7 Continuity and change, 1982/3 to 1992/3

Aims and data sources

The first part of this chapter identifies some key community qualities, and methods for their measurement. The second examines variation in these qualities over the study period, for the whole survey population and for key subsets. The third section measures change in the pattern of shopping and business patronage of country towns over the same period, to determine to what extent the rural crisis has promoted divergence between the social and the economic organisation of rural space.

The chapter is based on the primary data collected from the two State-wide postal surveys of individual rural households of 1982/83 and 1992/93. The two surveys aimed to measure some important qualitative aspects of the communities with which respondents identified, as well as information (used in Chapter 5) needed to plot the spatial aspects of their normal social and shopping activities. The exact 1992/93 replication of the earlier survey allows the measurement of change in personal attitudes and community qualities over the crisis decade, and the extent of community resilience/collapse in the face of adversity.

Some important qualities of communities, and efforts to measure them.

In the present Chapter, the term 'community' is used as a generic term to describe the localised social group nominated as such by the respondents as the main focus of their social lives. Some of these are fully overlapped by the social catchment of a larger centre, and include many small places barely meriting the status of 'community' as defined in Chapter 4. Particularly in the more densely peopled rural areas, there is a degree of gradation between strong neighbourhoods and weak communities, and local people make no sharp distinction. Thus, for economy of description, the term community will be applied to all the groups named as such by the respondents.

There are many qualities pertaining to communities which can radically affect what it feels like to live in them, whether as a native or a newcomer - though the differences would probably be most felt by the newcomer. Although country people may to some extent share a common rural ethos, one could hardly expect all rural communities to be like so many peas in a pod in their social characteristics. There may be substantial variations in the qualities of localism, at either a narrow local or a regional scale. Some of these differences are relatively predictable and in rural Australia could be inferred simply from population size and spatial location relative to the capital city, in many cases reinforced by climate and population density differences - for example, total population size or occupational diversity. The importance of location relative to a major metropolis in the development of social processes over time has been dealt with theoretically by Lewis and Maund (1976) and demonstrated empirically in studies in the United Kingdom (Davies and Lewis, 1974; Lewis, 1979; Lewis and Maund 1979). Smailes et al. (2002) have demonstrated the important influence of population density in South Australia. These spatially predictable differences alone can make a large difference in the quality of life between the inner and outer communities.

The main focus of interest here, however, is on specifically *social* characteristics of communities, not intrinsically related to variables like accessibility and therefore much less predictable. The literature examined in the early 1980s when the postal questionnaire was designed suggested a number of such variables, which can have an enormous influence on what it is like to live a place. More recently, these variables have become subsumed by and incorporated into the concepts of community strength, and human and social capital (Black and Hughes, 2001; Cocklin and Alston, 2003), to be discussed in Chapter 9. For the present, they are treated as separate categories.

Satisfaction

Based on the pioneering work of Davies (1945) a large number of studies have attempted to measure community *satisfaction* - eg. Jesser (1967); Marans and Rogers (1975); Rojek, Clemente and Summers (1975); Bach and Smith (1977); Eicher et al. (1978); Schwebel et al. (1978). The degree of community satisfaction should primarily be regarded as an attribute of individuals rather than of the community itself, and as an outcome of other, more basic intrinsic qualities of one's community. An index of collective community satisfaction may however be derived from data on individual satisfaction.

Attachment

In a similar way, a collective index of *attachment* may be derived from the level of attachment of individual community members. Community attachment, or the shared feeling of group belonging, is a basic quality that attracted a good deal of attention in the literature (some of which has been reviewed earlier in Chapter 4 in relation to place-bonding mechanisms). Works which have attempted to measure this include Kasarda and Janowitz (1974), and Swenson (1978), while others have examined the correlation between degree of attachment and other variables such as population size (Buttel et al., 1979) and geographic mobility (Fernandez and Dillman, 1979).

Openness

Openness is primarily a quality of the community itself, expressing the extent to which newcomers and outsiders are admitted as members, and the time and difficulty involved in making the transformation – earning the (communally accepted) right to say 'we', and as the song from the musical 'Oliver' puts it, to "consider yourself one of us". An open community is receptive towards newcomers and open to ideas from the wider society, as opposed to insularity and non-acceptance. Closed communities, such as the Yorkshire one I grew up in, were very grudging of membership and quick to define outsiders staying in the village or nearby (tramps, London evacuees, prisoners of war, displaced persons) as 'other'.

Integration

The classic work of G.D. Mitchell (1950) proposed a twofold classification of rural communities, distinguishing on one dimension between 'open' and 'closed' types, with a second dimension ranging between 'integrated' and 'disintegrating' cutting across the first to give a two-by-two matrix of types. Communities are not homogenous groups of socially and economically equal individuals sharing common

interests, but always consist of subgroups – classes or factions recognised on lines of status, occupation, religion, sporting affiliations and the like. Integration expresses the degree to which the community is fragmented into disparate groups, and the degree to which such groups show mutual respect and acceptance. A time dimension was later added to Mitchell's model by Thorns (1968). These two dimensions of *openness* and *integration* have proved to be crucial variables in many studies, eg. Forsythe's study of the impact of colonisation of an Orkney island community by mainland 'urban refugees' (Forsythe, 1980). The concept of integration is closely allied to those of 'community solidarity' (Fessler, 1952) or 'neighbourhood cohesion' (Smith, 1975).

Fluidity and linkage

The concepts of integration and openness were developed and extended by Sismondo (1972) in a large-scale study of Canadian communities, in which the complementary concept of *'fluidity'* was added to that of integration. Fluidity expresses the degree of contact and interaction between the subgroups or factions, eg. through shared premises, joint functions, multi-faction membership of clubs and associations and the like. Thus fluidity is a process, of which integration is seen as an outcome. Similarly openness as an outcome is influenced by the process of *linkage.* Linkage is measured by the extent of the community's external as opposed to local, internal contacts, such as national versus local newspaper circulation, telephone traffic and the like.

Leadership

An even more elusive variable which perhaps more indirectly affects the quality of life in a community is the quality of *leadership* (Epps and Sorensen, 1996; Sorensen and Epps ,1996). This, however, is difficult to address adequately without substantial fieldwork.

Method of measurement

In many of the above-cited studies, the various concepts relating to the social qualities of communities overlap or are investigated in conjunction, and as measurement instruments some variety of Likert scaling of response to carefully selected statements has been used. The present work uses the same system. Some of the statements used to construct the five-point Likert scales were drawn from the literature - in particular several were drawn from the classic study of Fessler (1952, pp. 151-152) - but most were developed specifically for the 1982/3 postal survey. It was decided to concentrate on measuring openness, integration, attachment and satisfaction. In addition, there were two statements relating to leadership, one to local government (not used in the analysis), and one summary question asking directly how satisfied the respondent was with living in that local community. To prevent respondents yielding to the 'donkey-vote' syndrome, and encourage them to think carefully about each one, half of the statements were expressed in a positive way towards the community - eg. "everyone works together here to get things done", and the other half in a negative way - eg. "real friends are hard to find in this local community". The statements also appeared in random order. The *positive* statements were then scored 0,1,2,3,4 in sequence from strong disagreement (0) to strong agreement (4). The *negative* statements were scored inversely, i.e. 4,3,2,1,0 with 4 representing strong

disagreement and 0 strong agreement. Thus, in every case a score of 4 represented the most favourable attitude towards the community, and 0 the least favourable, allowing the individual statements to be averaged to form composite indices (with scores converted to unity). To give an accurate picture of changing attitudes over the rural crisis decade, the postal questionnaire for 1992/3 replicated the 1982/3 statements practically without change.

Perceptions of community qualities, 1982/83: averages for the whole State

The average score for the whole state on each of the indicator statements appears in Table 7.1, with the indicators ranked in sequence from the most favourable attitude towards the local community to the least favourable, as of the 1982/3 survey. The negative statements, where a high score represents *disagreement* with the statement, are marked **NEG**. The 0-4 raw scores have been converted to a scale from zero to unity. The main quality that each item was chosen to measure is shown in the 'Key' column. The table sums up an enormous amount of data on one page.

It should be noted that there was a generally favourable attitude in 1982/3 to most aspects of community life, with no indicator falling below 0.500 - the level which would indicate a majority negative attitude to that aspect of local community life. The most striking result is the very high level of community *attachment* shown. The four top ranking indicators were all initially chosen as indicators of attachment; they provide the only cases where the scores rise above 0.800. This result provides further confirmation of the importance to rural people of the local element of their social interaction, or the 'need for the local' discussed earlier. An interesting feature of the four attachment indicators is their internal ranking. In a provocative paper originally written in Swedish, Gunnar Olsson reflects on the nature of the emigrant's feelings of homesickness, and the nature of the lost attachments to place that produce the homesickness. Drawing on his own experience, he writes:

> I long for home: for Värmlands vale and the open log fire, rather than for words and open arms. My own childhood friends are lost in the mists of forgetfulness. But what I remember so well that I can feel it in my body, is the roundness of the stone that lay in my hand before I threw it, and the sharp-edged grass in which I hid when I was chased. Feelings of solitary silence and peaceful security perhaps are found more in the stability of physical objects from the past than in mental relations which constantly change with changing situations.
>
> (Olsson, 1978, p. 106 - my translation)

In contrast to Olsson's intense place bonding with the physical environment, one might intuitively expect that one's major attachment might be towards the people of the place rather than its physical nature: friends, family, childhood sweethearts, encounters, etc. But the results of Table 7.1 lend support to Olsson's experience: attachment to the place itself ranks first on the list with a score of .817, while attachment to the people of the community comes substantially behind, in fourth place with a score of .746.

Table 7.1 Change in average value and ranking of indicators of community qualities, 1982/3 to 1992/3

Indicator	Key	Pos./ Neg.	Mean 1982/3	Rank 1982/3	Mean 1992/3	Rank 1992/3	Change in rank
I feel attached to this place itself (landscape, scenery, sounds, smells, feel of the place etc.)	**A**		0.817	1	0.814	1	
I would be pleased to leave this local community for good	**A**	**NEG**	0.808	2	0.777	2	
I would rather live here than in any of the surrounding local communities	**A**		0.753	3	0.745	3	
I feel attached to the local community of people who live here	**A**		0.746	4	0.725	4	
If you are an ordinary worker, employers here won't associate with you socially	**I**	**NEG**	0.731	5	0.708	5	
It is safe for women and girls to walk around our local town at night	**S**		0.714	6	0.646	9	-3
I am happy with the State primary schooling here	**S**		0.706	7	0.623	11	-4
Real friends are hard to find in this local community	**O**	**NEG**	0.704	8	0.684	6	+2
An outsider setting up or taking over a business here would be just as welcome as a local person	**O**		0.675	9	0.617	14	-5
Religious grouping tends to split this local community socially	**I**	**NEG**	0.665	10	0.662	7	+3
Your social standing here depends on how much you earn	**I**	**NEG**	0.659	11	0.622	12	-1
You don't have to live here long before you get put on committees and positions of trust	**O**		0.656	12	0.636	10	+2
You have to belong to the right clubs and societies to get anywhere here	**I**	**NEG**	0.656	13	0.609	15	-2
You have to live here most of your life to be really accepted	**O**	**NEG**	0.647	14	0.573	19	-5
This would be a better place to live if the population was larger	**S**	**NEG**	0.645	15	0.648	8	+7
Everyone works together here to get things done	**I**		0.641	16	0.618	13	+3
Getting adequate medical help in case of illness is a worry here	**S**	**NEG**	0.638	17	0.596	18	-1
How long you have lived here doesn't affect your social status	**O**		0.636	18	0.599	16	+2
Compared with surrounding local communities, this one is well supplied with leaders who can get things done	**L**		0.622	19	0.596	17	+2
A few people have all the real power in this local community	**L**	**NEG**	0.605	20	0.523	21	-1
People here give you a hard time if you insist on being different	**O**	**NEG**	0.594	21	0.558	20	+1
There are no recognisable social classes in this local community	**I**		0.514	22	0.480	22	
General satisfaction level			0.819		0.701		

Source: Author's postal surveys of rural households, 1982/3 and 1992/3
Note: Indicators marked **NEG** in the Pos./Neg. column are scored inversely, so that a high score on that indicator shows strong ***disagreement*** with the statement. For the other indicators, a high score shows strong ***agreement*** with the statement.
Key to indicators: **A**: Attachment; **S**: Satisfaction; **O**: Openness; **I**: Integration; **L** Leadership indicator

A partial explanation may be variation among the respondents in their period of residence in the community: new arrivals may well develop an attachment to their physical surroundings well before they acquire (or are granted) the status of belonging. This question is examined further later.

The high degree of attachment to place shown by the results is matched by an equally high general level of satisfaction with rural life in the early 1980s. The average score (0.819) to the final question "In general terms, how satisfied are you with living in this local community?" exceeded even the strongest individual indicator of place attachment. To some extent, most of the 24 indicator statements reflect satisfaction or lack of satisfaction with particular aspects of the community. The indicators specifically selected to measure attitudes to four key aspects of community life - personal safety, education, medical care, and population size (as a general measure of economic threshold levels for business) - showed a higher level of satisfaction with the first two than with the second.

Six of the indicators were originally chosen to measure integration. An interesting and unexpected finding, at first sight paradoxical, is the very wide disparity of scores between two of these which were intuitively expected to be positively correlated. Thus respondents emphatically rejected the proposition that 'If you are an ordinary worker, employers here won't associate with you socially'. The strong rejection of this statement gave it the fifth-ranking score (0.731), exceeded only by the four indicators of attachment. Yet only a very narrow majority agreed with the statement that "There are no recognisable social classes in this local community", and this indicator had the lowest score of all (only 0.514). Not much more favourable (0.605) is the response to the item 'A few people have all the real power in this local community'. It would thus appear that while a large number of respondents recognised the existence of social classes in their communities, they felt that this did not inhibit social interaction across the class boundaries.

The indicators initially chosen to measure openness also show wide disparities in their average scores. At the top end of the spectrum, respondents quite strongly rejected the proposition that 'Real friends are hard to find in this local community' (average score 0.704) and almost as strongly supported the view that an outsider setting up a business would be just as welcome as a local person (0.675). On the other hand, many of them agreed that conformity to local norms was a condition of acceptance, supporting the proposition that 'People here give you a hard time if you insist on being different' (average score 0.594).

