

## 19 Rural Governance and Power Relations

### Theorising the Complexity of State-Citizen Interactions

*Lynda Cheshire, Vaughan Higgins and Geoffrey Lawrence*

#### INTRODUCTION

Throughout the world, governments have played – and continue to play – a significant role in the organization of rural social life. Legislative rules and regulations have shaped the forms and dynamics of social interaction, and state agencies have intervened in rural economies in an effort to secure, *inter alia*, higher levels of production, improved industry efficiencies, increased employment, lower levels of poverty and, more generally, to improve the life chances of farm and regional populations. The typical means of directing such activity within liberal democracies has been through a broad set of agencies, comprising elected representatives and authorised bureaucracies, that are known collectively as ‘the government’ (see Dean and Hindess 1998). One key aspect of this liberal view of government has been a clear demarcation between the spheres of ‘state’ and ‘civil society’, and a desire to set limits upon the state’s capacity to intervene in the workings of the ‘non-governmental’ realm.

It is clear from the contributions to this book, that this orthodox model of government is undergoing significant change. The basic premise of this book is that, in line with wider tendencies within global capitalism, we are observing in rural societies throughout the world a shift away from *government* to *governance* – in which a broad assemblage of state and non-state people and resources are mobilized in projects of rural governing, and where the distinction between the public and private is increasingly blurred. Such a shift has been interpreted by some as providing greater opportunities for citizen participation at the local level (see, for example, Murray and Dunn 1995), while others have suggested that it provides new, and subtle ways, for political authorities to intervene in the lives of local citizens, albeit under the cloak of so-called empowering, bottom-up, approaches (Herbert-Cheshire 2000; Murdoch and Abram 1998). Both perspectives offer insights into the potentials and pitfalls of contemporary modes of governing, and suggest that further work is needed to better understand *how* governance operates in rural societies and

economies around the world and *whether* – and under *what conditions* – governance represents a more participatory mode of rule.

The contributors to this collection highlight that contemporary processes of rural governing represent a diverse – and sometimes confusing - mix of both ‘top-down’ and ‘bottom-up’ strategies of power. In this sense, the common tendency to dichotomise these forms of governing may no longer be helpful in conceptualizing the complexity of state-citizen interactions. The main purpose of this concluding chapter is to draw together the insights of contributors in this collection, and to question such binary divisions, while arguing for an analytics of rural governance that recognizes the complex and diverse ways in which rural economies and societies are governed.

The call for alternative approaches to the understanding of rural governing is by no means new. For example, Lowe, Murdoch and Ward (1995) and Murdoch (2000) use the concept of ‘networks’ to question the distinction between exogenous and endogenous models of rural development. While these authors are concerned primarily with rural development, their work is nevertheless relevant to processes of rural governing. Similarly, Herbert-Cheshire (2003) draws upon the network concept – specifically, Latour’s notion of translation – to provide a critique of models of power that view action by rural people as simply a form of resistance, or, conversely, as evidence that they have been ‘empowered’ by outside agencies. Networks are viewed increasingly in the governance literature (and, indeed, rural development literature) as an important extension to earlier modes of governing through hierarchies and markets. Nevertheless, it should not be assumed that these new forms of co-ordination displace, completely, older forms of *government*. In this chapter we examine the multifarious power relations through which state-citizen interactions are played out. For the sake of clarity we have divided our discussion into three inter-related analytical themes: actors; sites and spaces of governing; and, managing processes of governing.

## **ACTORS**

In examining the nature of state-citizen interactions, much of the popular rural development literature tends to adopt a relatively linear approach in which state agencies are seen to transfer power, relatively unproblematically, and often via rural development

experts, to the local level, thereby facilitating community action (see Herbert-Cheshire and Higgins 2004). The contributions to this collection demonstrate that state-citizen interactions are far from being this simple. In fact, power is frequently distributed among a number of different actors including state agencies, farmer organizations, local elites, development professionals, co-operatives, non-government organizations, environmentalists, the corporate sector and municipalities. This has a number of consequences for the dynamics and impacts of rural governing.

