

The Experience of Women in Co-management Landcare Groups

Issues of Representation, Participation and Decision-making

MAF Policy Technical Paper 98/6

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June 1998

ISSN 1171-662
ISBN 0-78-07492-1

Preface

This technical paper is a summary of key points developed from research carried out by Trudy Brasell-Jones for a Masters degree in Regional and Resource Planning at Otago University.

The research findings will have considerable interest for people concerned about resource management issues, or who are involved in setting up and operating Landcare and other kinds of resource management groups. The findings are of relevance to central and local government agencies, particularly planning and training institutions, as well as to private organisations, community groups and individuals.

While the emphasis in this study is on identifying and removing barriers to the participation of women in resource management groups, the message can be applied to other kinds of activities where women's vital contribution is invisible due to narrow perspectives and attitudes. Exclusion from these groups is not only experienced by women.

Attention to the needs and concerns of Maori by planners and others involved in resource management is also needed to ensure participation by Maori in Landcare and other kinds of co-management activities.

The recommendations provided are a useful starting point for resource managers and those involved in co-management groups.

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1- Introduction

Co-management arrangements are a set of strategies, developed by local resource users and government, which are employed to manage local natural resources. Co-management has many names: community based, collaborative, co-operative, participatory, joint, and multi-stakeholder management. All these terms mean ultimately "the sharing of power and responsibility between the government and local resource users" (Herkes *et al.*, 1991:13).

Partnerships of this kind have proved to be successful worldwide (Berkes *et al.*, 1991) and several co-management initiatives have been set up in New Zealand (Pollock and Horsley, forthcoming). Besides the sustainable management of natural resources, one of the main objectives of co-management groups is to achieve a balanced representation of all interests in the community (Pinkerton, 1994). Yet despite efforts to involve a representative mix of stakeholders, many of these groups have a gender imbalance. This imbalance is particularly evident in rural groups where men dominate membership. It is also apparent in urban groups where, although membership is often equally distributed between women and men, women are under-represented in decision-making roles (Curtis *et al.*, 1994; Claridge and Chamala, 1995). This report summarises a one-year investigation into the experience of women in New Zealand co-management groups concerned with landcare and natural resource issues. Gender imbalance is explored in relation to representation, participation and involvement of women in decision-making. This gender analysis of co-management groups draws on research conducted during the course of thesis work for a Master in Regional and Resource Planning at the University of Otago.

This report comprises six sections. Section two outlines the concept of co-management groups and section three examines the different needs and interests of women in such groups and the barriers they face to representation, participation and involvement in decision-making. This provides a general framework by which the New Zealand data can be analysed. Section four documents national patterns of women's unequal experiences in co-management groups and the overall level of gender awareness amongst planners in New Zealand. The section then takes a closer look at gender in Co-management groups by analysing two New Zealand case studies: the Whaingaroa Environment group and the North Otago Sustainable Land Management group.

Finally, the section reviews the opportunities and constraints for addressing gender issues by planners in the Otago Regional Council, the Waitaki District Council, the Waikato Regional Council and the Waikato District Council. Section five presents the conclusions of the study and recommendations to co-management members and planners concerning the successful implementation of co-management arrangements sensitive to gender issues.

2 - Co-management

There are differing degrees of participation by both community and the government in Co-management, which can be illustrated with Greg Pollock and Peter Horsley's (forthcoming) "Levels of Co-management" (Table 1). Based on Sherry Arustein's (1969) "ladder of citizenship participation", each rung indicates increased power sharing.

The bottom rung represents token power sharing, whereby the community is merely informed. Gradually more and more power is delegated to the community until there is an equal "partnership" on the top rung. Co-management, therefore, can involve: different levels of government (central, regional, local, or a combination of these levels); varying degrees of community participation; and arrangements ranging from formal statutory requirements to informal agreements. This report concentrates on co-management groups at the local government level where there is equal partnership with the community such as the type of co-management described in rung seven (Table I).