Changes in the indicators, 1982/3 to 1992/3

It must be remembered that the results quoted in Tables 6.1 and 6.2 are averages over the whole State, and may well conceal substantial variation both regionally and in accord with other variables such as age, period of residence and the like. These are examined later in this chapter. However, there is considerable interest in the overall strength of the indicators, their ranking and the change over time brought about by ten years of rural crisis conditions. In comparing the 1982/3 and 1992/3 results, the dominant impression is one of stubborn continuity rather than radical change. Nevertheless, there had been change. The general deterioration in quality of life in rural areas is marked by a quite substantial drop in the summary 'general satisfaction

level' index, which fell from .819 to .701. Also, the average score on every single indicator, bar one, fell slightly over the period. The one exception, discussed below, relates to the population of one's local community: in 1992/3, more people were satisfied with their current population level, and did not wish to see it increase. This is surprising in view of the severe population losses in much of the wheat belt, and suggests that there are likely to be sharp regional variations in the responses.

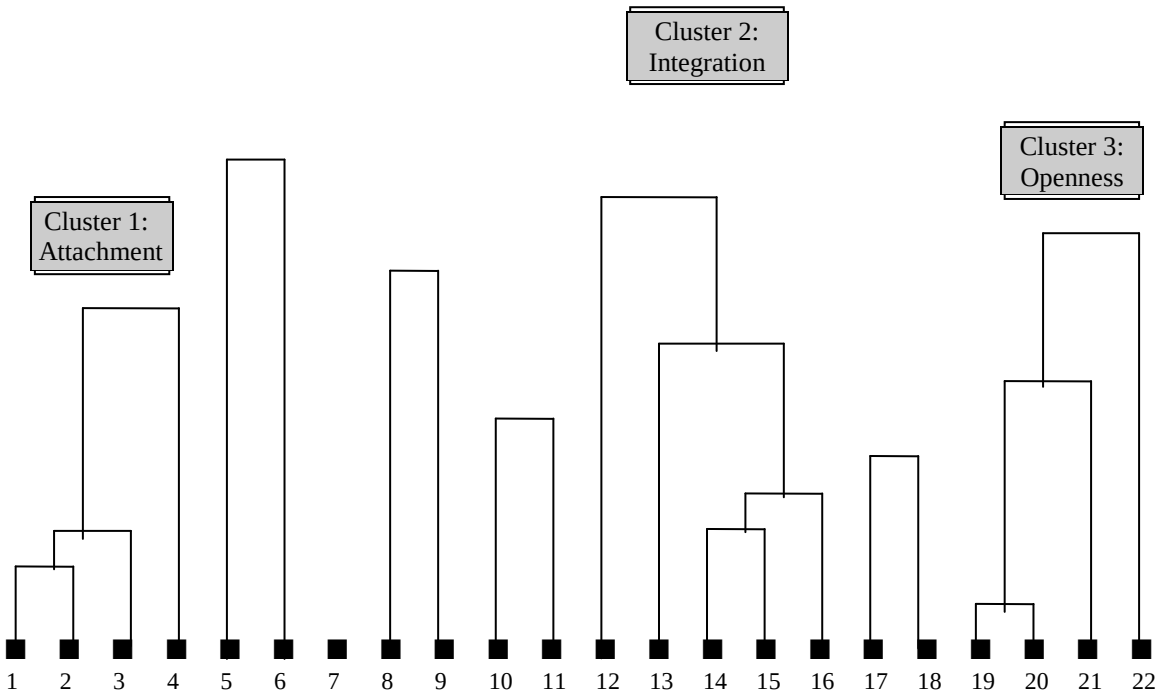
Despite these changes, which indicate a modest general decline in respondent perceptions of local community life, the most striking feature of the tables is the very limited extent of this decline, and the close similarity between the findings of two large surveys with quite independent samples. The changes in the indicator scores were small. The attachment of people to their communities remained very strong, with the top-ranking four indicators again being those relating to attachment. Of the 22 indicators listed on Table 7.1, the relative ranking of the top-scoring five indicators remained identical, and that of the bottom three showed minimal change. In the central part of the ranking order, items reflecting a relative deterioration in quality of community life (fall of more than one or two places in the ranking) were those relating to personal safety, quality of education, and acceptance of incomers. Those improving their relative ranking were reduced social divisions arising from religious grouping, and increased perception of everyone working together to get things done.

Cluster analysis of the indicators to produce composite indices

To avoid excessive detail, and the idiosyncrasies which may arise from examining the 22 indicators individually, it is necessary to combine them to represent the various dimensions of community life as economically as possible. Although selected to reflect openness, integration, leadership and satisfaction in community life, the wide within-group variations shown in Table 7.1 suggest that these may not be the most appropriate groupings. Some of the cue statements used - eg., "real friends are hard to find in this local community" could well overlap two or more of these dimensions. A cluster analysis was therefore performed on the 22 variables,[1] to discover whether the indicators clustered into more cohesive and easily interpretable groups, and how the membership of these groups compared with the intuitive *a priori* labelling of the indicators used in Table 7.1 The dendrogram below (Figure 7.1) shows the sequence in which the individual indicators joined their respective clusters, starting with 22 indicators, and stopping the grouping process when eight units remained. At this stage there were three major, cohesive clusters of variables, four minor 'clusters' each with just two members, and one single indicator that was weakly correlated with all the others, and therefore had not yet joined any cluster. The three major clusters were readily interpreted as 'Attachment', 'Integration' and 'Openness', but no clear 'Satisfaction' cluster emerged.

[1] Cluster analysis was preferred to factor analysis, for maximum directness and simplicity in interpreting the index values. A correlation coefficient matrix using Kendall's *tau* was first constructed for all 22 of the variables, for each of the two major studies. As would be expected, there are some variations in the *r* values between individual variable pairs in the 1982/3 and the 1992/3 matrices respectively, and for the grouping analysis the more recent 1992/3 data set was preferred. All but eight of the 231 1992/3 correlation pairs have positive coefficients, but the strength of the relationship varies greatly, from .005 to .462. Treating the (squared) coefficient matrix as a measure of distance between the indicators, the mainframe SAS procedure "Cluster" was used. Experiments with four clustering methods showed that the well-tried Ward minimum-variance method of measuring intra-cluster distances produced the clearest results.

Fig. 7.1 Dendrogram of cluster analysis of the 22 attitude indicators, 1992/93 postal survey, using Ward's minimum variance method. (n = 1113 respondents)



Indicators in the Attachment cluster:

1. "I would be pleased to leave this community for good" **(Neg)**
2. "I feel attached to this place itself (landscape, scenery, sounds, smells, feel of the place etc)"
3. "I feel attached to the local community of people who live here"
4. "I would rather live here than in any of the surrounding local communities"

Indicators in the Integration cluster:

12. "Religious grouping tends to split this community socially" **(Neg)**
13. "People here give you a hard time if you insist on being different" **(Neg)**
14. "You have to belong to the right clubs and societies to get anywhere here" **(Neg)**
15. "Real friends are hard to find in this local community" **(Neg)**
16. "A few people have all the real power in this local community" **(Neg)**

Indicators in the Openness cluster:

19. "You have to live here most of your life to be really accepted" **(Neg)**
20. "An outsider setting up or taking over a business here would be just as welcome as a local person"
21. "How long you have lived here doesn't affect your social status"
22. "You don't have to live here long before you get put on committees and positions of trust"

Note: For indicators marked "**(Neg)**", *disagreement* gives a high score. For other indicators, *agreement* gives a high score.

Source: SAS analysis of data from author's postal surveys, 1982/83 and 1992/93

The Attachment cluster was identical to the original labelling as listed on Table 7.1 (**O, I, S** etc.). The Openness cluster included just four of the original six '**O**' indicators; and the Integration cluster also took in three out of the six original '**I**' indicators, but added two others that were originally placed in other groups. For further analysis, it was decided to accept the new cluster groupings to produce the composite indices, relying on responses to the single summary statement for a 'Satisfaction' index. On Figure 7.1 it is noticeable, though quite possibly coincidental, that the Integration cluster is dominated by negatively framed statements (favourable attitude to community indicated by strong *dis*agreement with the statement) while the other two clusters are dominated by positively framed statements.

Repetition of the cluster analysis using the 1982/83 correlation matrix showed that the Attachment variables formed an identical strong cluster, and the Integration index included four of the five 1992/3 Integration variables; but no clearly separate Openness cluster was evident. It is evident from these results that *attachment* to one's community is a clear, consistent and easily measured variable, while *openness* and *integration* are strongly interrelated qualities - integration being somewhat more consistently traceable than openness, from the indicators used here. *Satisfaction* with different aspects of one's community may vary widely (eg., feelings of personal safety compared with the availability of medical help), and for this dimension I have relied on the single summary question "*In general terms, how satisfied are you with living in this local community?*". As a counterbalance allowing the maximum expression of negative views about rural life, I have also included an index of *dissatisfaction*, which gives the average score on the three variables which ranked lowest on Table 7.1, for both survey years.

Table 7.2. Changes in five composite indices of perceived quality of community life, 1982/3 to 1992/3

COMPOSITE INDEX	Mean value 1982/3	Std. deviation 1982/3		Mean value 1992/2	Std. deviation 1992/3
Attachment	.782	.163		.765	.172
Openness	.654	.172		.606	.181
Integration	.641	.182		.607	.184
Satisfaction	.821	.184		.702	.335
Dissatisfaction	.565	.192		.520	.198

Source: Author's postal surveys of rural households, 1982/3 and 1992/3. (The maximum possible value of each index is 1.000).

As would be expected from the change over time of the 22 individual items (Table 7.1), the composite indices made up from groupings of these items all show a fall in values over the 10-year period as the perception of local community life deteriorated. The least change occurred in *attachment* to one's local community, which remained almost as strong as ever, and the greatest change was the drop in overall *satisfaction* with the local community life. This contrast is not a paradox: one can well love one's home place without being happy with the way things are going there. The other major feature of Table 7.2 is the increase in the standard deviation of individual values about the mean - this occurs in all five indices, but in the case of the general satisfaction

index it almost doubled over the ten years. Clearly, the gap between rural people happy and unhappy with their lot has greatly widened in the study period.

Relationships between individual attributes and strength of attitude indices

To ensure a good return rate, the postal questionnaires were brief and requested a minimum of potentially sensitive personal information. Nevertheless, they allow testing of a number of hypotheses about the relationship between some key personal attributes of respondents, and their attitudes to their local community. It was hypothesised that respondents' attachment to, satisfaction with, and perceptions of the openness and integration of their communities, would be positively related to attributes 1-7 on the list below, and negatively related to attribute 8:

1. Having spent one's childhood in the community of present residence. From the discussion in Chapter 4, one would expect that spending one's formative years in a community would positively influence place-bonding to it.
2. Period of continuous residence in the community. Even independent of whether one was born and raised there, it was hypothesised that for most people, long immersion in a local subculture would increase identification with it.
3. Age in years. Other things being equal, it was hypothesised that older rural people would exhibit more conservative attitudes towards localism and rural life generally, as well as having knowledge and experience of the workings of local organisations and networks. Of course, attributes 1-3 are likely to be substantially interrelated.
4. House ownership. Many rural communities have a core population of long-term residents, and a floating population including both higher status 'spiralists' (Montague, 1981), workers on limited term contracts, and low-status seekers of cheap accommodation. It was hypothesised that those who had either inherited their house, or made a commitment to residence in their local community by buying a house there, would have more favourable attitudes to the community than those renting or leasing.
5. Type of property. The questionnaire distinguished between property types full-time farm, part time farm, house only and 'other'. It was hypothesised that the full-time farm population would be more conservative and more committed to their community than those with lesser investment there.
6. Remoteness from Adelaide. It has been demonstrated that the rural zone up to about two hours' driving time from Adelaide has been subject to heavy in-migration by people representing a wide range of social status groups, mostly from the metropolitan area (Smailes, 1996a). It was hypothesised that commitment to local community would be positively associated with a more socially homogeneous rural population at a greater distance from Adelaide.
7. Social involvement. For both newcomers and established residents, active participation in local social organisations frequently acts as a gateway into the local social structures (whether deliberately used as such or not). It was hypothesised that, independent of period of residence, attachment to and attitudes towards the local community will be positively associated with the number of local organisations of which the respondent is an active member.
8. Size of community (as indicated by the population size of the place on which the community centres). The degree of personal knowledge of, and commitment to, the local community was expected to be greatest in small to middle sized

communities, and to decline as population rises above about two to three thousand.

These hypotheses were tested by X^2, and the results appear in Tables 7.3 and 7.4. The results are ranked in order of average strength of the association between these variables and the composite Attachment, Openness, Integration and Satisfaction indices, first for the 1982/3 survey, then for 1992/3. The remoteness variable (respondent's reported average driving time to Adelaide) was not collected in the earlier survey, but for 1992/93 the very low values of X^2 in 1992/3 indicate a clear rejection of the hypothesis that attitudes to one's local community are related to distance from the metropolis.

All of the other hypotheses, however, were supported by significant X^2 results for at least one of the four indices. With large values of n, X^2 becomes statistically significant with relatively small differences between the observed and expected values, so for this analysis the significance level was set at .01 (instead of the usual .05).

Table 7.3 Relationships between attitudes to one's local community of identification and selected attributes of respondents, 1982/83.

	ATTACHMENT			OPENNESS			INTEGRATION			SATISFACTION		
INDEP. VARIABLE	Df	X^2	*p*	Df	X^2	*p*	Df	X^2	*p*	Df	X^2	*p*
Period of residence	15	72.5	**.001**	15	94.7	**.001**	15	43.9	**.001**	15	58.4	**.001**
Social involvement	9	47.5	**.001**	9	80.5	**.001**	9	52.7	**.001**	9	51.9	**.001**
Childhood residence	3	10.0	**.018**	3	39.7	**.001**	3	12.4	**.006**	3	11.4	**.010**
Age in years	15	24.9	.052	15	23.8	.068	15	30.9	**.009**	15	43.7	**.001**
House ownership	6	17.0	**.009**	6	20.9	**.002**	6	28.9	**.001**	6	8.4	.211
Type of property	6	13.3	.038	6	25.3	**.001**	6	14.6	.023	6	2.1	.914
Size of community	12	19.7	.073	12	15.0	.242	12	30.6	**.002**	12	9.1	.692
Remoteness	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

Source: Author's postal survey of rural households, 1982/83. (Relationships significant at the .01 level or better shown in bold type).

Table 7.4 Relationships between attitudes to one's local community of identification and selected attributes of respondents, 1992/93.

