than here. They tell us that even the neighbouring township is better off; they have fewer no-hopers, the houses are full along the streets there and people care about the way things look. This detachment from place seems to correspond with their increasing attachment to places elsewhere. She would like to retire closer to their grandchildren further north, but he is not so sure.

7.12 Mid-life entrepreneurs

Their story is overwhelmingly about a family that has worked hard to get through the direct impacts of the loss of occupation as a consequence of the loss of an industry. Now in their late 40s, this couple met when they were teenagers. Although he is a born and bred local, she comes from away. Together they have raised three children, all of whom moved away from the West Coast seeking work opportunities. Recently, one of their children has been enticed back to take up work alongside his parents in the family-owned and operated business. Until a couple of years ago, the wife, like many other women in the area, was picking up bits of casual work in the growing tourism industry. However, as the demands of the family business increased she began working full-time alongside her husband.

He had a long association with the forestry industry. He was there in the beginning, when the first trees were being felled and was still working in forestry when the industry came to a close. In the beginning he was a waged labourer, but by the time the forest closed he had moved into self-employment, contracting his services to the forestry sector. However, this apparent

continuity wasn't always smooth, consistent with the experiences of many people employed in forestry in recent decades. Between the closure of the NZFS, the relocation of the timber mills and stints of working away, this family has carried its share of redundancy, employment change and general uncertainty.

When they reflect on life at the time of the forestry closure, they say that it was a considerable blow to them and many other families in their community. He tells how forestry was a very central part of his life:

We used to meet in the bush, with our mates working, it was a lifestyle. And then there was time to come home, go fishing, do the garden. Our lifestyles changed a lot after that. People don't do anymore what they might have done.

However, it took very little time for him to get back on his feet and begin working again. His first job, unskilled labouring, came his way 'through connections' almost immediately after the final redundancy. She, too, was quick to pick up more work to make up the shortfall in the household income, and together they set their sights on the future. They are hard-working and optimistic people who do not believe in sitting around and waiting for things to happen.

This couple's recognition that families just like theirs bore the brunt of the forestry closure makes them acutely aware that the Government did not help people get into the next thing. They are among those who remain resentful at the lack of direct financial compensation for families who were directly affected. They are also among those who have been determined to remain in the region and just get on with it. They are now, five years after forestry ended, working for themselves in a successful business, which takes him all over the Westland district and keeps her more than busy working at home. He smiles when he tells us:

Well I was eventually going to get out of the [forestry] industry. I'm not young any more and I couldn't be doing that kind of work till I retired. The end to the forestry was just the push I needed to do something different. And I certainly am doing that now.

Undoubtedly, when they recognised a market niche, the time was right for establishing this family business. Nonetheless, this family's success can also be attributed to their hard work and the social networks

they maintain, both within the local community and across the wider region. Early on [he tells us], the pub was a good place to go, a place where informal negotiations about securing business could take place. However, as his business has grown, he now finds it just easier to stay away.

We really don't go to the pub much any more.

People want to interrogate me about our business, and our development – everyone just wants to know everything. We now stick to ourselves a bit more, we're busy and we don't socialise as much. Not like we used to when we were wage-workers.

They have positive feelings about their community and the people in it. They acknowledge that their diminished free time and busy lifestyle mean that they can no longer contribute as much (to community) as they might otherwise do. They remember when they had more time to get involved, and tell us that people with time on their hands have a very positive effect upon community through the kinds of work done by groups such as the Lions Club, or by St John Ambulance volunteers. She tells us that people who volunteer

create benefits for others, and that they have a good influence on community. He adds that they have less time now although they sponsor some community events: "We want to so we can put something back."

Despite the changing lifestyle that they are shaping for themselves they must still be regarded as quintessential 'Coasters'. He tells us:

When things change, well, you've just gotta get on with it. We like the lifestyle, so we have had to fight to keep that. We couldn't live in the city. It would throttle me. It's more than just me thinking that. You know, that's why people live here. We like the freedom and the isolation. You know, in a small community, isolation makes the people.

