

Projects 1-4: Community Resilience in Agricultural Rural Towns

- Supervisor:** Prof Grace Pretty
Phone: 07 46 31 1740
Email: pretty@usq.edu.au
- Research Purpose:** To determine what characteristics of agriculture centred rural towns are related to residents' perceptions of their community's resilience in times of significant economic threat and their intentions to stay.
- Research Description:** This project can accommodate up to 4 students with combinations of variables, adult and adolescent participants, qualitative and quantitative variables.
- This project was completed in two local SE Qld towns as a pilot project for the Department of Primary Industries. The purpose of the research was to determine those factors that predicted resident's intentions to stay in their rural towns despite the economic hardship related to the drought. Concepts related to perceptions of community resilience were considered as were the degree to which residents were engaged in the community, and their sense of place. These data were to inform an education program for local councils regarding those factors that would help sustain their town's motivation and activity to survive the exodus of residents to larger urban centres. However, due to restructuring in the DPI, the project was cancelled shortly after these pilot data were collected. There were 7 variables assessed through a survey, which included adolescent and adult participants in one town and adults only in another town.
- The particular theories the student would expected to draw upon or theories that have been used to develop the proposed project are Sense of Community; Sense of Place; Community Engagement, Satisfaction and Efficacy.
- The following are previous projects which have assessed similar variables
- Pretty, G., Chipuer, H. & Bramston, P. (2003). Sense of community amongst adolescents and adults in two rural Australian towns: The discriminating features of place attachment, sense of community and place dependence in relation to place identity. Journal of Environmental Psychology, 23, 273-287.
- Pretty, G., Bishop, B., Fisher, A., & Sonn, C. (2006). Psychological sense of community and its relevance to well-being and everyday life in Australia: A Position Paper of the Australian Psychological Society. Australian Psychological Society: Melbourne, Australia.
- Pretty, G. (2006). Knowing where you are walking: The benefits and hazards of using theoretical roadmaps and research to guide community consultation practice. Australian Community Psychologist, 18(3), 58-67

Key variables: Community Cohesion, Community Satisfaction, Sense of Place, Communal Efficacy, Community Engagement, Perceptions of economic well-being and community resiliency.

Participants: Data has already been collected and data base has enough for honours level regression or MANOVA designs. Data comes from 2 local towns.

Methodology: The following questionnaires have been used:
(a) Psychological Sense of Community Scale
(b) Sense of Place Questionnaire
(c) Place Attachment Scale
(d) Community Satisfaction Questionnaire
(e) Open-ended questions regarding community volunteer activity
(f) Open-ended questions regarding community characteristics that would/would not make it resilient
(g) Likert Scale question regarding perceived community resiliency

This project was completed two years ago in two local SE Qld towns as a pilot project for the Department of Primary Industries. Due to changes in the local DPI management, the Community Resiliency Project was not continued, and thus the data have not been analysed in their entirety.

Data Analysis:

- (a) Broad type of analysis expected (i.e., quantitative/qualitative) Quantitative and qualitative
- (b) I expect the student to be able to run basic SPSS independently. I would then assist with interpretation of output.
- (c) If a student does not have knowledge of thematic analysis and is interested in including some qualitative data with a quantitatively assessed factor, I am happy to assist in teaching this skill.
- (d) The student will be expected to perform usual data screening, psychometric analyses, correlations, regression, t-tests, ANOVAS, MANOVAS, plus thematic analysis if appropriate.
- (e) If archival data is being used, outline what tasks the student would be expected to perform on this data. The student will be expected to engage in data screening, checking psychometric properties of questionnaires, separating participants into particular groups based on questionnaire responses, regression analyses with possible determination of moderators and mediators. If interested, basic thematic analysis from open-ended questions.

Student friendliness: This project is suitable for both external and on campus students. At least 4 face-to-face supervision sessions are expected that will vary in length. Once during proposal generation, once for feedback after first draft of the introduction, once after initial data analysis, once for feedback after first completed full draft of the thesis is submitted. At least fortnightly update emails.

Further reading: Pretty, G., Chipuer, H. & Bramston, P. (2003). Sense of community amongst adolescents and adults in two rural

Australian towns: The discriminating features of place attachment, sense of community and place dependence in relation to place identity. Journal of Environmental Psychology, 23, 273-287.

Pretty, G. H., Bramston, P., Patrick, P. & Pannach, W. (2006). The relevance of community sentiments to Australian rural youth's intention to stay in their home communities. American Behavioral Scientist, 50 (2): 1-15.

Expected research outcomes At the minimum posters or papers acceptable for APS National Conferences 2010, and one journal article of all outcomes with joint authorship of all students for the Journal of Community Psychology

Ethics:

- Ethical approval will be sought by supervisor; or
- Ethics approved by USQ Human Ethics Research - # HO3REA265 – Developing a method for measuring the vital signs of a rural community.

Resources:

No departmental funding required

- Project able to be funded within \$150 departmental limit
- Project not able to be funded within \$150 departmental limit – additional funds will come from:

Filename: 473D12F7.doc
Directory: C:\Documents and Settings\User\Local
Settings\Temporary Internet Files\Content.MSO
Template: C:\Documents and Settings\User\Application
Data\Microsoft\Templates\Normal.dotm
Title: Getting Inside Heads: Using Cognitive Mapping to
Enhance Learning and Teaching
Subject:
Author: Faculty of Sciences
Keywords:
Comments:
Creation Date: 12/23/2008 9:21:00 AM
Change Number: 6
Last Saved On: 1/7/2009 11:34:00 AM
Last Saved By: Division of Information, Communication & Technolog
Total Editing Time: 39 Minutes
Last Printed On: 2/6/2009 4:03:00 PM
As of Last Complete Printing
Number of Pages: 3
Number of Words: 944 (approx.)
Number of Characters: 5,383 (approx.)