	ATTACHMENT			OPENNESS			INTEGRATION			SATISFACTION		
INDEP. VARIABLE	Df	X^2	*p*	Df	X^2	*p*	Df	X^2	*p*	Df	X^2	*p*
Period of residence	15	81.5	**.001**	15	91.1	**.001**	15	52.1	**.001**	15	44.0	**.001**
Age in years	15	42.1	**.001**	15	35.4	**.002**	15	36.5	**.002**	15	49.7	**.001**
Social involvement	9	24.2	**.004**	9	22.0	**.009**	9	34.8	**.001**	9	32.3	**.001**
House ownership	6	25.8	**.001**	6	21.4	**.002**	6	12.3	.055	6	14.2	.028
Childhood residence	3	25.3	**.001**	3	26.6	**.001**	3	5.9	.117	3	3.2	.358
Type of property	6	8.0	.239	6	42.8	**.001**	6	23.2	**.001**	6	5.8	.448
Size of community	12	21.2	.047	12	28.8	**.004**	12	28.4	**.005**	12	10.3	.593
Remoteness	15	12.3	.657	15	20.2	.164	15	22.3	.101	15	14.5	.489

Source: Author's postal survey of rural households, 1982/83. (Relationships significant at the .01 level or better shown in bold type).

The strongest support was for *Hypothesis 2* relating to period of residence, which was significant at the .001 level on all four indicators, for both years. This finding strongly confirms the writer's long-held feeling that period of residence (not collected in the Census) is likely to be a powerful variable affecting migration, shopping and other types of behaviour, as well as the function of the rural population as a reservoir of cultural traits.

Almost as strongly supported is *Hypothesis 7*, which relates the respondents' views on their community of residence to the degree of their current participation in community organisations. This hypothesis strongly confirms that active participation in clubs and associations is likely to increase one's feelings of attachment and satisfaction, as well as perceptions of the level of openness and integration of the community. However, the causality could readily go in either direction, and there may be a degree of tautology in this hypothesis.

Hypothesis 3 suggests that age of respondents will affect their attitudes. Results show that in the 1982/3 survey, age fails to show a statistically significant relationship with the attachment and openness indices, though it is strongly related to perceptions of integration and level of satisfaction. By 1992/3, age of respondent had become highly significantly related to all four indices. I would suggest that this change is completely consistent with the effects of the rural recession, discussed below.

Hypothesis 4, which suggests that established house owners are likely to have a more favourable view of their community than renters, was only slightly less strongly supported, the X^2 test failing to reach the .01 level of significance for the 1982/3 Satisfaction index, and for the Integration and Satisfaction indices in 1992/3.

The results which showed the greatest changes over the ten years related to *Hypothesis 1*. The expectation here was that having spent one's childhood years in the local community would give full rights of membership, strong place bonding and immunity from any perceived lack of openness or integration in the community that might be experienced by newcomers. In fact, while these expectations were borne out for all four indices in 1982/3, by 1992/3 they were no longer supported for the Integration index, and the relationship between childhood residence and the Satisfaction index in particular was no longer anywhere near statistical significance.

Hypothesis 5, relating to type of property, proved to be quite strongly supported with respect to the Openness and Integration indices, but type of property was only slightly related to the Attachment, and not at all to the Satisfaction, indices. This is readily understandable in that not only farmers, but very many people who own only a house block, or very small 'rural living' property may nevertheless be highly satisfied with and attached to their locality - eg. those who have retired from farms to small country towns, and those who have recently moved from the city to rural retreats or house blocks in the peri-urban area.

Smallness of community size (*Hypothesis 8*) is shown to be most strongly related to the Integration index; had the significance level been set at .05, it would have also related to Attachment, but not at all to community Satisfaction. Indeed, of all the indicators, the Satisfaction index shows the least relationship with the independent

variables, particularly in 1992/93. By 1992/93 respondents in the badly-affected areas had become acutely conscious of the shrinkage of their communities.

On comparison, the results for the two years, from two entirely different samples, are more remarkable for their continuity and similarity than for changes. Those changes which have occurred, however, may readily be understood in terms of, first, the severe impact of the rural recession on the long-term 'core' residential population, whether on farms or in the private service sector; and second, continuing but spatially selective counterurbanisation and the advent of 'urban refugees'. It has been shown elsewhere (Smailes 1996a, 1997; Ford, 1998) that the general out-migration and ageing of the residual population has been partly offset in a roughly two-hour driving range from Adelaide by in-migration of people mostly of metropolitan, interstate or overseas origin, augmented by some rural people displaced from further out. In the process, the retiree population has been less affected by the recession than those still in the workforce, and the younger generation on many farms has been driven to out-migration by the inability of family farms to support two generations of operators. Thus, for those remaining through the recession, to have spent one's childhood residence in a community still correlates strongly with *attachment* to that local community, but is no longer necessarily related to *satisfaction* with it. On the other hand, large numbers of recent ex-urban migrants to peri-urban areas may well feel a high degree of satisfaction with their new location and lifestyle, quickly become attached to it, and work hard to achieve a measure of integration with it.

In sum, results from Tables 7.3 and 7.4 show that perceptions of the degree of Openness and Integration are fairly strongly related to seven of the eight investigated independent variables, and these relationships have remained remarkably constant over the period of the recession. Attachment and Satisfaction are somewhat different. They were strongly related to period of residence, age of respondent and social involvement in both surveys. However, also in both surveys, Satisfaction was unrelated to house ownership, property type and size of community; and the strong relationship evident in 1982/3 between Satisfaction and childhood residence had disappeared by 1992/3. In evaluating these conclusions it is as well to note that relationships revealed by the X^2 tests are no more than *tendencies* to association, with very many individuals not conforming to the trends.

Spatial variation in community qualities

With the above background in general changes in people's views about their local community over *time* through the rural recession period, I now turn to the more specifically geographical focus of interest: do the modest changes in the index values over time mask significant contrasts over *space*? Were there regional differences in perceived community qualities already in 1982, and if so have these intensified or reduced over the crisis period? To test for spatial differences, both graphic (map) and statistical analyses are needed. Map analysis of responses to the 22 indicators is possible at four levels: a) the detailed level of individual respondent scores, or b) mean scores for respondents aggregated i) by three broad age-of-settlement zones described in Chapter 2; ii) by 17 informally recognised regions in the State's settled areas; and iii) by the individual communities of identification to which the elicited responses actually refer. In what follows, these levels are dealt with in the above order.

The spatial distribution of individual responses

GIS techniques allow the mapping of individual responses to each indicator of perceived community quality. Visual interpretation of such detailed mapping at so small a scale is difficult, and of limited value given the inevitable random mix of personal views of respondents. To avoid choking the narrative with a surfeit of detail, only the composite indices (not each individual item) have been mapped, and only a sample of the results is included (Appendix 5, Figures App 5.1 and App 5.2). These show the highest- and lowest-scoring indices (Attachment and Integration respectively) for 1982/3. The lack of clear visual patterns in the mapping of each individual respondent's attachment, integration, openness and satisfaction indices suggests that regional variations in attitudes towards the local community are not particularly marked. However, inevitable complexity in the picture at this level may mask zonal, regional or inter-community variation in the mean strength of attitudes.

Spatial variations by settlement zone

To test this possibility, the respondents were first grouped according to the three settlement zones (oldest, intermediate and newest age of European settlement) as defined in Chapter 2, Figure 2.2. Prior to the rural recession, the peri-urban counterurbanisation movement of the 1970s, together with slow attrition in the rural heartland, had already developed a concentric pattern of demographic change in South Australia (Hugo and Smailes 1992; Smailes 1996a). The previous chapter has demonstrated this pattern, and shown how the rural crisis forced the pace of this change, reinforcing the contrast between the three zones of early, intermediate and late white settlement outlined in Chapter 1.

For these broad zones, the mean score averaged over *all* of the 22 variables (labelled GENSCORE) was first examined. Results (not tabulated) showed that the individual zones diverged remarkably little from the total survey mean in 1982/83. By 1992/93 there was a somewhat greater spread of mean GENSCORE values between the zones, but not enough for statistically significant difference from the total survey mean. We must therefore conclude that at this level of aggregation, the mix of respondents is too varied to show up any notable difference from the GENSCORE response of the whole study area.

Setting GENSCORE aside, the zonal aggregation was also tested for more specific differences in the four key indices. It was hypothesised that

1. in the inner rural zone, the lifestyle motivation of much of the in-migrant population would be reflected in high and possibly slightly increasing levels of community satisfaction and attachment;
2. the increasing mixing and heterogeneity of population might be expected to generally reduce openness and integration in the inner zone, though this was likely to differ substantially between communities depending on the amount and rate of in-migration.
3. In the outer rural zone, where the effects of the recession had been more severe and much less offset by exogenous in-migration, it was hypothesised that while attachment, openness and integration were all likely to have remained relatively high, community satisfaction was likely to have been substantially reduced.

To test these hypotheses, indices of attachment, satisfaction, integration and openness were calculated for each zone. (Table 7.5) The maximum possible value of the scores is unity.

Table 7.5 Change 1982/3 to 1992/3 in four key indices, by age of settlement zone

Zone	Year	ATTACHMENT		SATISFACTION		INTEGRATION		OPENNESS	
		mean	SD	mean	SD	mean	SD	mean	SD
Old core	1982	.794	.217	.831	.170	.652	.260	.645	.243
(pre-1868)	1992	**.758**	.250	***.685***	.343	***.595***	.270	***.588***	.260
Intermed.	1982	.780	.223	.814	.199	.634	.269	.649	.247
(1869-94)	1992	**.740**	.258	***.720***	.328	.618	.270	.618	.253
Recent	1982	.763	.222	.807	.174	.647	.259	.687	.238
(post-1898)	1992	**.718**	.268	***.678***	.333	.615	.265	***.623***	.250

Source: author's postal surveys, 1982/83 and 1992/93
Note: 1992/93 figures in **BOLD** type indicate a statistically significant change in mean values for that index between 1982/83 and 1992/93 ($p < .05$). Bold ***ITALICS*** indicate ($p < .01$).

Again the results show a large degree of consistency in trends over time across the zones. For every index, and for every zone, the mean scores fell between 1982/83 and 1992/93; also in every case the standard deviations increased, showing an increased divergence of views among respondents on the quality of community life. In nine out of the twelve cases, including the attachment and satisfaction indices for all three zones, Table 7.5 shows that the changes over time in the key indices were significant at the .05 level or stronger. It must always be remembered, though, that even after the falls noted here, the indices in general remained remarkably high in 1992/93.

While the differences over time were marked, the differences over space between the three zones were very muted. In 1992/93, there was no significant difference, for any of the four indices, between the zonal mean and the total survey mean, while in the earlier year there was only one such case – the outermost settlement zone showing significantly higher openness.

In relation to the hypotheses above, hypothesis 1 is partly supported in that the inner core zone had the highest values in all four indices in 1982/83, but the expectation that satisfaction and attachment would rise over time was not fulfilled. Indeed, satisfaction in the inner zone fell more sharply than anywhere else.

Hypothesis 2 is supported: the inner zone's integration and openness indices fell well behind the other two zones by 1992/93. In fact this inner zone was the only one that suffered significant falls in all four indices, while the falls were least in the intermediate zone.

Hypothesis 3 is only partly supported. Satisfaction certainly fell significantly in the outer zone, but so did attachment and openness.

The broad settlement zones thus partake of the general trends over time, but fail to show major spatial differences at either point in time at this level of aggregation. The

zones are somewhat segmented, however – for example, Zone 1 includes parts of the Southeast and lower Eyre Peninsula as well as the metropolitan fringe. To examine more cohesive segments, I turn to the regional level. For a map identifying regional names, see the fold-out map at p.317.

Spatial variations at the regional level

The regions are defined by grouping the communities of identification according to the location coding system used in the survey, which is based on subdivisions of postcodes. Seventeen regional groupings are used, based on regional terminology widely used by the public (Tables 7.6 and 7.7). The regions are listed in descending order of their average score on all 22 indicators, first for 1982/3 and then for 1992/3. Regions with mean values significantly ($p < .05$) above or below the mean for the whole survey are shown in **bold** type.

As expected, at this scale of resolution some significant differences between regions do emerge, but these differences are still not great. In 1982/83 the scores ranged only from a high of .717 in Lower Eyre Peninsula to a low of .650 in the Upper Murray. Only two regions had means differing significantly from the population mean. Nevertheless, there is much of interest in the relative ranking of the regions. 1982 was a severe general drought year, very badly affecting particularly the northern margins of the wheat belt. Even so, in 1982/83 among the wheat belt regions only the Yorke Peninsula and West Coast are below the population mean, while the Upper North, Mid North, Murray Mallee and Eastern Eyre Peninsula are all above it. The rural recession proper had not yet begun; the higher rainfall zone was less affected by the 1982 drought, and indeed Kangaroo Island and Lower Eyre Peninsula were experiencing a mini-boom from the then high wool prices. Thus the differences in the way people perceived their local community in the 1982/3 survey are likely to be only modestly affected by the vagaries of the rural economy.

The levels of in-migration to the more accessible regions during the 1970s may well have affected the average scores, through conflict between the established and the newcomer populations. Particularly striking is the very low position of the Barossa Valley, which has had the reputation of being a rather conservative and socially closed region. Also, the qualitative data from both surveys suggest that it may not be co-incidental that several of the regions at the low end of the ranking have substantial Aboriginal populations (West Coast, Lower Murray, Upper Murray). This may have influenced responses on indicators relating to integration, presence of social classes etc. The Upper Murray also has a considerable element of ethnic minority groups on the irrigation fruit-growing blocks.

By 1992/93, the trends noted above had intensified. The mean scores were lower in every single region, the gap between the highest and lowest means had increased, and three regions now had means significantly *below* the population mean - Lower Murray, Upper Murray, and Barossa Valley (now at the very bottom of the ranking). Despite the ravages of the rural recession, by 1992/93 there was an even greater tendency for the wheat/sheep belt and high-rainfall pastoral regions to cluster in the top half of the table, and the accessible areas of general in-migration to be in the bottom half.