They are resilient and resourceful people who have drawn only what they have needed from community in a bid to get on with it. Perhaps more importantly, they have ultimately relied on each other as they have moved on from the loss of his employment in forestry. In doing so, they have also built a promising future for themselves.

8. CENTRAL THEMES EMERGING FROM THE STORIES

This section uses a social capital perspective to discuss the mechanisms used by these families as they have adjusted to change in industry and their communities. The concept of social capital has provided an effective tool for examining family responses. Social capital cannot be regarded as an asset of particular individuals or families; it inheres in the relations between people to facilitate actions. In this study, it is these relations between people, or more specifically, between family and community, that have provided a useful focus for understanding facilitated social response.

In this research, families have told us their stories of adjustment to the social and economic changes that have occurred in recent years. The earlier sections have depicted the changes experienced by the communities of Whataroa and Hari Hari, including:

- loss of the forestry industry and associated employment
- industry intensification (dairy farming and tourism)
- growth in seasonal visitor numbers
- growth in seasonal employment opportunities
- increased inward and outward migration
- increased pressures on housing and infrastructure
- longer working hours.

Among the stories there were many commonalities of experience. At other times, quite particular circumstances have required families to make highly individual choices. Irrespective, adjusting to these changes has required some considerable trade-offs for families seeking balance between family life, work and their participation in the wider community. While not all families and individuals were equally affected, certain shared costs and benefits have spread throughout these two communities.

This section will elaborate on the key themes that have emerged from the families' stories, using a social capital perspective. However, we first remind the reader of the following aspects of social capital as it relates to the families who participated in this study:

- Social capital is a shared asset of community upon which families are able to draw.
- Social capital works differently for different families.
- The rate of contribution to social capital as a 'shared public good' differs between families for many reasons.

8.1 Families and social capital

8.1.1 Use of networks and ties

A common theme in the discussion of social capital is that social activity relies upon networks of social ties to achieve desired outcomes. Achieving such outcomes can be as simple as taking in a neighbour's washing, or may involve large numbers of people in community projects. Network ties that are both strong (bonding ties) and weak (bridging ties) are fundamental to generating social capital.

An examination of the families' stories shows us that families can access and utilise networks with varying degrees of success. Those families that can draw on both bonding and bridging ties are more likely to be able to generate social capital that contributes to the wellbeing of families in the community. The *older farming family* and the *younger farming family* with their extensive networks of both weak and strong ties illustrate this. These ties have allowed them to access different sets of social and physical resources that provide 'solutions' for their community, and in doing so contribute to the shared stocks of social capital. To a lesser extent, the activities of the Rural empty nesters and the *middle-aged township family* also demonstrate this capacity to improve outcomes by using networks with both bonding and bridging ties. In particular, resolving the *middle-aged township family's* immediate employment issues was made considerably easier because they could draw upon the husband's wider bridging social networks. The *young township family* mother's story of her own childhood shows how strong kin-ties made it possible for both her parents to work, and how she still places a high value on the maintenance of these kin-ties in her own family. Equally, however, her involvement in community activities relies heavily upon bridging ties for such activities as fundraising.

Where an industry and consequently occupations have been lost, networks have been a critical factor in the

capacity of some families to get ahead. The *single mother* used her parents' bridging ties to maintain a continuous run of employment. The *township empty nesters* show how the husband drew on bridging ties to secure employment when the actuality of retirement didn't match the prospect. Perhaps the most revealing example of network utilisation can be seen in the experience of the *mid-life entrepreneurs*. This family possesses sufficient strong and weak ties to resolve their own dilemma. They could use wider social networks to secure employment immediately after the husband lost his job in the forest industry. Equally, this family was able to draw heavily on their local social connections, the social capital they have within their immediate community, to generate the custom necessary in the early stages of the establishment of the family business. Consistent with Woodhouse's argument (2006, p86), with the aid of sufficient bridging weak ties, the *mid-life entrepreneurs* have been able to "get ahead".