First, we should remember that some actors are already more ‘empowered’ than others. While the state is often viewed as the most powerful actor, others may also have significant authority. These include established local elites who control the main institutions, and who can shape governing to suit their interests (Woods, Edwards, Anderson and Gardner Chapter 12; see also Gray 1991); corporations whose investment in local projects gives them more influence in community affairs than others (Hoppe, Rickson and Burch Chapter 5; Sinclair and Janes-Hodder Chapter 11; Tilzey and Potter Chapter 8); NGOs (High, Slater and Rengasamy Chapter 18) and universities (Saladar and Loveridge Chapter 9) which are able to shape the nature of local participation in important ways; local government administration and development agencies who deploy their resources to facilitate relationships that are seen as most beneficial to the development of the immediate region (Aarsæther and Nyseth Chapter 4; Connelly, Richardson and Miles Chapter 16; Nemes, High and Huzair Chapter 7; Woods et al. Chapter 14); and, co-operatives which seek to build relations between local actors (such as farmers) and other parties (Blackstock, Brown, Davies and Shannon Chapter 13; Dibden and Cocklin Chapter 12; Eshuis Chapter 2). These actors are significant in that they often already have the capacities to shape governing, and have an existing relationship with the state. Thus, the facilitation of change must involve either working through these mediating actors, or bypassing them – in which case governing can face legitimacy dilemmas, as we argue later in the chapter.

Second, state agencies may prefer to work with only certain actors. Obviously those who have an existing relationship with government, as noted above, or those who are already prominent in community organizations (see Gray 1991; Yarwood 2002) are likely to have the capabilities to most effectively participate in, and utilise, networks of governing. Thus,

governing ‘through communities’ is somewhat of a misnomer; more accurate is the notion of governing through specific actors *within* communities (see MacKinnon 2002). For example, Sinclair and Janes-Hodder focus, in Chapter 11, on the influence of existing institutional arrangements on processes of governing. In this case, the owning of timber rights by the timber company, Kruger, as well as a provincial government interested in maintaining timber industry employment in a region where few other employment options existed, ensured a substantial power imbalance between Kruger, on the one hand, and the local residents and activists who were lobbying for greater participation concerning the environmental impacts of logging, on the other. In other cases – where there is a broad consensus regarding the nature and urgency of problems (Hoppe et al. Chapter 5), or where planning processes explicitly seek to transcend existing institutionalised relationships (Everingham Chapter 15) – these power imbalances are less likely to be manifested in obvious ways. Nevertheless, while government rhetoric is about participation and partnership, in practice state agencies frequently find it difficult to move from hierarchical relationships based on control, to forms of governance based on horizontal relationships and trust (see Jones and Little 2000; Yarwood 2002; see, in this volume, Eshuis Chapter 2).

Third, some local actors may not want to be ‘empowered’ in the first place. Rather than viewing this in terms of local actors being unwilling to change or failing to accept what is ‘good’ for them, such resistance may be seen as indicative of a failure on the part of these programmes to take into account the diversity of local knowledge (Blackstock et al. Chapter 13; Eshuis Chapter 2; Saladar and Loveridge Chapter 9; Sikor Chapter 3. See also Clark and Murdoch 1997; Higgins et al. 2001), or a legitimate reaction to the perceived adverse consequences of such programmes (Dibden and Cocklin Chapter 12; Sinclair and Janes-Hodder Chapter 11). Local actors can also shape programmes creatively to suit their interests. For example, Chapter 10 by Rodriguez-Bilella indicates how a strong focus on group participation had unintended consequences. Promoted as a means of empowering farmers, and facilitating the development of broader farming organizations, the Agricultural Social Programme (PSA) introduced in Argentina in the early 1990s was expected to improve small farmers’ lives through more ‘rational’ ways of dealing with problems. However, in this case, sole emphasis was given to collective action. Neglected was the diversity of non-collective strategies used by farmers to manage their livelihoods.