Table 7.6 Mean score on 22 indicators of quality of community life, by region: 1982/83

Rank	Region	n	Mean	Std. Dev.	z
1	Lower Eyre Peninsula	**37**	**.717**	**.106**	**2.56**
2	Lower North	**56**	**.703**	**.111**	**2.06**
3	Kangaroo Island	24	.708	.106	1.66
4	Murray Mallee	54	.680	.100	0.57
5	Eastern Eyre Peninsula	25	.689	.155	0.56
6	Mid North	74	.677	.133	0.36
7	Metropolitan fringe	30	.677	.109	0.28
8	Upper North	40	.677	.126	0.25
9	Upper Southeast	47	.673	.136	0.06
10	Fleurieu Peninsula	66	.672	.123	0.02
11	Central Adelaide Hills	93	.671	.109	-0.05
12	Yorke Peninsula	90	.667	.141	-0.29
13	Lower Southeast	128	.666	.108	-0.55
14	West Coast	19	.657	.104	-0.62
15	Lower Murray	66	.649	.136	-1.31
16	Barossa Valley	67	.647	.127	-1.55
17	Upper Murray	94	.650	.121	-1.68
	Whole survey	1070	.672	.122	0.00

Table 7.7 Mean score on 22 indicators of quality of community life, by region: 1992/93

Rank	Region	n	Mean	Std. Dev.	z	Change in rank
1	Eastern Eyre Peninsula	**56**	**.687**	**.107**	**3.28**	**+4**
2	Mid North	**72**	**.674**	**.118**	**2.50**	**+4**
3	Kangaroo Island	22	.677	.101	1.79	
4	Upper North	48	.665	.108	1.68	+4
5	Murray Mallee	34	.671	.149	1.27	
6	Lower Southeast	152	.648	.124	0.88	+7
7	Lower Eyre Peninsula	43	.650	.127	0.57	-6
8	Central Adelaide Hills	75	.644	.099	0.43	+3
9	West Coast	35	.646	.108	0.40	+5
10	Metropolitan fringe	29	.634	.124	-0.17	-3
11	Lower North	65	.630	.145	-0.44	-9
12	Yorke Peninsula	80	.629	.167	-0.47	
13	Upper Southeast	41	.625	.157	-0.54	-4
14	Fleurieu Peninsula	60	.629	.106	-0.63	-4
15	Lower Murray	**65**	**.604**	**.130**	**-2.07**	
16	Upper Murray	**138**	**.612**	**.113**	**-2.52**	
17	Barossa Valley	**92**	**.600**	**.122**	**-2.85**	
	Whole survey	1113	.638	.123	0.00	

Source: (both Tables) Author's postal surveys, 1982/83 and 1992/93. Regional means significantly above or below the total survey mean at the .05 level or better are shown in **bold** type.

The regional differences noted above for the average scores on all 22 indicators may be amplified when the various indices are examined separately. To examine this possibility, Tables 7.8 and 7.9 set out the results for the Attachment, Openness, Integration and Satisfaction indices by region, for 1982/83 and 1992/93 respectively.

This comparison shows that in 1982/83 there was very little systematic regional difference in the values of the four indices. Only in the case of the index of Openness was there a fairly wide variation, with Lower Eyre Peninsula and the Murray Mallee as the most 'open' regions, significantly higher than the population mean, while at the other extreme the Central Adelaide Hills and the Fleurieu Peninsula fell significantly below it. The other three indices had very narrow ranges between the highest and lowest ranking region, with only one other case (Lower Eyre Peninsula on the Attachment index) departing significantly from the population mean. The index of overall satisfaction with the local community was very high across all the seventeen regions.

Table 7.8 Indices of opinions about one's local community, by region, 1982/83

ATTACHMENT		OPENNESS		INTEGRATION		SATISFACTION	
Lower Eyre Pen	**.840**	**Lower Eyre Pen**	**.771**	Lower Eyre Pen.	.673	Lower Eyre Pen.	.856
Fleurieu Peninsul	.815	**Murray Mallee**	**.707**	Eastern Eyre Pen	.673	Fleurieu Peninsul	.846
Kangaroo Island	.813	Kangaroo Island	.695	Metro. fringe	.671	Metro. fringe	.844
Eastern Eyre Pen	.804	West Coast	.693	Kangaroo Island	.666	Lower Southeast	.835
Lower Southeast	.803	Lower North	.690	Lower North	.665	Kangaroo Island	.833
Upper North	.797	Eastern Eyre Pen	.672	Murray Mallee	.665	Central Ad. Hills	.831
Mid North	.790	Upper North	.668	Lower Southeast	.652	Eastern Eyre Pen	.830
Barossa Valley	.785	Mid North	.661	Mid North	.648	Barossa Valley	.829
Central Ad. Hills	.785	Upper Southeast	.659	Central Ad. Hills	.646	Mid North	.825
Lower North	.778	Lower Murray	.656	Fleurieu Peninsul	.634	Upper North	.819
Yorke Peninsula	.778	Metro. fringe	.653	Lower Murray	.633	Yorke Peninsula	.818
Metro. fringe	.764	Lower Southeast	.652	Upper North	.628	Lower North	.812
Murray Mallee	.760	Yorke Peninsula	.647	Upper Murray	.627	Upper Murray	.811
Lower Murray	.760	Upper Murray	.637	Upper Southeast	.625	Murray Mallee	.807
Upper Murray	.753	Barossa Valley	.630	West Coast	.622	Upper Southeast	.787
West Coast	.750	***Central Ad. Hills***	***.607***	Yorke Peninsula	.617	Lower Murray	.780
Upper Southeast	.742	***Fleurieu Penins.***	***.598***	Barossa Valley	.595	West Coast	.772
Total survey	.782	Total survey	.654	Total survey	.641	Total survey	.820

Source: Author's postal survey, 1982/83. Regional means that differ from the population mean at the .05 level of significance are shown in **bold** type. Those significantly below the population mean are shown in ***italics***.

By 1992/93, with very few exceptions, the mean values had dropped for all indices and in all regions - most sharply in the case of the Satisfaction index. The only three cases where regional index values actually rose were Kangaroo Island and the Upper North (Integration index) and the Upper North again on the Openness index. While the difference between the extremes had narrowed in the case of the Openness index, it had widened sharply on the Satisfaction index, which now had two regions significantly above, and two significantly below, the population mean for that index.

Table 7.9 Indices of opinions about one's local community, by region, 1992/93

ATTACHMENT		OPENNESS		INTEGRATION		SATISFACTION	
Mid North	**.817**	**Upper North**	**.672**	**Eastrn Eyre Pen**	**.674**	**Eastrn Eyre Pen**	**.825**
West Coast	.805	Murray Mallee	.670	Kangaroo Island	.668	Upper North *	.769
Eastern Eyre Pen	.799	Eastern Eyre Pen	.661	Mid North	.646	**Lower Southeast**	**.768**
Yorke Peninsula	.792	Lower Eyre Pen	.661	West Coast	.644	Kangaroo Island	.739
Upper North	.776	West Coast	.645	Upper North	.639	Fleurieu Penins.	.730
Lower Southeast	.775	Mid North	.631	Murray Mallee	.628	Mid North	.710
Central Ad. Hills	.774	Kangaroo Island	.622	Lower Southeast	.623	Lower Eyre Pen	.704
Upper Murray	.761	Lower North	.616	Central Ad. Hills	.616	Central Ad. Hills	.703
Lower Eyre Pen	.754	Lower Southeast	.608	Lower Eyre Pen	.611	Barossa Valley	.699
Murray Mallee	.754	Upper Southeast	.595	Metro. fringe	.603	Metro. fringe	.697
Lower North	.740	Yorke Peninsula	.594	Fleurieu Penins.	.594	Yorke Peninsula	.688
Kangaroo Island	.739	Central Ad. Hills	.593	Upper Southeast	.591	Murray Mallee	.686
Metro. fringe	.736	Upper Murray	.587	Yorke Peninsula	.591	Upper Murray	.686
Barossa Valley	.731	Lower Murray	.585	Upper Murray	.586	Lower North	.640
Fleurieu Penins.	.730	Metro. fringe	.577	Lower North	.575	Upper Southeast	.625
Lower Murray	.728	Fleurieu Penins.	.574	Lower Murray	.572	***West Coast***	***.579***
Upper Southeast	.713	***Barossa Valley***	***.538***	***Barossa Valley***	***.539***	***Lower Murray***	***.575***
Total survey	.765	Total survey	.606	Total survey	.607	Total survey	.702

Source: Author's postal survey, 1982/83. Regional means that differ from the population mean at the .05 level of significance are shown in **bold** type. Those significantly below the population mean are shown in ***italics***.

* Does not meet .05 significance criterion, due to variation in values of n and σ as compared with Lower Southeast.

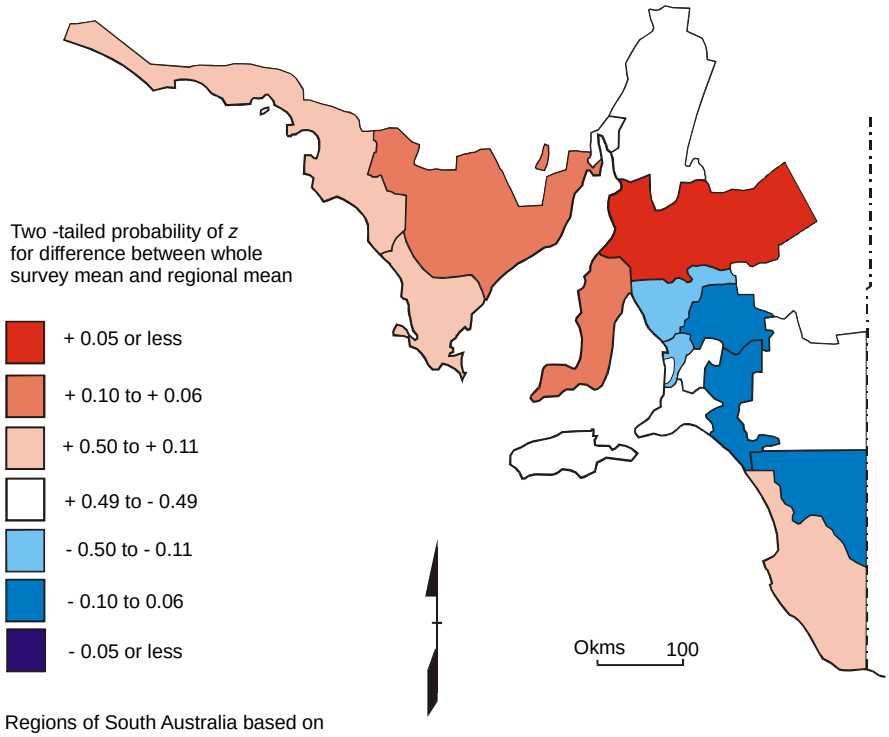
To help summarise the impact of the rural crisis at the regional level, Table 7.10 presents the correlation matrices between the four indices for 1982/3 and 1992/3. Clearly, at the start of the period, there was a very strong correlation between one's attachment to one's local community, and satisfaction with life there. By 1992/93, this link had been greatly weakened, but the correlations between attachment and both openness and integration had strengthened. This may be interpreted as an affirmation of the links between *attachment* to community and the traditionally prized qualities of rural life, despite the sharp reduction (already noted above) of *satisfaction* with it. The links between the perceived openness and integration of one's community actually strengthened considerably over the period, and further investigation (not tabulated) showed that there was also a strong positive correlation between *change* in these two variables over the ten years.

Table 7.10 Correlations between the four indices, 1982/3 and 1992/3, by region.

1982/83						1992/93				
	Attach	Open	Integr.	Satisf.			Attach	Open	Integr.	Satisf.
Attachmnt	1.00	0.24	0.38	0.80		Attachmnt	1.00	0.50	0.59	0.28
Openness		1.00	0.51	-0.01		Openness		1.00	0.74	0.25
Integratn			1.00	0.42		Integratn			1.00	0.48
Satisfactn				1.00		Satisfactn				1.00

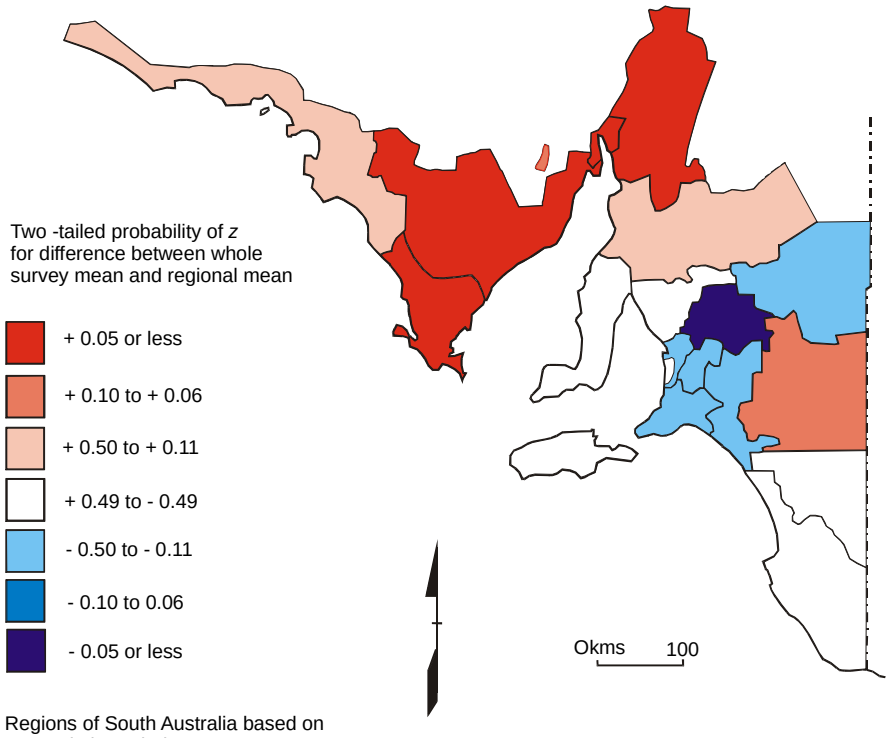
Source: Author's postal surveys, 1982/83 and 1992/93.