Conversely, the excess of strong bonding ties evident in the *semi-retired family* has confined their options to those available within their rather homogeneous immediate social world. This family's experiences are consistent with the argument of Woodhouse (2006) that an excess of bonding ties allowed people to simply "get by" (2006, p86). The strong bonding ties, in this case mostly kin-ties, have provided this family with a block of land and stock, which have effectively allowed this semi-retired family to remain in the area. The case of the *ex-forestry family* and their difficulty in securing continuity of employment also points to a lack of weak ties that might 'bridge' them into other opportunities.

Newcomers recognise the need to build social capital by developing social networks. A newcomer family will typically arrive with very few or no bonding ties in their new community, and establishing them becomes critical to their gaining acceptance and moving into the community. The *newcomer young family* recognised this need; she joined the local playgroup and he made an early entry into the rugby team. Further, her ability to use the ties she was developing was important in the success of establishing the sports club. In effect, she used the bridging capacity of the people she had developed strong ties with to access necessary resources, including families willing to get involved. This is consistent with Granovetter's (1983) argument about the value of weak ties for accessing different

sets of resources. The *township empty nesters* also demonstrated this need to establish strong ties when they first arrived. Although it was a long time ago, she recalls how important getting involved was to getting along. While it was a bit easier for her husband with a job to go to, she remembers working hard at doing things in the local community to try to deal with loneliness and isolation.

8.1.2 Trust and families in community

Trust is an important component of social capital and central to the way these two communities have adjusted to substantial change. Individuals are willing to take social risks based on the belief (or the 'trust') that the response from others will be predictable at best, and at worst, not intentionally harmful. Trust is essential for co-operative and collaborative behaviour. The relationship between trust and social action is such that communities with high levels of trust also have high levels of community-mindedness and participation, which build social capital. Equally, we would argue that where trust is lacking, it is not possible to establish high levels of community-mindedness. Participation can be exacted through coercion, but not community-mindedness.

All the families who participated in this study generally indicated high levels of trust in their communities. We were constantly reminded that most people can be trusted. Almost every household indicated that they could trust the community with their assets, being able to leave the house unlocked; and most people indicated that they had a high level of trust regarding the safety and wellbeing of their children. As the *middle-aged township family* point out:

I can always trust that someone is watching out for my kids. One of the advantages of living here, if your kids get up to no good, someone, somewhere, will be looking out. It's like a big neighbourhood watch.

Trust in community serves a useful purpose for families in reassuring them of the social monitoring of their children, and illustrates a role for community of supplementing families' wellbeing. Interestingly, this social monitoring was seen to serve a wider purpose, of keeping their children safe while alerting parents to any of the children's transgressions:

Everyone looks out for everyone else's kids. If someone does something [if a child misbehaves]

parents will actually contact each other. And as parents we thank each other for keeping that going. [Ex-forestry family]

Despite demonstrably high levels of trust and feelings of safety regarding their families, the recent influx of newcomers and seasonal workers has had a potentially corrosive effect on local families by challenging this trust. The *rural empty nesters* echo the sentiments of many families in this study. They point out that the constantly changing population base has made them reconsider some of their own behaviour regarding the security of their belongings and the way they approach newcomers.

This caution towards strangers reinforces the notion of 'boundary maintenance' (Cohen, 1985). Cohen argues that community is a relational idea, where outside differences, or oppositional otherness, reinforce the social norms and bonding ties of those within the community. Put simply, this is a 'them and us' scenario, where the attitudes and actions of 'them' are constantly visited to illustrate the worth of the things that 'we' (us) hold dear. Hence there is a paradox: While the community rhetoric endorses treating people you don't know with suspicion [*rural empty nesters*] there seems little logic or value in terms of community cohesion in maintaining a mistrust of 'outsiders'. For communities that depend upon the entry of 'new blood' there is limited adaptive value in closing the community boundaries and excluding newcomers.