As a consequence, farmers tended to continue following individualistic strategies while at the same time forming groups with relatives and friends to obtain access to PSA funding.

## **SITES AND SPACES OF GOVERNING**

In much of the literature on rural development, there is the assumption that the primary, and most legitimate, space of governing is ‘the community’, with the state ensuring the conditions through which communities develop a capacity to change their attitudes and attract development (see Herbert-Cheshire 2000). From this perspective, rural communities that are not performing in accordance with expected criteria for economic growth (or social harmony or environmental protection) may be labelled as ‘pessimistic’ communities that are characterized by the wrong attitude to change. To change their circumstances these communities are advised to form partnerships with state agencies and to call upon assistance from a variety of professionals and experts (Cheshire and Lawrence 2005; Jones and Little 2000; Herbert-Cheshire and Higgins 2004). In other words, the onus is on the community to change. However, if governance is conceptualized in terms of network (as well as market and hierarchical) forms of co-ordination, then ‘community’ not only emerges as a vehicle of governing, but also as an effect of attempts to govern.

Formal institutions and bureaucratic hierarchies undoubtedly remain important in the vertical co-ordination of governing. These are evident in the key role of national (Bilella-Rodriguez Chapter 10; Eshuis Chapter 2; Everingham Chapter 15; Meyer and Elbe Chapter 6; Saladar and Loveridge Chapter 9), provincial/state (Sinclair and Janes-Hodder Chapter 11), and municipal (Aarsaether and Nyseth Chapter 4), government as facilitators of local development. It is also clear that markets continue to be promoted, through neo-liberal policies, as a means of improving the productive potential of rural spaces (see, in particular, Chapters 8 by Tilzey and Potter and Chapter 12 by Dibden and Cocklin), and the entrepreneurial capacities of rural people (see Herbert-Cheshire 2000). Networks do not run parallel to these existing forms of co-ordination but tend, as shown in this book, to cut across market and hierarchy thereby rendering visible a range of sites that makes governing possible. These include public fora (Connelly et al. Chapter 16; Korf, Chapter 17), informal institutions (High et al. Chapter 18), regional (extra-local) planning processes (Everingham Chapter 15; Meyer and Elbe Chapter 6; Nemes et al. Chapter 7)

and existing local practices (Blackstock et al. Chapter 13; Rodriguez-Bilella Chapter 10; Sikor Chapter 3).

Public fora are an important part of encouraging broad community participation in processes of rural governing, and particularly in promoting the ‘thick democracy’ advocated by Woods (2003). While such fora do not guarantee community empowerment or even participation, they provide a crucial starting point in consulting with local people (see Moseley 2003). Nevertheless, despite the rhetoric of representative democracy underpinning public fora, Chapters 16 by Connelly et al. and 17 by Korf argue that these spaces or ‘arenas’ are not necessarily any more effective or ‘representative’ than hierarchical forms of governing. Newer forms of governing may not be seen as legitimate when compared to more traditional representative forms. Thus, the risk with ‘bottom-up’ approaches based on public deliberation is that they may suffer from broader problems of legitimacy where only a few influential actors have the capacity to dominate debate, or where they are established alongside, and in competition with, existing institutionalized procedures (see Welch 2002).

Establishment of planning processes and networks at a regional level, rather than simply at a local ‘community’ level, may provide an effective means of avoiding some of the problems noted above. In fact, Chapters 15 by Everingham, 6, by Meyer and Elbe, and 7 by Nemes et al. provide compelling evidence that the building of networks at a regional level has a strong capacity to form the basis for more democratic forms of governance. However, such processes require a great deal of work, including monetary investment, in building relationships between state and non-state actors. For example, Nemes et al. argue that the success of regional development agencies in facilitating integrated rural development are contingent on the work of ‘reflexive agents’ mediating between different levels of governance. These processes also require monitoring to ensure co-operation and broad involvement. Legitimacy may assume prominence as a key issue in shaping the success or otherwise of such initiatives. The legitimacy issue is discussed in more depth in the next section of this chapter.