Fig. 7.2 Regional variations in the mean Index of Attachment, 1992/93



Source: (Figures 7.2 to 7.6) Author's postal survey, 1992/93

Fig. 7.3 Regional variations in the mean Index of Openness, 1992/93



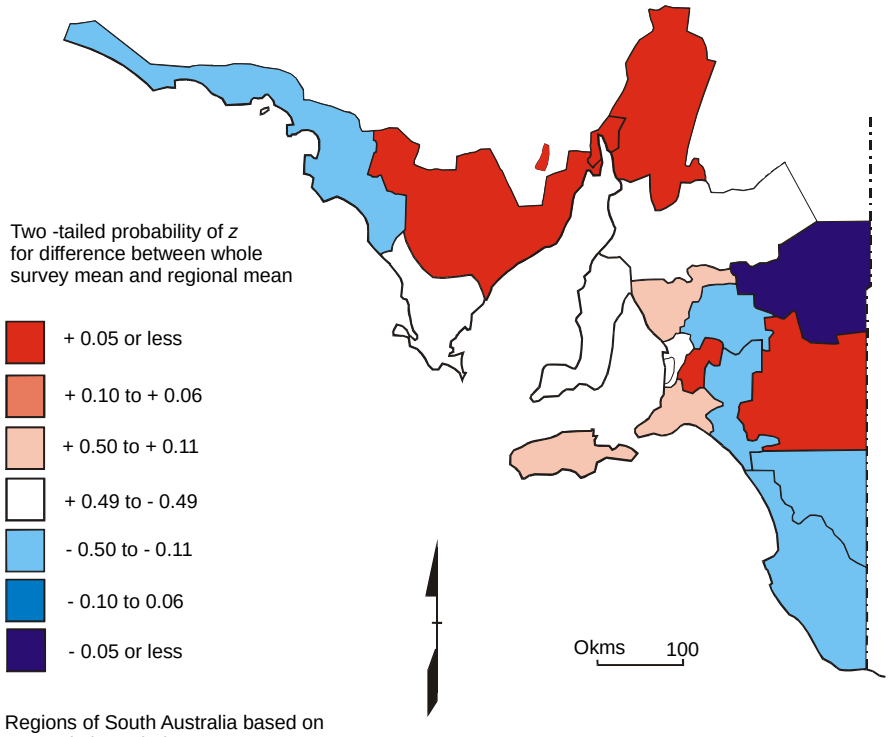
To assist in visualising the spatial patterning of these regional differences, particularly for readers unfamiliar with South Australia, some selected spatial distributions are presented in map form. The map of each index shows the difference between regions in the form of *z*-scores – that is, the extent to which each region differs from the mean for the whole study area for that particular index. Only if *z* reaches *.05 or below* is a region significantly different from the mean.

I concentrate on the situation as at 1992/93. Although the Attachment index for that year has only one region (the Mid North) that differs significantly from the population mean, Figure 7.2 suggests an emerging trend towards lower scores in the more easily accessible regions, with the higher scores in the remoter and more uniformly 'rural' areas. Much the same pattern, with slight variation, is shown by the (strongly correlated) Openness and Integration indices. Figure 7.3 shows the pattern for the Openness index, in which the above tendency is clearer and more accentuated. In 1982/83 generally high levels of all the indices (satisfaction, attachment, openness and integration) were found across the State with little regional variation, but by 1992/93 the evidence suggests that this traditional pattern was beginning to change through the loss of strongly locally oriented rural-born people, plus in-migration of exogenous, mostly metropolitan, people in the more accessible or desirable areas.

To supplement this general picture, the regional pattern in the responses to a few individual items among the 22 indicators may be useful. The response ranking lowest in both survey years was that to the statement 'There are no recognisable social classes in this local community'. Respondents who *disagreed* almost formed a majority. Was this consciousness of classes spatially uneven? The results (Figure 7.4) provide some mild surprises. In local folklore the Southeast, and sometimes the Barossa Valley, are thought of as somewhat class conscious, but the evidence bears this out to only a mild degree. The Upper Murray average response, however, shows a highly significant tendency to recognise social classes. The unexpectedly strong feeling of the absence of marked social classes in the Central Adelaide Hills, and to a lesser extent in the Fleurieu Peninsula is a surprise (which caused me to check the data) in view of the mixing of population which has gone on there.

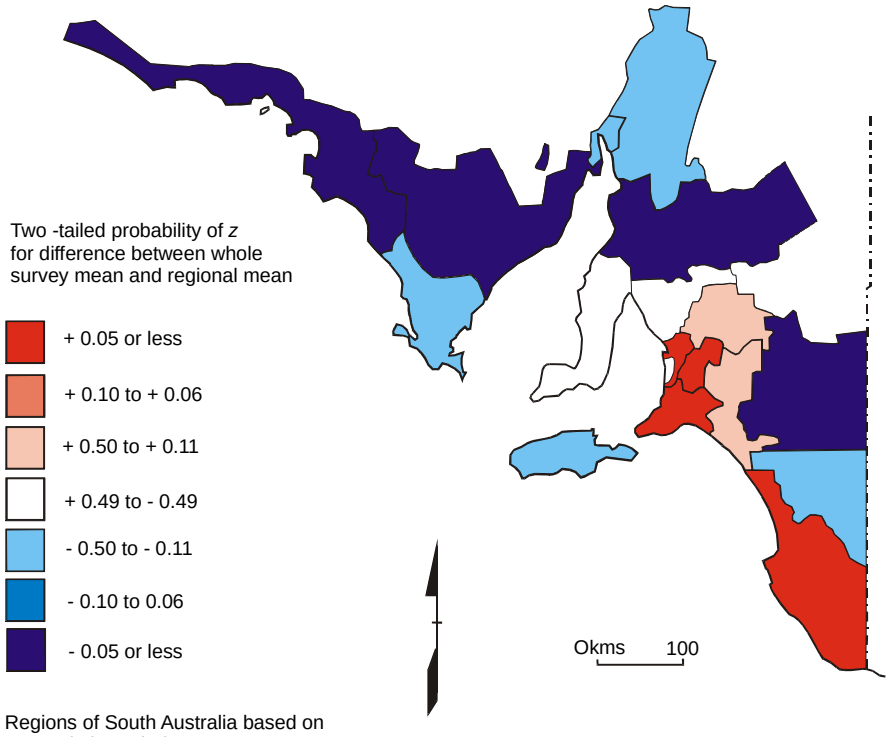
As mentioned earlier, the only one of the 22 indicators to show an *increase* (albeit a very small one) between 1982/83 and 1992/93 was satisfaction with the population size of one's local community - a surprising outcome in view of the heavy population losses shown in Chapter 6. However, a glance at Figure 7.5 shows that, as suspected, this small overall increase conceals very sharp and consistent regional differences. The cue statement was "This would be a better place to live if the population was larger". Those who *agree* are expressing dissatisfaction with their community's small population, and appear as negative values on Figure 7.5. Strongly negative values occupy almost the whole wheat/sheep belt. On the other hand, strongly positive values reflect the view that the population in the local community is already big enough, no more people are wanted: an attitude typical of the 'drawbridge mentality' of recently arrived rural retreaters in the central Adelaide Hills and Fleurieu Peninsula, and also of the less drought- and recession-affected Southeast. Intermediate positions are occupied by other regions of relatively high population density and/or attractions for retirement migration - the Riverland, Yorke Peninsula with its many coastal holiday/retirement colonies, and a ring around the outer edge, or rather less attractive northern sector, of Adelaide's commuting field.

Fig. 7.4 Regional variations in consciousness of social classes in one's local Community, 1992/93



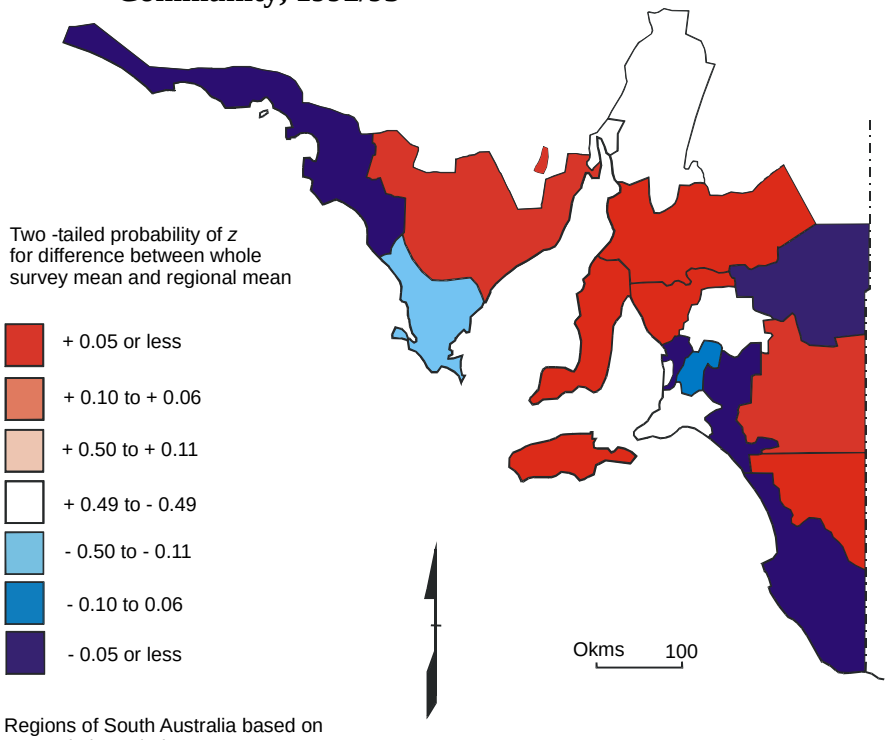
(Mean score in response to cue statement "There are no recognisable social classes in this local community")

Fig. 7.5 Regional variations in satisfaction with size (population) of one's local Community, 1992/93



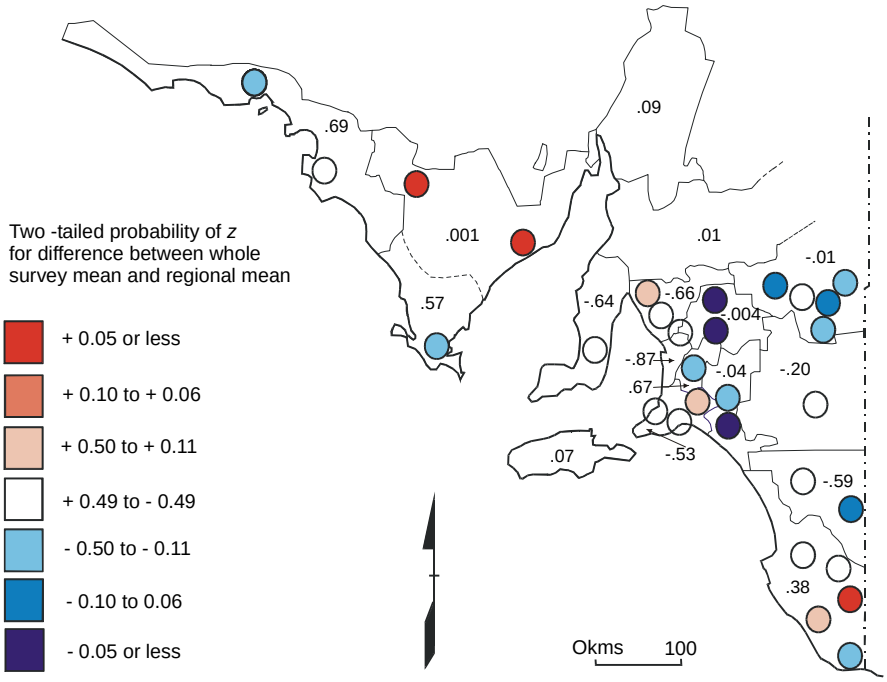
(Mean score in response to cue statement "This would be a better place to live if the population was larger")

Fig. 7.6 Regional variations in sense of personal security in one's local Community, 1992/93



(Mean score in response to cue statement "It is safe for women and girls to walk around our local town at night")

Fig. 7.7 Regional variations in mean score on all 22 indicators of attitude to one's individual local community (larger communities only) 1992/93



One further proposition that shows particularly sharp regional contrasts is the perception of personal safety and freedom from fear of violent crime (Figure 7.6). Here no less than eleven of the seventeen regional mean scores differ significantly from the population mean, and the positive deviations are found solidly in the rural heartland of the wheat/sheep belt plus Kangaroo Island. The significantly negative mean scores are found in those regions close to or including major towns, and/or having a substantial itinerant or unemployed - often Aboriginal - population element. Although the State's second largest city (Whyalla) may appear to contradict this, it is an isolated urban 'island' that lies in an almost empty expanse of saltbush; practically no rural respondents to the survey identified it as the focus of their local community. Such isolation applies to a lesser extent to Port Augusta, which is closer to the more populated rural areas of the Flinders Ranges on its eastern side.

Variations at the individual community level

The above discussion deals with trends of a regional nature, where substantial numbers of adjacent communities appear to share similar qualities in the perception of their residents. In many cases, though, such qualities might be expected to vary substantially from community to community - perhaps quite unpredictably, even between neighbouring communities. After all, the responses to the indicator statements apply specifically to one's own particular community, not to a whole region. Because the subcultures, social dynamics and prestige class makeup of individual communities can differ substantially, highly local differences in attachment, satisfaction, openness and integration may be expected to be superimposed on any broad regional differences. In so far as the data limitations allow, I now turn to the hypothesis that *intra*-regional variations in perceived community qualities will be more pronounced than the broad inter-regional variations discussed above.

The testing of this hypothesis is limited chiefly by the fact that primary social allegiance in South Australia is fragmented among so very many, very small communities that there are too few respondents per community to calculate meaningful average scores. An arbitrary decision was made to limit this analysis to communities nominated by at least ten respondents as their primary centre of social activity. There were 21 such communities in 1982/83, 26 in 1992/93, and of these only 15 met the minimum criterion in both years.[2] Most (not all) of these naturally focus on the larger country towns, and may differ systematically from smaller places in their scores on the various attitude indices. Even ten respondents per community is too small a number to obtain a reliable average for disaggregation into openness, integration etc. indices.

The individual community data are examined only for the mean score on all 22 indicators together, (GENSCORE) along with the responses to the overall summary indicator of satisfaction ("In general terms, how satisfied are you with living in this local community?", termed SATIS). (Table 7.11).

[2]These were: Gawler, Victor Harbor, Murray Bridge, Strathalbyn, Bordertown, Naracoorte, Lucindale, Millicent, Mount Gambier, Waikerie, Loxton, Renmark, Minlaton, Port Lincoln and Wudinna.