The wife of the *young township family* describes the way in which new workers, or the 'drifters', manage to fit in. She reminds us, as many others have, that in small and tightly bonded communities, where there is not a big pool of people, the notion of acceptance is important. The *middle-aged family* detail their own efforts to support newcomers by hosting lunch for those people in the community who don't have family nearby. Maintaining mistrust would perpetuate social faction and divide; something that almost all our families told us was ill-affordable in small rural communities. According to the wife in the *newcomer young family*, fitting in requires tolerance and acceptance of people of how they are; there is a need to fit in.

Among the many aspects of social capital, trust is perhaps the most intriguing. There is a direct relationship between trust and the capacity of a community to absorb new people. In short, willingness

to trust will facilitate a family's attempts to become a part of community. Conversely, trusting newcomers on the part of the community is essential to bring about behaviours necessary for long-term community wellbeing. These communities have demonstrated very pragmatic responses to resolving the tensions between locals and those new to the area.

8.1.3 Reciprocity and the family

Like trust, reciprocity is a social norm that is an essential contributor in the accrual of social capital. It is a validation of 'good deeds' as it represents the payback (or the potential for payback) for contributions to social wellbeing in a community. Reciprocity is built on the expectation that one's contribution of goods or services (to other members or to the wider community) will, at some point, be reciprocated. In the act of giving, one earns an entitlement that can be drawn upon, should the need arise. Almost without exception, the family stories illustrate the embeddedness of this commitment to reciprocation.

One example relates to thanks being expressed for the provision of a service in the form of home-baked biscuits and a cake, which were dropped off at the (unlocked) home of the original giver. The explanation given for this by the recipient of the home cooking richly validates the concept of reciprocation:

It's not expected, it's just a country thing really – a barter system. We look after each other. [*middle-aged township family*]

The husband in the *older farming family* explains this further, stating that:

If things [some local calamity] are really big around here, you don't even need to ask [for assistance]. They just step in and do it. Living here is a great place to live. Even though one might not get on with everyone, there is a recognition that in times of need, they'll all help and if things are done you just pay it back.

In this story the importance of the capacity of the community to help anyone and everyone and the need to reciprocate are explicit. The speaker is also very clear that this property of the community to assist makes here "... a great place to live".

Many of our respondents spoke of the pressures of industry changes reducing the amount of time

people have to 'give' back to or be involved with the community. There is no doubt that many people are working harder and longer; but it is manifest nevertheless that some very busy people are still making time for mutual assistance. The *mid-life entrepreneurs* commented that they:

... have less time now but do sponsor some [local events]. We want to so we can put something back in.

They acknowledge having less time to do 'community things', but compensate for this by providing financial support. Again, facing time demands the *middle-aged family* prioritises contributions for the wellbeing of local families. He distinguishes between local-level contributions and the kind of actions that might not directly benefit locals:

When I am called on by a neighbour or a friend to contribute in any capacity toward something going on around town, I really am almost always happy to contribute.

The few times he cannot contribute relate to the difficulties of balancing his work life with outside activities. His wife, however, admits to having more time available to make such contributions, and speaks of wanting to foster a sense of pride in the community by involving people in the building of shared projects.

Central to this practising of reciprocity is a strong notion of mutual support. Statements such as "people look after one another" and "they know I'm here and vice-versa" and "it's the right thing to do and you hope others would reciprocate if it were you (in need)" recur in many of the stories. Nonetheless, there were expressions of concern about increased time pressure being detrimental to building the kind of communities seen as favourable places in which to bring up families.

Another concern expressed by several of the respondents related to some newcomers having nothing, apart from money (in dairy farms), invested in the local community. This sentiment was nicely summed up by the *rural empty nesters* when the husband commented on the influx of newcomers. He noted that some were:

...now living just round the road and just sticking to themselves. These people are the sorts of people you just wouldn't ask for anything because they don't really get involved in things here.

While this is a concern of most of the respondents, it was interesting to note the number of locals who made a point of inviting newcomers to social events soon after their arrival. It is clear that those who have invested in community consider this is appropriate behaviour.