The problems with public fora and regional planning processes, noted above, appear to be associated with the almost exclusive focus in rural governing on formal institutions,

organizations and bodies. Obviously not everyone can, or desires to, participate in processes of governing – this is where formal representation is desirable. Nevertheless, as Chapter 18 by High et al. argues, the emphasis on formal institutions has tended to marginalize the productive nature of informal networks and relationships (see also Chapter 9 by Saladar and Loveridge). Despite the rhetoric of governing-through-community, a top-down mentality predominates: it is assumed that only formal bodies and organizations can be sufficiently trustworthy and transparent. While frequently conceptualized as a problem to be mitigated, these ‘shadow networks’ comprise the backdrop that makes governing possible. High et al. contend that rather than ignoring or attempting to marginalize these networks as a ‘corrupting’ influence on ‘good governance’, working through these networks can actually support policy advocacy, enhance participation, and promote network governance.

Working with, rather than against, existing local practices can also help enhance local participation. Local practices, which may be seen as constituted through informal networks, are frequently treated as a problem to be overcome through the changing of attitudes. These are, in fact, crucial in the ‘translation’ of programmes of governing (Herbert-Cheshire 2003), rather than simply a source of resistance. While not using the language of translation, a number of chapters highlight the key role played by local people in shaping governing to accord with their existing practices. Thus, Rodriguez-Bilella (Chapter 10) notes how farmers in Argentina used their loose personal networks to create ‘formal’ groups necessary to access government funding for farm credit. In this case, participation was certainly facilitated, but was used strategically by farmers to reinforce existing social relationships and practices. Sikor (Chapter 3) draws attention to similar issues in Central and Eastern Europe where there have been dramatic changes in property rights over the last 15 years. Rather than a smooth transition in which a new system of governing has displaced an older one, delineations of public and private property have proved far more complex and problematic, and have created multiple forms of agri-environmental governing. This is largely due to the various ways in which local actors contest new forms of governance and seek to modify definitions of private rights and public powers. Finally, in Chapter 13, Blackstock et al. demonstrate that local actors (in this case Scottish farmers) calculate the benefits and costs of collective action, and will only act, not surprisingly, when the benefits exceed the costs. Working collectively is

regarded as a risk that involves negotiating with complex bureaucracies and building relationships with partner organizations. This can be as time consuming as much as it is disempowering, with many farmers feeling that they cede much of their autonomy in the process. What all of these chapters emphasize is that sensitivity to a range of local voices is required if programmes are to achieve their desired effects.

## **MANAGING PROCESSES OF GOVERNING**

It is widely assumed in the rural development literature that change is best achieved through a ‘bottom-up’ process of empowering local actors as a means of facilitating local action. However, within this conceptualization of power relations lies a contradiction. On the one hand, citizens are expected to develop the capacities to govern themselves as power is progressively transferred. On the other hand, such a ‘transfer’ of power ties citizens into new webs of relations that may not necessarily involve the autonomy that ‘bottom-up’ change implies. Thus, Murdoch and Abram (1998: 49) argue that in many cases a ‘dominant strategic line’ exists; ‘citizens and communities cannot be simply allowed to “go their own way” ... while they can be enrolled into programmes of government, their incorporation is usually on constrained terms’. In addition, other scholars have pointed out that bottom-up change involves subjection to a range of governmental technologies that diagnose communities as risky or responsible (see, for example, Herbert-Cheshire and Higgins 2004). The point is that bottom-up forms of governing do not involve a zero sum empowerment of local people. Co-ordination and management is required to ensure alignment between often-competing interests.