Table 7.11 Average scores on the satisfaction index (SATIS) and mean score on all 22 indicators of quality of community life (GENSCORE), by individual communities: 1982/83 and 1992/93.

	n	GENSCORE 1982/83 Mean	SATIS 1982/83 Mean		n	GENSCORE 1992/93 Mean	SATIS 1992/93 Mean
Balaklava	15	0.683	0.809				
Cleve	12	0.681	0.846				
Keith	14	0.722	0.839				
Kingston	10	0.700	***0.750***				
Maitland	12	0.655	0.808				
Mt. Barker	10	0.658	0.825				
Pt. Pirie	13	0.657	0.768				
Yankalilla	10	0.707	**0.900**				
Bordertown	18	0.621	0.790		14	0.563	0.554
Gawler	10	0.698	0.825		24	0.637	0.656
Loxton	24	0.688	0.780		21	0.622	0.655
Lucindale	10	0.664	0.841		16	0.656	**0.891**
Mannum	11	0.683	0.841		11	0.611	0.523
Millicent	20	0.652	0.850		23	0.663	0.804
Minlaton	12	0.653	0.813		14	0.631	0.661
Mt. Gambier	29	0.662	0.854		47	0.607	0.750
Murray Bridge	28	***0.604***	***0.732***		31	***0.534***	0.605
Naracoorte	24	0.653	0.870		24	0.649	0.700
Pt. Lincoln	11	0.727	0.846		11	0.564	0.656
Renmark	13	0.666	0.808		24	0.619	0.656
Strathalbyn	12	0.642	0.813		13	0.664	0.731
Victor Harbor	14	0.631	0.804		14	0.672	0.846
Waikerie	31	0.643	0.858		34	0.597	0.750
Wudinna	15	0.702	0.783		12	**0.740**	**0.938**
Barmera					16	0.629	0.625
Berri					23	0.596	0.631
Ceduna					10	0.608	0.550
Eudunda					18	***0.552***	0.639
Karoonda					12	0.673	0.659
Nuriootpa					16	***0.558***	0.610
Penola					12	**0.713**	**0.917**
Pt. Augusta					16	0.596	0.766
Streaky Bay					10	0.643	0.550
Two Wells					15	0.633	0.650
Total survey	1070	0.672	0.820		1113	0.638	0.702

Source: Author's postal surveys, 1982/83 and 1992/93. Community means significantly above the total survey mean at the .05 level or better are shown in **bold type**, those significantly below the total survey mean are shown in ***bold italics***.

The results for the 1982/3 survey show very little tendency for means of the individual communities to differ sharply from either the means for the total population, or from the regions in which they are set. For GENSCORE, among the 21 qualifying communities only one (Murray Bridge) fell below the population mean

at the .05 level of probability, and none rose above it at that level. For SATIS, one other community (Kingston S.E.) fell significantly below the population mean, while only Yankalilla rose above it.

By 1992/93, the individual community scores had diverged somewhat more from the population means, and the results for GENSCORE appears on Figure 7.7, superimposed on the regional values for the same variables. It must be remembered that in absolute terms, the general attitudes expressed towards rural life still remained high in 1992/93, even though satisfaction had dropped considerably over the preceding ten years; what Figure 7.7 shows is the *relative* deviation of the regions and communities from the population means. It should also be recalled that although the individual community scores are shown in small circular boxes, these do not represent towns as such, but dispersed households that identify with the place symbolised by the circle.

Figure 7.7 shows that by 1992/93 three communities significantly exceeded the GENSCORE population mean at the .05 level, while three fell significantly below it at that level, along with a further four at the .10 level. The spatial distribution of individual community scores corresponds quite closely to the regional pattern, with a tendency to low scores in the Barossa and Upper and Lower Murray communities. However, there is also a tendency for average scores in several of the communities that focus on larger cities (notably Mount Gambier, Port Augusta, and Port Lincoln) to fall appreciably below those of the surrounding region, while those centred on smaller ones (eg. Penola, Barmera, Strathalbyn) tend to rise above it. There are also some noticeable differences between relatively closely spaced neighbouring communities, eg. Keith and Bordertown; Berri and Barmera; Mount Gambier, Penola and Millicent. Overall, the data for individual communities obtained from the State-wide surveys are too sparse to measure the extent to which sharp variations may exist in people's attitudes to their local community, as between adjacent places. The most that can be said is that there is a tendency for attitudes to one's community to vary regionally, and within several of the regions a tendency for the community feeling to be less favourable in the largest centres may be suspected.

The discussion of change in social allegiance undertaken so far in this chapter shows that despite some significant change over time, in relative terms the1982/83 geography of primary social group identification had changed relatively little by 1992/3. I now turn to the final main question posed in this chapter: has the spatial organisation of social life continued to be reinforced by that of shopping and business activity during the rural crisis years, at least for communities centred on middle-sized country towns, or has the geography of social identification drifted further apart from the geography of trade areas? This is an important question, given the major early community forming and building role ascribed to the "team-haul"-based trade centre in classical rural sociology.

Economic vs. social organisation of space: convergence, divergence or stability?

The 1982-93 crisis period undoubtedly added a significant new element to the ongoing process of change in the pattern of trade centres, trade areas and trade volumes in rural South Australia, discussed in Chapter 2 and elaborated elsewhere

(Smailes, 1996b). To recapitulate, between the 1985/86 and 1991/92 retail censuses there was a continued relative gain in retail spending share by the outlying Adelaide satellites and other towns within the population growth zone around the metropolitan commuting field. In the continued absence of newer small-area retail census data (as of 2006) the precise effects of the rural recession cannot be quantified, due to the inevitable time lag effects. The impact of low rural incomes and the loss of families certainly reduced overall spending, and a substantial number of rural businesses had been forced to close by 1993. The impact on shopping patterns is likely to have been complex. On the one hand local spending was somewhat protected because people had less to spare for recreational spending and for frequent long trips to Adelaide or to one of the major regional centres; on the other hand, though, the need to cut expenses to the minimum to make ends meet also increased bargain chasing, discount price seeking and mail orders etc. It appears likely that price-consciousness has increased, traditional loyalties to local businesses strained, and a transfer of at least some shopping and business travel patterns from smaller to larger country towns is certain to have occurred.

Elsewhere, I have shown how in one detailed Eyre Peninsula case study, the sharp reduction in rural spending power caused a transfer of economic functions up the hierarchy of centres: closures in neighbourhood level centres at first cushioned the impact on businesses at the community level to some degree, but the smaller community centres in their turn have suffered closures and the transfer of business upward to regional centres (Smailes, 1993). A time-lag naturally occurred as businesses struggled to stay solvent. By 1993 some businesses had succumbed and many more were under serious threat; but much of the impact on community level centres (eg. the spate of rural bank closures) was yet to come.

Change in the number and population size of social and business centres

The two State-wide postal studies compared shopping patterns for twenty intermediate-range goods and services for which the standard community-level centres were in competition with regional capitals such as Port Lincoln, and with Adelaide. In fact, a surprising number of the indicator services were then obtained in quite small country towns. The 1992/93 study contained two extra questions, but we first examine the information that is directly comparable between the two surveys.

To compare the changing patterns of business activity and social identification with community, Table 7.12 first illustrates changes in the actual numbers of places that respondents identified as, firstly their “own town” that they belonged to and felt most at home in, and secondly, as their primary social and business centres at the time of survey. In some cases ‘own town’ was a distant childhood home or previous residence distinct from and additional to the present community centre; not surprisingly, despite a drop in numbers over the study period, by 1992/93 the 1200 respondents collectively still called over 350 places home.

Concentrating for the present just on the social and economic interactions *current at the time of survey*, in 1982/83 the rural respondents between them named as many as 309 places as the centre of their local community. However no more than 69 of these figured as the first-ranking place in terms of the twenty selected goods and services (i.e., where the greatest number of these services was normally obtained). By

1992/93, both these numbers had fallen, but while there were still 265 places nominated by respondents as their community centre (a fall of 5%), the number of first-ranking shopping towns had dropped to only 58 centres (a 16% fall). The *community centre* (almost always identical to the place named as socially most important) was the place to which all the attitude variables discussed earlier in this chapter specifically relate. Clearly, with four or even five times as many primary social centres as there were of primary shopping centres, the shopping catchments must be physically much more extensive, and likely to be centred on larger places. In 1992/93, an extra question was asked to discover which of the towns normally supplying the twenty indicator services was the one *most often visited*, and this most frequently visited place was in many cases one of the smaller towns on the list, supplying just a few of the listed services. Even this question yielded a list of only 109 places in 1992/93, giving a ratio of well over 2½:1 between 'community centres' and 'most frequently visited' business centres.

Table 7.12 Numbers of places identified as primary social and primary business centres, and as 'own town' in 1982/83 and 1992/93

Category of place	1982/83 No.	1992/93 No.	Change %
Town named as one's 'own town'[3]	410	356	- 13
Town named as one's community centre [4]	309	265	- 5
Town named as socially most important [5]	299	273	- 9
Town *most frequently visited*, among those listed as respondent's main shopping centres [6]	n/a	109	
Town regularly used for *greatest number* of 20 selected goods and services [7]	69	58	- 16
Number of respondents in sample	1247	1198	- 4

Source: Author's postal surveys, 1982/83 and 1992/93

Confirmation that social allegiance is centred around much smaller places than those normally used for shopping and business purposes is provided in Table 7.13, which

[3] 'Own town' is given by the response to "Which town or locality do you really consider as your own, that you belong to and feel most at home in? (Note: this may not necessarily be in the district where you live at present)"

[4] 'Community centre' is given by the response to 'Please name the town or locality on which your local community centres ('local community' includes the people of the town/locality where most social activities take place, as well as the surrounding rural households that normally use the town for social purposes)'.

[5] 'Socially most important' town is given by the response to 'Please name the country towns or localities where you and your family now carry out most of your social, sporting, church and visiting activities. If there is more than one, please put them in order of importance, with the most important first'.

[6] 'Most frequently visited shopping town' is given by the response to 'Of all the towns named in the table above, which one would you use most often?'

[7] Given by the response to ' On the table below, please enter the name of the towns that you and your family would normally use (over half of your business) to obtain the items listed'.

classifies the places named as main social and business centres respectively, by population size class.

Table 7.13 Main centre for social activities and centre used for most shopping items, by population size of centre, 1982/83 and 1992/93 (No. of respondents).

Population of centre (persons)	1982		1992	
	Social	Business	Social	Business
	%	%	%	%
Below 500	47.8	2.3	34.8	0.3
500 - 999	13.0	7.4	15.6	6.0
1000 - 1499	8.1	4.7	8.2	3.7
1500 - 1999	6.3	5.9	5.8	3.9
2000 - 2499	2.6	3.0	2.4	2.1
2500 - 2999	3.3	5.4	3.2	5.4
3000 - 3999	4.2	6.1	6.4	11.1
4000 - 4999	4.0	5.6	4.5	7
5000-9999	4.8	11.2	3.7	4.5
≥ 10000	5.9	48.4	15.4	55.9
Total	*100.0*	*100.0*	*100.0*	*100*
n	*1230*	*1244*	*1193*	*1162*
Missing values	17	3	4	36

Source: Author's postal surveys. 1982/3-1992/3

The contrast between the size distribution of towns acting as community foci and business sectors respectively is striking in both years: in 1982/83 roughly 60% of all towns named as community centres had below 1000 people, compared to just 10% of the first-ranking business centres, while these proportions were almost exactly reversed for the major centres of 10,000 people and upwards. Examining the change over time, however, these disparities have been reduced. The frequency distribution has shifted up the population size ladder for both social and business centres, particularly affecting the very smallest and the very largest population size groups. For example, the proportion of respondents naming a town of population 10,000 or more as their principal social centre rose from 6 % to 15%, while the proportion naming places of below 1000 dropped from 60% to 50%. This movement in part reflects the population growth by migration in regions like the Adelaide Hills, Fleurieu and Barossa where some respondents retained their former Adelaide social links, and others had their main social centre in places like Gawler or Murray Bridge; and at the same time, the bleeding of population from the outlying wheat belt regions has reduced the proportion focussing on the small places of below 500 people.

The spatial pattern of trade areas, 1982/83 and 1992/93

As is the case with the spatial pattern of social allegiance, at a visual level the pattern of country town trade areas has changed only slightly over the ten years of the rural crisis; but the relative stability of the general outline of trade areas does not pick up the changing intensity of usage of the centres at different levels. Figure 7.8 first shows the pattern of business patronage for the town that supplied the greatest number of the twenty indicator services in 1992/93. It is directly comparable with the results for 1982/83 presented earlier in Figure 5.15, and shows a very similar pattern. Consistent with the results presented earlier in Chapter 6, Adelaide's dominance as the most-used supplier of the twenty selected services appears somewhat reduced when compared with 1982/83, eg. in parts of Eyre Peninsula, the Upper Murray, the eastern Murray Mallee and Kangaroo Island. Even the 1992/93 results for the second-ranking centre, (not presented here for space reasons) give a clear impression of somewhat reduced dominance by Adelaide over the study period.

Despite this reduction, Adelaide still cast a heavy shadow over the State in both years, making it difficult to see the pattern of country town trade areas clearly at this small scale. To remedy this, Figure 7.9 shows the full pattern of business usage of the twenty selected services (first, second and third most used places), but omitting all Adelaide destination arrows. It is directly comparable with the 1982/83 picture given earlier in Figure 5.16. The Figures give a very clear impression of the economic regionalisation of the State in terms of its trade and business patterns. Within Yorke Peninsula, Eyre Peninsula, the Southeast, the Riverland, Mid-North and the growth ring around Adelaide, we have a complex and dense web of overlapping trade areas, but between these regions there is little interconnection, once their common links with Adelaide are taken out of the picture. Within most of these regions, comparison of the 1982/3 and 1992/3 maps suggests an expansion of the influence of the dominant regional centres, particularly Port Lincoln, Whyalla, and Murray Bridge, and to a lesser extent Port Augusta; the random distribution of sample householders in the two survey years makes it risky to compare the spatial patterns for smaller centres too closely, but some of the middle sized regional centres like Kadina, Naracoorte and Kingscote appear to have lost some of their previous dominance, while that of Clare has increased.

Comparing now the 1992/93 map of the first, second and third most important business centres (Figure 7.9) with that of the first, second and third most important *social* centre for the same year (Figure 7.10), the much more local-oriented pattern of social contacts emerges at a glance, even for third-level choices. Nowhere is this more apparent than in Eyre Peninsula. At the same time, though, with the addition of second- and third-importance social centres, the spatial patterns of social allegiance and business activity correspond much more closely than they do when only the first-importance places are examined. This is an important finding, for it gives some hope that the feeling of primary social allegiance and localism may be transferable upward over time, as behaviour gradually responds to higher mobility and lower population densities.