A constant theme in the families' stories is the need to give something back to other families and the wider community and to return favours. Irrespective of the nature of the networks to which the families were connected, whether strong bonding, weak bridging or both, the stories illustrate the embeddedness of commitment to reciprocation.

Trust and reciprocity underpin many aspects of belonging; they help provide the link between families and the wider community and enable the members of the community to improve their social wellbeing. Trust both enables and encourages reciprocity, thus creating the conditions under which community can buffer families against many of the vicissitudes of life. It is under such circumstances that a member of the community can claim "Community is a family unit without blood ties – it's what good community is" [*young farming family*]. In this quote the model of 'goodness' is the family, and this particular community offers the set of social conditions that best allow this 'goodness' to be achieved. There can be little doubt that high levels of trust and reciprocity support and reinforce many other aspects of families within a community. Some of these are discussed below.

8.1.4 Community attachment and participation

It was clear from the families' stories that a sense of attachment to place and belonging deepened people's interest in community – their desire to remain there, and in doing so, to create and maintain social capital, and then benefit from that investment. The husband of the *middle-aged family* who had been made redundant with the closure of the forests echoed the sentiments of many when he told us this:

We have chosen to build our family home here. I'm not going to chase a career around. To feed my family and pay the bills I would be happy milking cows. Being a sawmiller was central to me but it is getting less and less. I chose to stay... I could go elsewhere, but I don't want to shift. This is where I live. I am from here, I'm a local.

While this level of attachment must, at least in part, be seen as a consequence of satisfaction with place itself,

at the risk of proposing a 'chicken and egg' argument, we can understand why commitment to maintaining community is so high. This shared attachment and commitment to their place heightens the concern locals have about newcomers who do not become involved. For some locals, the observed non-involvement of some recent newcomers is so counter-intuitive that it evokes considerable concern. This is not at all surprising, as the narratives reveal that the 'richness' of these communities is a function of the investment that the locals have put into them.

8.2 Fitting work around family and community life

Another common theme in our families' stories was the way shifts in employment have challenged the capacity of families to engage in some aspects of the formation of social capital. Willingness to become involved through voluntary participation is certainly admirable and the benefits for families are clear. However, having the time to become involved is another matter altogether. As the profile (see Section 6) illustrates, the hours people spend working have generally gone up. The *rural empty nesters* state what we heard repeatedly:

We can ask people for things if we need to, but everyone is actually really busy ... mainly 'cos of dairying and tourism ... everyone is just flat out working.

The *mid-life entrepreneurs* offer a glimpse into how life has changed and how time for voluntary pursuits has diminished. They once had time to coach a local team, but now, with less free time, this family relies on sponsoring a sports team as their contribution back to community. This couple has also reduced their attendance at the local pub, citing business growth and the desire to keep a bit more to themselves as their rationale.

Notwithstanding their act of sponsorship, developing the *mid-life entrepreneurs'* businesses had to take precedence over community and the building of social capital. On the other hand, such things as sporadic employment, the need to seize casual opportunities when they arise, and shifting or uncertain working hours hinder families such as the *ex-forestry family* and the *middle-aged family* engagement in formal voluntary participation, despite their willingness. The

middle-aged family father rationalises his use of time. He highlights the considerable drain and commitment involved in volunteering for such things as the Ambulance: "Service in this organisation may take one far from home only to provide assistance to strangers (the number of ambulance call-outs to tourist driver mishaps has greatly increased in recent years)." Hence questions are asked as to whether membership of such organisations is really about putting something back into the local community, or whether it is more about an unpaid service to the tourism industry. However, he does point out that contributing to families in town, such as neighbours or friends, is almost always possible. A further example is found in the story of the *middle-aged township family*. Time pressures coupled with odd working hours impede his ability to get fully involved, despite his strong conviction of the importance of doing so. They both agree his wife is the 'main contributor' to building social capital on the part of this family.