The promotion and management of collective action is one of the key issues in any attempt to govern. While the rhetoric of governing-through-community would seem unproblematic in theory, the achievement of action is dependent upon a range of variables. These include the presence of a significant organizing cadre of professional middle class individuals who ease the process of partnership working (Saladar and Loveridge Chapter 9; Woods et al. Chapter 14); the availability of opportunities to participate in decision-making through deliberative planning processes (Connelly et al. Chapter 16; Everingham Chapter 15); the perceived or actual benefits of participation (Blackstock et al. Chapter 13); the strength of existing ‘local’ networks, organizations and forms of knowledge (Rodriguez-Bilella Chapter 10); and, the willingness of government

agencies to form partnerships with, and gain the trust of, local organizations (Eshuis Chapter 2). Even where these variables are taken into account, the success of governing is by no means guaranteed since the ‘flexibility’ of, and scope for, local action is not always compatible with the managerial imperative in formal organizations (and particularly government agencies) for centralized planning (see for example Chapter 9 by Saladar and Loveridge).

Despite collective action at a local or regional level being considered essential to effective community empowerment, and thus rural governing (see Moseley 2003; Murray and Dunn 1995), it is evident that in many cases, state agencies continue to exercise considerable control. Such control, while often necessary in facilitating co-operation, can diminish the willingness of civil society groups to participate in ‘partnerships’ with government (Jones and Little 2000; and in this collection Meyer and Elbe Chapter 6; Blackstock et al. Chapter 13), or contribute to local actors finding creative ways to work around, or resist, measures viewed as inconsistent with local knowledge and practices (Eshuis Chapter 2; Rodriguez-Bilella Chapter 10). As Eshuis (Chapter 2) has suggested, attempts to implement top-down control intensify distrust and result in contested policies. Nevertheless, it is often difficult for governments to move away from hierarchical relationships based on control to horizontal relationships based on trust (see Saladar and Loveridge Chapter 9). This could be due to existing structures of representative democracy that rely on formalised lines of accountability (Amin and Hausner 1997; Hirst 1994). However, such control is often deemed necessary in order to maintain broader legitimacy among voters, and in some cases to protect the investment and employment made possible by key actors such as those in the corporate sector (Sinclair and Janes-Hodder Chapter 11). These problems illustrate the tensions between ‘network’ and ‘organic’ forms of governance. While organic governance fosters liberty and promotes opportunities for ‘thick’ democracy at the local level, network governing relies on more distant mechanisms of representative democracy that rely on ‘thin democracy’ and do little to facilitate local participation (Woods 2003: 153-154). The dominance of state agencies noted above in ‘steering’ shows the persistence of hierarchical governance and draws attention to broader difficulties in managing the tension between centralised planning and local flexibility.

As noted above, the devolution of responsibility to local agencies and community members does not necessarily mean complete freedom and autonomy in governing. In fact, the process of aligning local development ‘needs’ with broader state-based objectives is fraught with tensions (Cheshire forthcoming 2006). From the perspective of many of the contributors to this collection, such tensions result from the need on the part of state agencies for formalised planning, and the related imperative of representative democratic systems to ‘show’ to the broader electorate that action is being taken. Yet, the complexity and variability of local development demands a degree of flexibility. While planning and flexibility can undoubtedly co-exist in certain circumstances (see examples in Chapters 4 by Aarsaether and Nyseth, 2 by Eshuis; 5 by Hoppe et al., and 7 by Nemes et al.) in other settings, conflicts arise. Eshuis (Chapter 2) notes, for example, that attempts at ‘top-down’ monitoring by state agencies can be interpreted as unnecessary control in local affairs and can result in community distrust of government. Such a loss of trust is clearly likely to have negative consequences in terms of future attempts at fostering community participation. Where attempts at governing are viewed as incompatible with local goals from the outset, actors may engage in forms of contestation and resistance through overt material struggles such as protest (Dibden and Cocklin Chapter 12), or via more subtle symbolic and discursive strategies such as feigned ignorance and avoidance (Sikor Chapter 3). While state actors are clearly crucial in ensuring local cooperation and participation, there is always the risk that strong state influence on governing processes will inhibit the willingness and/or capacity of local groups to participate (see Saladar and Loveridge Chapter 9). Thus, there exists a fine line between too little and too much coordination and control. One of the key questions that this raises is how legitimacy is achieved and maintained.