Fig. 7.8 Town supplying the greatest number of twenty selected goods and services, 1992/93 (includes Adelaide and satellites)

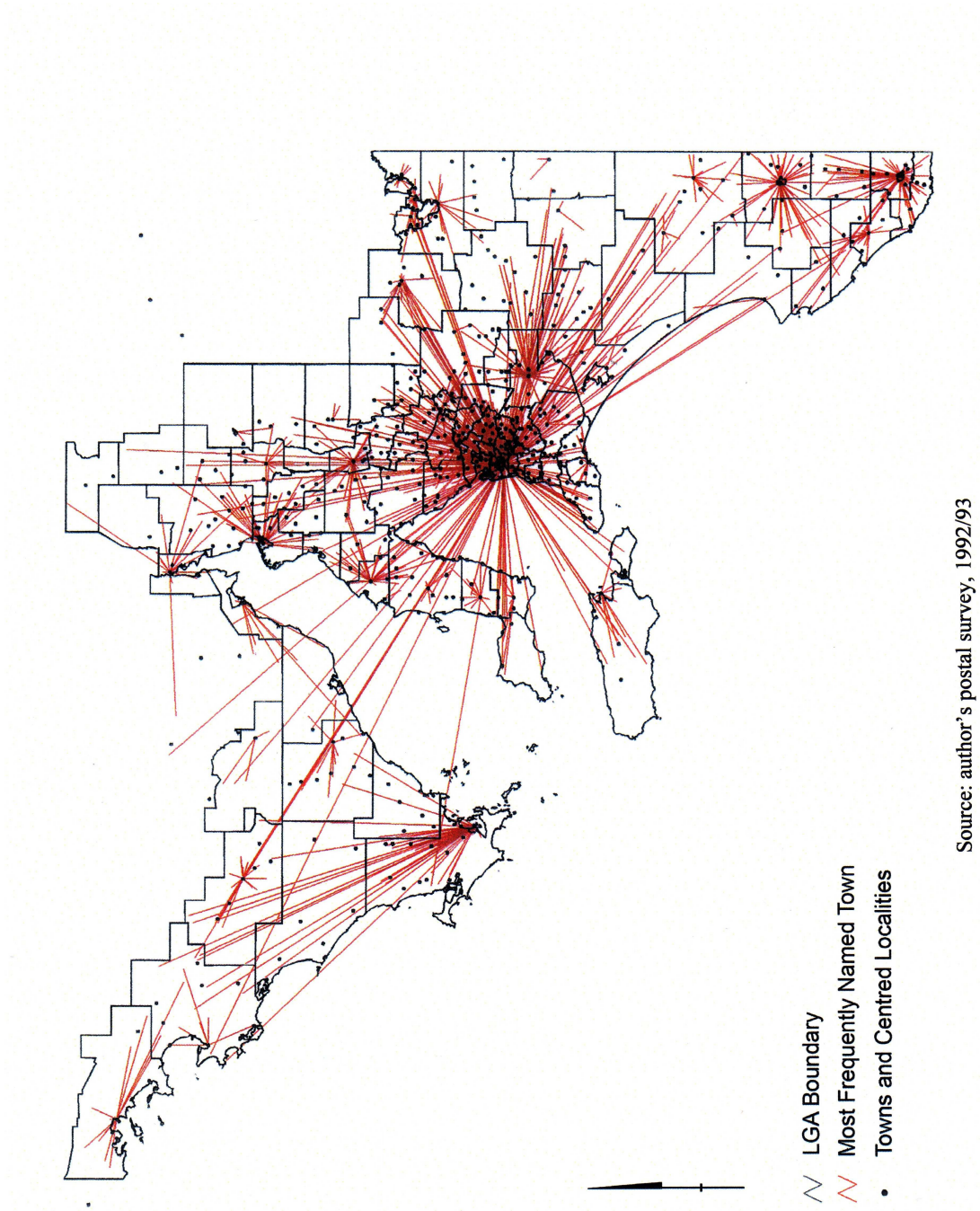


Fig. 7.9 Town supplying the greatest, next greatest and third greatest number of twenty selected goods and services, 1992/93 (excludes Adelaide)

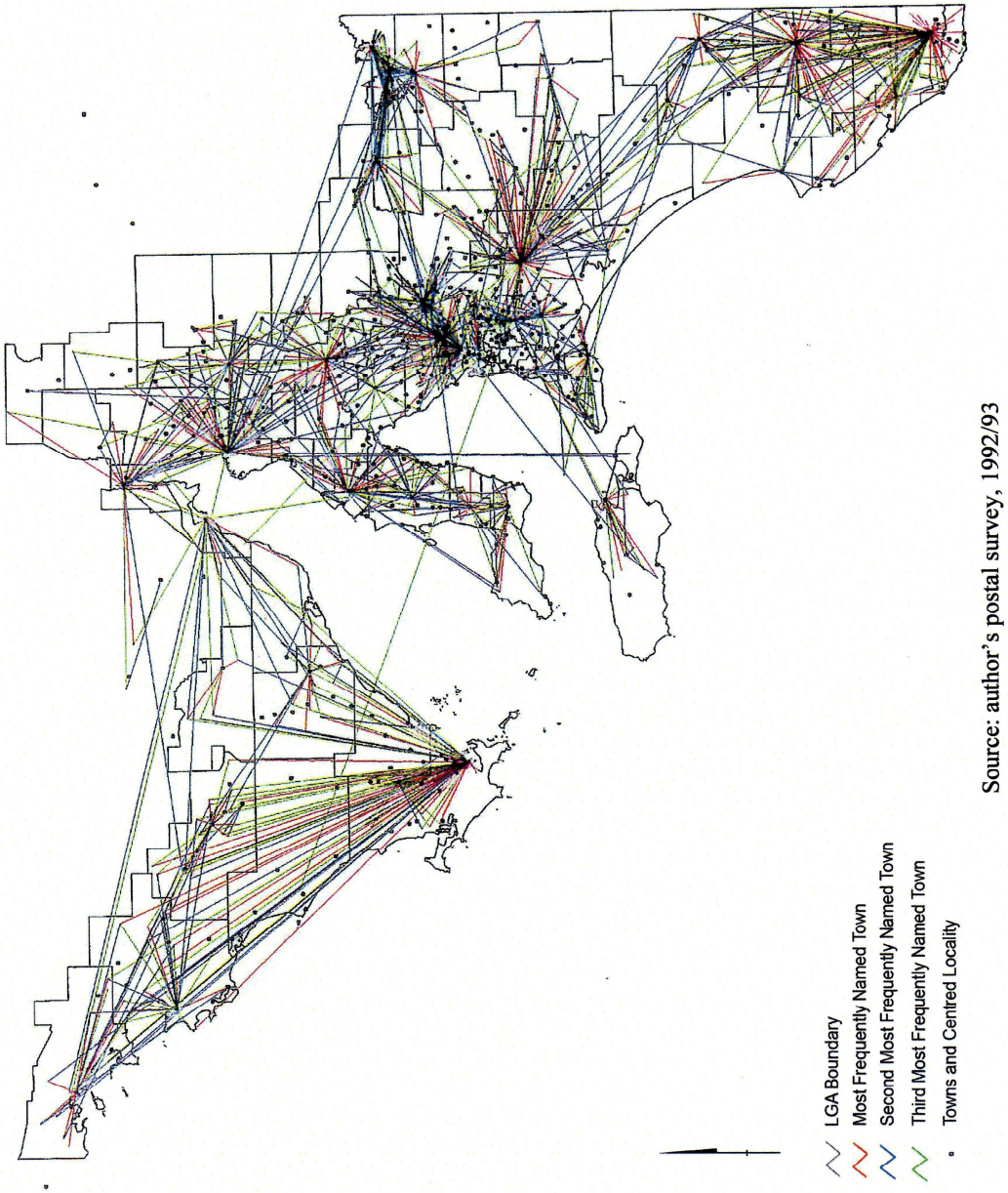
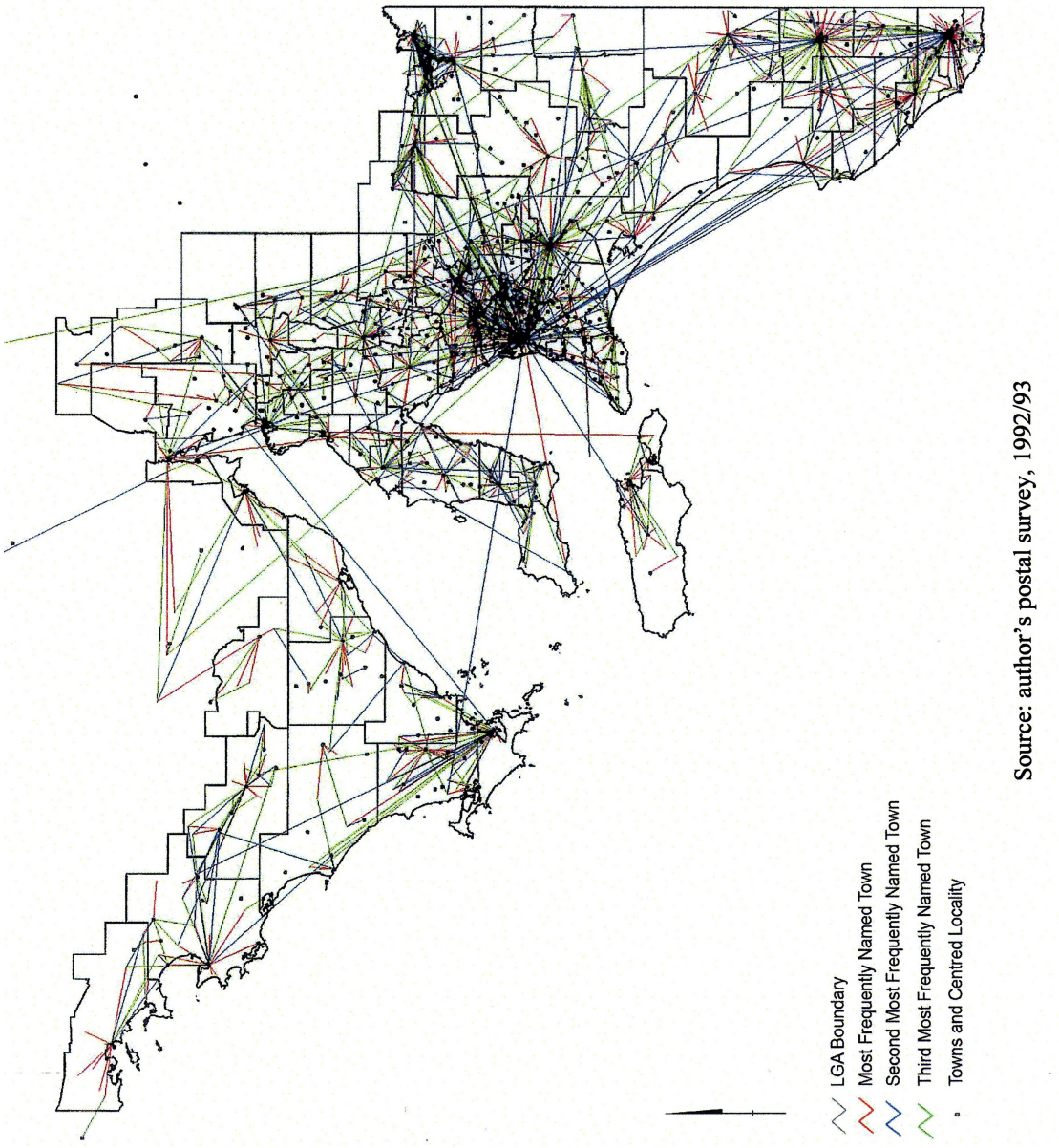


Fig. 7.10 Places of greatest, next greatest and third greatest social importance, 1992/93



While both surveys established where the same twenty selected indicator goods were obtained, neither of them directly sought information about the respondents' shopping habits for *short-range convenience* goods such as groceries, hardware or motor vehicle servicing, many of which could be obtained in the smallest community-level and even in the larger neighbourhood centres. The 1992/93 re-survey, however, did identify the shopping centre which may not have provided many of the twenty indicator services, but were nevertheless the *most often* visited. Such frequent, routine visiting and its associated pattern of contacts could be expected to reinforce a social sense of belonging much more strongly than occasional trips to a large centre for major items. The degree of localism in such travel behaviour is indicated in the distribution of travel-times to the most frequently visited shopping town (Table 7.14).

Table 7.14 The distribution of driving times to the most frequently used shopping town, 1992/93

Driving time (minutes)	No. of respondents	% of respondents	Cumulative %
0-9	158	13.4	13.4
10-19	364	30.9	44.3
20-29	224	19.0	63.3
30-39	179	15.2	78.5
40-49	110	9.3	87.8
50-59	24	2.0	89.8
60-69	49	4.2	94.0
70-79	17	1.4	95.4
80-89	3	0.3	95.7
90 & over	51	4.3	100.0
Total	1179	100.0	

Source: Author's postal survey, 1992/93

Driving times to the most often used shopping centre are generally short. About two thirds of the respondents are within a half hour's drive of their most frequent shopping venue, and about 90% are within an hour's driving time. An hour's drive, however, covers a substantial number of 'country miles', and in many cases would take householders well beyond the small place named as their principal centre of social activities. The absence of equivalent information for 1982/83 precludes analysis of any change during the rural recession.

Social patterns and business patterns: a cross-classification of communities

The above discussion has shown that the population size distributions of the most-used towns for social and business purposes differ sharply. Nevertheless, there is much spatial overlap between their catchment areas. A more precise cross-classification is needed to determine the extent to which the two are intertwined, acknowledging the fact that not all of the respondents' social or business activity, respectively, is carried out in the place named as most important. In fact, when invited to list up to three places in order of importance for social activities, only one

third of the 1992/93 respondents named just one centre; 349 respondents (29%) named two, and a further 462 (38%) named three. No doubt a certain proportion could have named even more. This pattern of responses reflects a number of factors, notably the spatial hierarchy of local identification (neighbourhood, community, region), marginal location of the household between several alternative communities, continued links with former place of residence, and so on. It thus may well be that the town most used for shopping and business purposes is the respondent's second or third listed place of social importance, or vice-versa.

Table 7.15 shows the extent to which this occurs, cross-classifying the first, second and third-named places of social importance against the equivalent for purchase of the twenty selected goods and services, for each of the survey years. (For shopping as well as social activities, many respondents did not name as many as three places).