8.3 Gendered contributions

Women in particular valued the complementary growth in seasonal and unskilled job opportunities that could be fitted around their family lives. The wife in the *middle-aged township family* took advantage of the flexible hours in unskilled tourism-related work while also contributing to unpaid community activities. Work in the tourism industry allowed the *ex-forestry family* mother to be at home to meet the children after school. Indeed, many of the *ex-forestry-workers'* wives commented on the value of growing opportunities to supplement lost household earnings with unskilled work in the service industry sector.

In this study we found that it is the women who especially underpin and reinforce the value of social capital. It is their contacts, ideas and practices that drive many of the families' mutually beneficial activities in the community, which is consistent with accounts of gendered contributions in rural communities. The 'old' male-dominated stories are typified in Berry's history of Hari Hari (Berry, circa 1986). He provides a wonderfully rich collection of stories about men, events and community going back to the earliest days of settlement in Hari Hari. Women's voices are largely silent in this history, except to say who married them and how many children they had. The exceptions tend to be where they have acted more like men in some

sense. There is a delightful give-away as to how things actually happened in a caption to a photograph of the foundation members of the Hari Hari branch of the Country Women's Institute, established in 1930. In part, the caption reads:

It would be fair to say that these women along with a few others were the backbone of Hari Hari, all contributing much time and effort to the social activity and improvements of the district. (Berry, circa 1986, p157).

Our contemporary exploration indicates that in gendered terms very little has changed. It can be argued that because women carry most of the nurturing role in their families, they have more to gain from mutuality and co-operation as they build socially cohesive places within which to raise their families. Almost without exception it is the men who are the major breadwinners, and it is the women who are responsible for home and children. It is the women who have 'available time' – or simply compromise their time and activities in order to perform the multiple roles that they have assumed on the part of their families.

8.4 Aligning family and community needs

The nature of many women's investment in social capital illustrates one of the stronger mechanisms whereby community can be maintained and reproduced alongside the demands of family. Consistent with Furstenburg's thesis (2005) children become a conduit into community for families. This is demonstrated by the *newcomer young family*; establishing the local sports club met the needs of the mother's own children for after-school activity, as well as enabling her to fill a perceived need on the part of others. The substantial contribution of this newcomer mother gave her own family an excellent opportunity to build the social networks and ties necessary for forming, and drawing on, social capital.

The *young township family* mother offers a further illustration of this synergy. The community playgroup not only provided a social space for her children; through the building of networks and social ties this mother became involved in the provision of an after-school sporting opportunity for local children. The *middle-aged township family* also engaged in a similar alignment of community and family activities. That

mother recognised that the after-school activity she was instrumental in establishing was principally for her own children, though her recognition of the lack of activities for other non-sports'-minded children in the community provided considerable impetus for this undertaking.

While focusing on the contributions these mothers have made to the community we are not trying to diminish the ways men contribute to the building of social capital. All of the men we interviewed shared their experiences of 'giving' in one way or another; for example, volunteering for search and rescue, running the agricultural and pastoral show, volunteer fire-fighting, helping run the community association or turning out for the ubiquitous working bees. We are suggesting that the nature of women's contributions, and in particular their alignments to meet the needs of both family and community, is a useful strategy in the context of diminished free time. Moreover, our discussions with mothers and wives commonly indicated the elevated status they accorded to the demands of family and community, frequently over the building of careers for themselves. In closely aligning these two objectives it was clear that many of them could do for themselves what they did for community.

The families' stories illustrate commonalities and peculiarities of their experiences, both in the process of adjustment to change and also in the daily maintenance of the relations between people, families and community. The maintenance of trust is seen as fundamental to enabling the establishment of networks and ties that connect the members of the community to each other and provide social bridging to other locations. It has been shown that while these networks and ties involve two very different types of relationships, the presence of both kinds benefits a 'healthy' community. Reciprocity follows trust, and we have seen the extent to which reciprocity is a key driver in these communities. The expectation of giving as a defining element of membership of these communities is fundamental to the production and maintenance of social capital. Community attachment and the alignment of family and community needs can be seen as further reinforcing the production and maintenance of social capital. By putting family first, we have seen how families and the wider community have all benefited.