Legitimacy has long been recognised as central in justifying processes of governing. Within Marxism and critical theory, the capitalist state is viewed as attempting to achieve both capital accumulation and political legitimation – and, therefore, to face the contradictory task of promoting the interests of particular fractions of capital while at the same time professing ‘neutrality’ and seeking the continued support of citizens whose fortunes may decline as capitalism expands (see Habermas 1975; Lawrence 1987; O’Connor 1973, 1984; Offe 1984; Wright 1979). According to Habermas (1975), legitimacy can be readily withdrawn if governments fail to meet the programmatic

expectations that have been set in the political arena: people become suspicious of the motives of government and seek to remove from office administrations that fail to deliver what communities demand and/or what they believe they are entitled to. Importantly, there is a need for social theorists to move beyond the notion of macro-crisis management within capitalism to focus upon new crises that relate to the rationality of the state, including its various modes of intervention (see Jones (2004: 197). It is here that the new forms of rural governance can be made problematic.

In rural development, for example, legitimacy is an important condition for effective governance, albeit one where particular actors and forms of knowledge are privileged over others. But is legitimacy achieved via representative government or participatory governance? Is ‘bottom up’ rural governance a more acceptable (legitimate) form than that of ‘top down’? According to Korf (Chapter 17), bottom-up governing in rural development is characterized by a dilemma: while participatory methods legitimize the intervention of external agents in rural communities, they paradoxically may be crowding out, or transforming, existing forms of local governance (see also Welch 2002 and, in this volume, Saladar and Loveridge Chapter 9). This can also have the effect, as High et al. (Chapter 18) point out, of privileging ‘rational’ and formal organizational forms at the expense of less visible, but equally legitimate, informal networks. The opportunities for seemingly ‘free’ participation encouraged through rural development initiatives thereby privilege certain practices and actors and conceal hegemonic power relations – both within state agencies and rural communities (see Chapter 10 by Rodriguez-Bilella). In order to maximise community participation and create public-private ‘partnerships’ to more effectively address local issues, it is widely believed that deliberative democratic processes provide a superior means of promoting participation, and creating legitimacy, than traditional principles of representative government. It has become common for scholars – particularly those in the development field (see, for example, Pretty 2002) – to contrast ‘top-down’ forms of governing based on representative democracy with ‘bottom-up’ strategies based on deliberative processes (Fung and Wright 2003). Nevertheless, deliberative processes, too, run the risk of legitimising the strategies of the powerful and influential at the expense of others (Korf Chapter 17). Connelly et al. (Chapter 16) explore this point in some detail, arguing that while multiple discourses of legitimacy underpin rural governance processes, the strongest legitimizing principles are, in fact, grounded in

norms of representative democracy. As a consequence, although the new approaches of participation and partnership may be endorsed by core stakeholders, they struggle for legitimacy alongside more broadly-accepted representative forms of governing. This means that the legitimacy of rural governance is best characterized as a 'hybrid' arena.

What seems to be occurring is the dramatic and widespread growth in what some construe as 'experiments' in sub-national regional governance (see Lawrence 2005). Will these new forms overcome the problems of representative democracy or generate their own contradictions? Will they produce more viable and, indeed, 'vital' rural communities – ones that are more able to make their way in an era of globalization? Many of the contributions to this book alert us to the contradictory effects of emerging forms of participatory democracy. Multi-level governance, along with devolved decision-making and 'joined up' approaches to service delivery, have the potential to enrol new actors in the political process (Smyth, Reddle and Jones 2005). But they face forms of accountability that seem to disempower - as much as they empower (see Eshuis and Van Woerkum 2003), and to confuse as much as clarify the ways forward for rural people. An important task for social scientists is to examine, in a critical fashion, the new forms of governing in an era of global neo-liberalism as well as to assess, and report on, the democratic potential of such forms.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