Table 7.15 Extent of correspondence between towns used for shopping and social interaction respectively (percentage of respondents).
(A) 1982/3 (n = 1247)

	1st shopping town	2nd shopping town	3rd shopping town	No correspondence
1st social town	393 (31.5%)	152 (12.2%)	72 (5.8%)	234 (18.7%)
2nd social town	204 (16.4%)	80 (6.4%)		
3rd social town	91 (7.3%)	21 (1.7%)		

(B) 1992/3 (n = 1194)

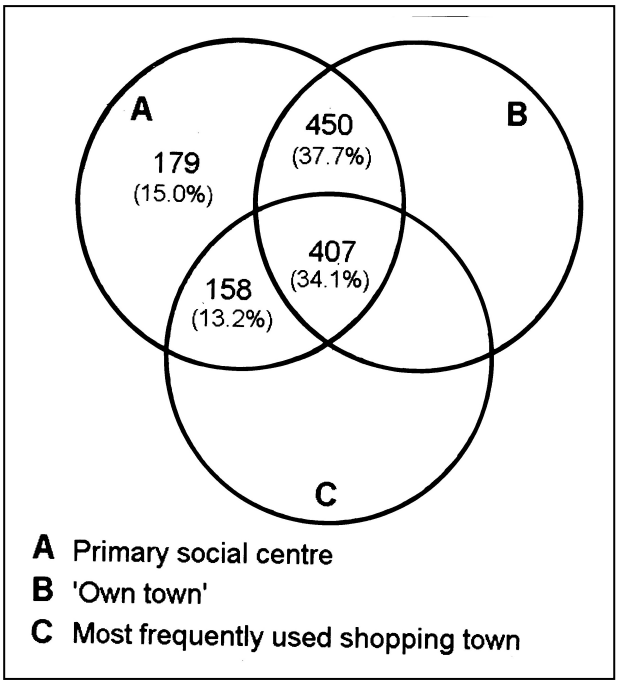
	1st shopping town	2nd shopping town	3rd shopping town	No correspondence
1st social town	455 (38.1%)	140 (11.7%)	54 (4.5%)	143 (12.0%)
2nd social town	205 (17.2%)	70 (5.9%)	16 (1.3%)	
3rd social town	75 (6.3%)	25 (2.1%)	11 (0.9%)	

Source: Author's 1982/83 and 1992/93 postal surveys.

The shading pattern on the Table indicates the strength or otherwise of the correspondence between centres of social and business activity. The strongest association is found in the top left, where roughly one third of the respondents are placed; for them, the first-ranking social and business towns are one and the same. Where the first-ranking social town is the second-ranking shopping town, or vice versa, there is evidently still a degree of mutual reinforcement between the two, and together these two cases account for roughly another 30% of respondents. Beyond that, though, the degree of correspondence between the two geographies fades, and for a good proportion of respondents (approaching 20% in 1982/83) there is no correspondence at all. For many of them (in fact 35% of the whole sample, though this is not apparent from the Table) the community of identity does not appear at all as a supplier of the twenty goods and services. Over the study period, the degree of change revealed in Table 7.15 is not great, but does show a greater variety of the looser types of connection by 1992/93.

For the 1992/93 results only, it is possible to investigate more closely the extent to which social activity, local allegiance and shopping patterns reinforce each other. The extent of overlap between the most frequently used shopping venue, the primary social centre, and the town considered to be one's 'own town' is shown in the form of a Venn diagram (Figure 7.11) which shows that a solid core of over two thirds (71.8%) of all respondents consider the place where they carry out most of their social activities as their 'own town'($A \cap B$). For these people, social participation in their community is buoyed by a strong sense of local belonging and identification with the town. The most intensive coincidence social and commercial activities occurs in a little less than half of this common core (34.1% of the whole sample), where the primary social centre, 'own town', and most frequently used shopping centre are one and the same place ($A \cap B \cap C$). The diagram also shows that, for 629 or 52.7% (179 + 450) of the respondents, their primary social centre is *not* the place where they most frequently do their major shopping.

Fig. 7.11 Extent of coincidence between 'own town', primary social centre and most frequently used shopping town: number and proportion of respondents, 1992/93



Source: author's postal survey, 1992/93

Summing up, the results reported above show that the social and the economic organisation of space in rural South Australia are somewhat more closely related than the sharply contrasting maps of respondents' primary social versus primary business centre would suggest at first glance. However, the relationship is indirect and multi-tiered, and the conclusion that social activity and personal sense of belonging is much more localised than is the spatial pattern of business activity is inescapable. The main community of identification coincides with the most frequently used shopping town for less than half of the respondents; and for almost a quarter of cases (23.6%) the town named as the most frequently used shopping town is completely different from the towns named as first, second or even third most important social venue. There is no consistent relationship between the population size of towns nominated as first,

second and third most important places for social activities - in some cases the smaller place is ranked first, and the larger place second, while in other responses the reverse is the case.

Whichever way they are ranked, the places of first and second social importance are likely to encompass most of the neighbourhood and community level interactions, and between them the towns on which these two levels of social interaction focus account for some 72% of the most frequently used shopping towns. This finding is of importance for the possibility of a gradual, natural upward transition of people's primary social identification to a higher and more sustainable level in the spatial hierarchy of centres - redefining the local, in fact. Such upward movement could bring social identification back to a closer correspondence with business activity. However, the possibility of such an outcome depends on whether social change can keep up with the speed with which the geography of rural economic interaction itself is changing.

Change in business patronage of different levels of service town during the recession period

I have already shown that the frequency distribution of places named as most important business centres moved up the ladder of population size groups between 1982/83 and 1992/93. Has the volume of business moved up the hierarchy in proportion? Direct evidence from the survey is somewhat meagre, as no questions were asked on dollar values of expenditures, but an indication is given in Table 7.16, which is built on the use of the twenty indicator goods and services. For the purposes of this Table, each time a town is named as the normal supply location for a good, it scores a point. With 1198 respondents and 20 items in 1992/93, for example, there is a potential 23,960 points to be distributed among the various size classes of town. As not all respondents used all of the twenty items, this reduces to 21,439, equating to 100% of the business patronage in that year. Obviously, the way that this patronage frequency is spread between town size groups will *not* be a measure of its dollar value, but it may indicate the direction of any change.

Table 7.16 Percentage of the observed total usage of 20 selected goods and services obtained in different classes of centre, 1982/83 and 1992/93.

Class of centre	1982/83		1992/93	
	No.	%	No.	%
Adelaide (City)	6,499	29.0	5,317	24.8
Major suburban shopping centres	928	4.1	596	2.8
Other Adelaide suburban centres	123	0.6	739	3.4
Rural: "Regional capitals" (Pop. > 10000)	4,909	21.9	4,868	22.7
Rural: other country towns	9,933	44.4	9,919	46.3
Total score (mentions of towns used)	22,388	100.0	21,439	100.0

Source: author's postal surveys, 1982/83 and 1992/93

The results above show that, over the rural recession period, there has (or had up to 1993) been remarkably little change in the pattern of people's normal purchase venues for the indicator services. It is often difficult to discern the difference between the use of major suburban shopping centres and other Adelaide suburbs - eg., a respondent quoting 'Modbury' may or may not mean to refer to Tea Tree Plaza shopping centre located in that suburb. The most one can say from this table is that a slight decline in Adelaide patronage has been taken up by slight increases in the other categories, (taking all Adelaide suburban centres together). The pattern of reduced dominance by central Adelaide ties in with evidence presented earlier, and also with responses to the survey question which directly asked respondents to estimate (by ticking one of a series of broad categories) roughly how much of their shopping expenditure for non-convenience items was incurred in Adelaide (Table 7.17).

Table 7.17 Changes in the use of Adelaide by respondents, 1982/83 to 1992/93: proportion of estimated shopping expenditure incurred in Adelaide.

Est. proportion of shopping budget spent in Adelaide	Proportion of respondents		
Percent	1982/83 %	1992/93 %	Change %
0-20	51.1	53.2	+ 2.1
21-40	9.2	10.9	+ 1.7
41-60	11.1	11.0	- 0.1
61-80	16.3	13.4	- 2.9
81-100	12.3	11.6	- 0.7
Total	100.0	100.0	
n	1186	1159	
Missing values	61	35	

Source: Author's postal surveys, 1982/83 and 1992/93

Conclusion: continuity or change?

As the findings of each subsection of Chapter 7 have been summarised en route, they are not repeated *in extenso* here - a brief overview should suffice. Because the 1992/93 survey was a practically identical replication of the 1982/83 study, with a very similar response rate, comparison of the two sets of results should give a fairly accurate picture of any changes in attitude to community.

To state the main conclusion of the chapter first, the analysis has revealed a great deal more continuity than change over the crisis-torn decade between 1982/3 and 1992/3 in rural South Australia's *social* organisation of space. Results showed that while the average scores fell slightly on practically all the 22 indicators, they still remained remarkably high by 1992/93. In particular, there had been little change in the strength of *attachment* to one's local community. Scores on the composite indices of attachment, satisfaction, openness and integration in both years were found to be positively correlated with period of residence, degree of social involvement, and age of respondent. Consistent with the migration flows and population mixing of the

time, the strong positive association between childhood residence in the local community and scores on the composite indices that was evident in 1982/83 had weakened substantially by 1992/93. Other variables investigated (house ownership, type of property and population size of the community) were found to be related to some (not all) of the composite index scores, but no relationship at all was found with remoteness of the community from Adelaide.

Spatially, the plotting of attitude scores for individual respondents gives a very complex picture, too difficult to interpret by eye. Agglomeration of the data at the level of broad zones reflecting the age of white settlement shows that while all the zones had experience a decline in the perceived quality of community life over the period, the extent of this decline had been greatest in the inner or core zone in spite of its general population growth, and least in the intermediate zone. The differences between the zones were not very marked, however.

Spatial differences did emerge more clearly at the level of regional mean scores. The most significant fall was the clear decline in the general level of *satisfaction* with life in the community of residence. In 1982/83, a high level of both attachment to and satisfaction with local community life was found throughout the regions of the State, with a correlation coefficient of .80 between the two. By 1992/93, this coefficient had fallen to only .28; attachment remained little diminished, but satisfaction had declined substantially through most of the State, and its range of regional means had increased sharply. Also by 1992/93, with few exceptions average scores on every attitudinal indicator had fallen in every region throughout the State, and at the same time the standard deviations had increased, indicating a growing divergence of opinion (polarisation is perhaps too strong a word). It should be remembered that significant variations between regions appear in only a relatively few cases on Figures 7.2 to 7.6, and even in these cases the significance is calculated within a quite small range between maximum and minimum regional values.

There was a tendency for the integration and openness indices - measures of traditionally valued features of rural life - to remain high in the wheat-sheep belt or more outlying regions, and to become more closely associated one with the other. The more accessible regions tended to score more poorly on the openness and integration indices. This change is hypothesised to result from the population mixing occurring through in-migration in the growth zone, while out-migration from the more outlying or less environmentally attractive regions has left an older, but still strongly locally oriented, residual population there.

The data were too sparse to make firm conclusions about potential variations in attitudes to social life at the scale of individual communities, apart from a tendency for communities centred on the smaller country towns to score more highly than their regional average, and the reverse for larger towns.

Comparison of the changing pattern of social allegiance and business activity over the study period shows a dramatically more localised geography of social than of economic activity. In both cases there has been a shift upwards through the centre hierarchy, but this has been very limited in the case of social activity, and more pronounced in the case of business and shopping. Both the map and the quantified evidence suggest that Adelaide's dominance has been somewhat reduced over the

study period, with the slack taken up by other Adelaide satellites and suburbs, and to some extent by the major country towns. However, considering the intensive impact of the recession, the study shows a very limited readjustment of shopping patterns up to 1992/93.

I end this chapter with a reflection on what its findings mean in relation to the wider aim of 'redefining the local' - i.e. to ensure, if possible, that the deeply meaningful contribution which I believe that localism can make to the human need for roots, identity, belonging and solidarity, and for a niche in which one can function securely as a social being, is not lost in the processes of globalisation and economic rationalism. I trace through the argument in a series of ten steps.

1. We have established, I believe, that although territorially based community allegiance is by no means the only basis of identity formation among rural people, it remains extremely important. Local communities have been shown to be well defined spatially, quite easy to map, and to exist in at least two layers in a spatial hierarchy.
2. In rural South Australia, the environment within which these local communities are set is characterised by an increasingly steep gradient between core zones of relative demographic growth, or at least stability, and peripheral areas of demographic decline. The character of demographic change has been shown to be consistent and predictable in nature.
3. Throughout the State, but particularly in the outlying areas, increased mobility compensates to some degree for falling population density in terms of access to services, but tends at the same time to increase the economic power of large as opposed to small country towns.
4. It has been shown that place-identity, sense of belonging and primary social contact patterns are subject to much greater inertia, and are much less dominated by scale economies, than are shopping and business interaction patterns. Hence they change much more slowly. This is not to say that once formed, they are permanently fossilised - the community patterns of the 1960s and 1970s had of course already made enormous adjustments to ongoing technological and social change ever since the first European settlement.
5. The three constituent dimensions of rural communities - territorial (the habitat/place dimension), communion (the shared feeling of belonging), and interaction (the local social system) - reinforce each other in favourable circumstances, but are not necessarily spatially coincident. In particular, the local element is only a part of the total social interaction field, which also has an important, and growing component of long-range, 'remote' social contact patterns.
6. Thus the local social system can change more rapidly than the other two community dimensions, responding to lower population density, telecommunications and increased personal mobility by expanding the radius of social interaction.[8] Even pre-Internet, by 1992/93 the cohesion of the once tight-knit habitat/communion/interaction trinity was already beginning to be stretched by expanding social fields.
7. Much more threatening to the stability and viability of the dominantly very small primary communities of South Australia was (and is) the tendency for economic

[8] For South Australian rural households, later field work has shown that 1992/93 was essentially pre-Internet, and mobile phone adoption was just beginning (Smailes 2002).

functions to withdraw from smaller towns, moving up the hierarchy to favour in particular the larger regional centres, and thus weakening or removing the mutually reinforcing nexus between social activity and regular frequent (eg. weekly) shopping trips.

8. The danger to the local dimension (and the whole cultural complex of rural social life) comes from a situation where rapid changes in the provision of goods and commercial services, and the employment they generate, transfers economic activity up the central place hierarchy so far and so rapidly that social group identity cannot be re-forged at a broader spatial scale, quickly enough to keep up.
9. The period of trauma and stress spanned by this study has been at least as great for rural communities as any period since the depression of the 1930s. However the results reported in this chapter show that up to 1992/93, inertia, resistance, the suspension of much private spending and capital goods replacement and so on, had resulted in a surprisingly little degree of fundamental change in the spatial patterns of both social and economic interactions in rural South Australia. There were many tell-tale signs of impending major changes, however.
10. What, then, is needed is a set of public policies which will allow rural society to take advantage of improved mobility - transferring social allegiance and group identity upwards, allowing the refashioning of the social organisation of space in a way and at a pace that does not destroy the essence of local social fabric. I return to this in Chapter 9. First, however, I wish to supplement the quantitative and spatial evidence presented in this chapter with the much deeper insights into the processes of social change that come from the as yet untapped qualitative comments supplied by the respondents. This I undertake in Chapter 8.