9. CONCLUDING COMMENTS

In this study we have taken a social capital perspective to examine how rural families have attempted to resolve individual and collective difficulties that have arisen as a consequence of change in industry and thus employment. The objectives of this study were twofold. The first was to examine how families contribute to, and draw upon, social capital within their community. Using a social capital perspective we found differing levels of investment by families into the collective social asset of community. Some families could be described as 'social capital rich'; others, not so.

Our second objective was to explore family wellbeing in the context of such industry change. While some families considered themselves to be directly affected, all the families noted that their communities have negotiated many of the effects of recent change in a major industry. It was clear that change has affected families in different ways. It was also evident that families in this study considered that they do not possess access to the same social resources as families living in less isolated places.

Several key themes emerged from the families' stories regarding the way they have responded to change and the role of social capital in facilitating this response:

- **Families' sense of attachment to community:** The capacity to build networks and social arrangements that facilitate participation in the generation of social capital grew for families as they developed their own sense of attachment and belonging to place.
- **The importance of social networks in supporting families:** The social networks and ties developed by families have been shown to be a critical asset for accessing social and physical resources to improve families' wellbeing. This effect is heightened in rural places, where market solutions are not always available.
- **The social norms of trust and reciprocity:** Trust, as a precursor to reciprocity, has allowed families to support others, and be supported by others. From the social monitoring of children to the security of being able to rely on others, high levels of trust and reciprocity have enabled families to 'get ahead' in the context of significant change.

- **Balancing work, family life and community participation:** In the face of changing social and economic circumstances families indicate the necessity of working to achieve more balance between these aspects of their daily lives. One strategy to secure this balance is re-evaluating the allocation of time spent on different activities in their daily lives. In particular, the alignment of family and community commitments and the reliance upon women to pick up many of the contributions on the part of the family have helped find this balance.

Social-capital-generating behaviour (the *vita activa*) in these communities clearly has to be self-determined by participants. Social capital draws upon itself in its own social production. Put simply, the more social capital that exists in a community, the greater the capacity of that community to build further stocks of social capital for the wellbeing of the collective. Families, as the 'building blocks of community', engage social capital to build the kinds of communities in which parents want to raise their children. Behind these activities is the notion that rural communities function in the role of extended family, as was highlighted by those respondents who were living without such kin-support. The critical question, therefore, is how best to support families as they participate in community, in order to actively build the healthy social spaces they determine as essential for their own family's wellbeing.

For social capital to work well it has to emerge from the 'bottom up'. More than that, it must speak to shared assumptions about what is appropriate for resolving collective issues. People have to feel a sense of ownership and pride. As we have seen, attachment and belonging to place increase this sense of ownership – of both the physical place and the community itself. Developing social ties and bonds with others in community emerged as a critical precursor to participation in the accrual of social capital. Social networks that are open and can tolerate the ideas of 'others', including those new to community, stand a greater chance of co-ordinating and facilitating reciprocity, mutuality and community-mindedness both formally and informally down to the level of the street, the neighbours, the family household.

As public policy continues to debate social capital, we would suggest that the stories outlined in this

report provide useful lessons for agencies attempting to facilitate social capital at the local level. The social responses observed highlight the importance of local initiative and control of the processes required to amass social capital. It follows that attempting to create social capital through policy directives has limitations. The jointly-built civil spaces referred to by Arendt (1958), in which the *vita activa* is actioned, are the property of everyone in the community. As a resource of the collective, social capital is expressed in the everyday lives of individuals, families and communities. Hence, at best, policy directives can facilitate access to resources, by fostering bridging opportunities and

providing financial and technical or advisory support. In the interest of family wellbeing, such support should necessarily come with 'no strings attached'. The degree of self-determination afforded to a community will be critical to the success of any external initiative to help generate and maintain social capital. Any agencies taking approaches that embrace the norms of social capital itself, such as trust, reciprocity and mutuality, will be advantaged in their capacity to 'bring along the community'. Otherwise the direct involvement of the apparatus of government is likely to be totally counter-productive to the establishment and facilitation of enduring social capital.

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