It has taken some time for the concept of governance to be utilized widely in the study of rural economies and societies. Writing in 1998, Goodwin observed a 'noticeable silence at the centre of contemporary rural studies concerning the way in which rural areas are governed' (1998: 5). He also noted that this silence was especially surprising given the changes that were already beginning to take place in the way rural areas were governed, and the emergence of new institutional structures based upon partnership arrangements between actors from the public, private, and community sectors. Almost a decade on, there exists a considerable body of research on rural governance. In fact, theoretical debates and empirical studies focusing on the topic are now a regular feature in publications such as the *Journal of Rural Studies*. The chapters in this volume have made a significant contribution to this emerging field by highlighting issues that are central to our understanding of rural governance, both empirically and conceptually. What emerges

from these chapters is not simply an insight into some of the key questions that are frequently posed about rural governance – who is involved; who is excluded; where accountability lies; and, how competing interests are negotiated. There now exists a foundation from which new questions and a new research agenda can develop.

As the title of this chapter implies, and the contributions to the book demonstrate, issues of power are likely to remain at the forefront of research on rural governance. Yet, it has already been recognized that an analysis of the ‘new’ power relations within rural societies should begin with a concern for *how* power is exercised, rather than simply where, or in which groups or individuals, it resides (see, for example, Goodwin 1998; Herbert-Cheshire 2000). As we outlined in the opening chapter of this collection, such a line of inquiry allows researchers to move beyond dichotomies of top down versus bottom up, and governmental authority versus local resistance, to examine the various ways in which power is exercised by all those enrolled in networks of rule. While some actors in the governing arena clearly have more power and resources than others, this should not prohibit a thorough examination of the way in which power is contested and negotiated by local actors seeking to articulate their own concerns. Much research has been done already to show how governance creates novel ways for political authorities to shape rural development and agri-environmental initiatives. That said, there is still much to learn about how and why local actors also engage in these activities, and the strategies they adopt to influence the outcomes that ensue.

In undertaking such research, it is also important to ensure that we do not limit analysis to the more obvious ways in which power is exercised in contemporary societies. While a great deal can be gained from an exposition of the power struggles that arise within the institutional settings of local and regional bodies, it is also worth extending this work to incorporate the whole range of discursive and material practices through which rural economies and societies are governed. These include the subtle, but nevertheless influential, normative mechanisms through which citizen identities are shaped (see Herbert-Cheshire and Higgins 2004) and by which rural communities are encouraged to ‘think themselves into existence’ (Ward and McNicholas 1998). Finally, it has already been acknowledged in this volume that a growing range of agencies and actors are now implicated in the employment of such mechanisms – not only those from state agencies,

but also 'independent' experts, representatives from the corporate sector, local leaders, and other community members. The role played by these disparate actors in governing the conduct of rural citizens and communities also needs to form part of this developing research agenda. Opening up these, and other, issues for analysis will not only lead to conceptual developments in the field of rural governance, but will also continue to enhance our understanding of the new power relations that now exist in rural economies and societies.

## REFERENCES

- Amin, A. and Hausner, J. (1997) 'Interactive governance and social complexity', in A. Amin and J. Hausner (eds) *Beyond Market and Hierarchy: Interactive Governance and Social Complexity*, Cheltenham: Edward Elgar.
- Cheshire, L. (forthcoming 2006) *Governing Development: Discourses and Practices of Self-help in Australian Rural Policy*, Aldershot: Ashgate.
- Cheshire, L. and Lawrence, G. (2005) 'Neo-liberalism, individualization and community: regional restructuring in Australia', *Social Identities*, 11, 5: 85-96.
- Dean, M. and Hindess, B. (eds) (1998) *Governing Australia: Studies in Contemporary Rationalities of Government*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Eshuis, J. and Van Woerkum, C. (2003) 'Trust and monitoring in governance processes: lessons from landscape management by farmers in a Dutch municipality', *Journal of Environmental Policy and Planning*, 5, 4: 379-396.
- Fung, A., and Wright, E. (eds) (2003) *Deepening Democracy: Institutional Innovations in Empowered Participatory Governance*, London: Verso.
- Goodwin, M. (1998) 'The governance of rural areas: some emerging research issues and agendas', *Journal of Rural Studies*, 14, 1: 5-12.
- Gray, I. (1991) *Politics in Place: Social Power Relations in an Australian Country Town*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Habermas, J. (1975) *Legitimation Crisis*, Boston: Beacon Press.
- Herbert-Cheshire, L. (2000) 'Contemporary strategies for rural community development in Australia: a governmentality perspective', *Journal of Rural Studies*, 16, 2: 203-215.
- Herbert-Cheshire, L. (2003) 'Translating policy: power and action in Australia's country towns', *Sociologia Ruralis*, 43, 4: 454-473.
- Herbert-Cheshire, L. and Higgins, V. (2004) 'From risky to responsible: expert knowledge and the governing of community-led rural development', *Journal of Rural Studies*, 20: 289-302.
- Hirst, P. (1994) *Associative Democracy: New Forms of Economic and Social Governance*, Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press.
- Hopper, P. (2003) *Rebuilding Communities in an Age of Individualism*, Aldershot: Ashgate.
- Jones, M. (2004) 'The regional state and economic governance: regionalized regeneration, or territorialized political mobilization?' in A. Wood and D. Valler (eds) *Governing Local and Regional Economies: Institutions, Politics and Economic Development*, Aldershot: Ashgate.

- Jones, O. and Little, J. (2000) 'Rural challenge(s): partnership and new rural governance', *Journal of Rural Studies*, 16, 2: 171-183.
- Lawrence, G. (1987) *Capitalism and the Countryside: the Rural Crisis in Australia*, Sydney: Pluto.
- Lawrence, G. (2005) 'Promoting sustainable development: the question of governance', in F. Buttel and P. McMichael (eds) *New Directions in the Sociology of Global Development*, Amsterdam: Elsevier.
- Lowe, P., Murdoch, J. and Ward, N. (1995) 'Networks in rural development: beyond exogenous and endogenous models', in J. van der Ploeg and G. van Dijk (eds), *Beyond Modernization: The Impact of Endogenous Rural Development*, Assen: Van Gorcum.
- MacKinnon, D. (2002) 'Rural governance and local involvement: assessing state-community relations in the Scottish Highlands', *Journal of Rural Studies*, 18, 3: 307-324.
- Moseley, M. (2003) *Rural Development: Principles and Practice*, London: Sage.
- Murdoch, J. (2000) 'Networks – a new paradigm of rural development?' *Journal of Rural Studies*, 16, 4: 407-419.
- Murdoch, J. and Abram, S. (1998) 'Defining the limits of community governance', *Journal of Rural Studies*, 14, 1: 41-50.
- Murray, M. and Dunn, L. (1995) 'Capacity building for rural development in the United States', *Journal of Rural Studies*, 11, 1: 89-97.
- O'Connor, J. (1973) *The Fiscal Crisis of the State*, New York: St. Martins Press.
- O'Connor, J. (1984) *Accumulation Crisis*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- Offe, C. (1984) *Contradictions of the Welfare State*, London: Hutchinson.
- Pretty, J. (2002) *Agri-Culture: Reconnecting People, Land and Nature*, London: Earthscan.
- Smyth, P, Reddel, T. and Jones, A. (eds) (2005) *Community and Local Government in Australia*, Sydney: UNSW Press.
- Ward, N., and McNicholas, K. (1998) 'Reconfiguring rural development in the UK: Objective 5b and the new rural governance', *Journal of Rural Studies*, 14,1: 27-39.
- Welch, R. (2002) 'Legitimacy and rural local government in the new governance environment', *Journal of Rural Studies*, 18, 4: 443-459.
- Woods, P. (2003) 'Building on Weber to understand governance: exploring the links between identity, democracy and "inner distance"', *Sociology*, 37, 1: 143-163.
- Wright, E. (1979) *Class, Crisis and the State*, London: Verso.
- Yarwood, R. (2002) 'Parish councils, partnership and governance: the development of "exceptions" housing in the Malvern Hills District, England', *Journal of Rural Studies*, 18, 3: 275-291.