While New Zealand is yet to embrace the co-management concept fully, a number of groups have emerged under the title of 'care' groups. This increase of co-management-style groups is due to the 1989 local government reforms, and the Resource Management Act 1991, which have devolved more power and natural resource management responsibilities to local authorities and promoted wider public participation in natural resource decision-making.

Both these changes have been directed by a neo-liberal free market policy in which communities are expected to help themselves (user-pays) (Memon, 1993). Greater local autonomy and fiscal restraint have contributed to the encouragement of co-management groups because local authorities want to ensure their policies and programmes work effectively and resources are not wasted. To do this, people in the community must be informed about local authority policies and be involved in setting them.

Table 1: Levels of Co-management

	Level of Community Involvement	Shifts in Power and Responsibility from Government to Community
7	Partnership/Community Control	Partnership of equals; joint decision-making institutionalised; power delegated to community where feasible
6	Management Boards	Community is given opportunity to participate in developing and implementing management plans
5	Advisory Committees	Partnership in decision-making starts; joint action or common objectives
4	Communication	Start of a two-way information exchange; local concerns begin to enter management plans
3	Co-operation	Community starts to have an input into management; e.g. use of local knowledge, research assistants
2	Consultation	Start face to face contact; community input heard but not necessarily heeded
1	Informing	Community s informed about decisions already made

(Source: Pollock and Horsley, forthcoming: 5)

3 - Women in Co-management

This section outlines some of the key findings of recent literature which have informed the current study. First, it is recognised that women have an important role to play in resource management because of their different skills, knowledge and experience compared with men (Brown and Switzer, 1992). However, the interests and needs derived from these different skills, knowledge and experiences often go unrecognised, thus creating barriers to women's representation, participation and involvement in decision-making in co-management groups. A distinction is made here between 'representation', 'participation' and 'participation in decision-making'. 'Representation' is used to refer to membership and is measured by numbers of members. However, because women may attend group activities without being official members, numbers involved in group activities are used to indicate 'participation'. There is therefore a difference between this kind of participation and 'participation in decision-making' which refers to involvement in the practice of resource management and the leadership activities involved.

3.1 Women's Representation in Co-management

Recent studies have found that women are more concerned with environmental issues and are more likely to join environmental groups compared with men (MfE, 1993; Merchant, 1995; Steel, 1996). This was found to be true in catchment co-management groups in Canada (CARP, 1994) but women were found to be under-represented in Australian and New Zealand co-management landcare groups (Curtis *et al.*, 1994; New Zealand Landcare, 1997).

This under-representation of women has been attributed to a lack of interest by women in landcare objectives which are focussed on economic, scientific and environmental issues arising from agriculture production (Liepins, 1995). Women have a wider view of farming where "women are exploring the connection between the economic viability of farming and wider issues of environmental care, consumer responsibility, community sustenance and political justice" (Liepins, 1995:123). This finding is in accordance with evidence that shows that women are often more interested in environmental issues such as toxic wastes, pesticides, pollution, nuclear weapons and energy conservation than men because these are the issues that affect their own health and the health of their children and family (Seager, 1996). Women's motivation for being involved in co-management groups often stems from such concerns and, if social sustainability and health issues are ignored by co-management groups, then this may deter women from joining.

3.2 Women's Participation in Co-management

In general, women are also more likely to participate more actively in environmental groups than men (Merchant, 1995; and Steel, 1996). Once again, however, the landcare programme does not fit neatly into this generalisation and participation among women is low (Claridge and Chamala, 1995). It has been suggested that women's level of participation in co-management groups is closely linked to whether or not a group meets their particular needs (Claridge and Chamala, 1995). A distinction has been drawn between the practical and strategic 'gender needs' of women (Moser, 1993). "Practical gender needs" are those needs that arise from women's socially constructed gender positions in society. Women's role as the main childbearers, and the lack of value assigned to this role, can be a major obstacle to participation in

co-management groups (Hogan, forthcoming). The time at which meetings and events, such as field days and workshops, are held can prevent women, who have to look after children (take them to and from school and organise sports and other extra-curricula activities), from attending. When childcare or provision for children under 14 years old (who legally may not be left alone or unattended by an adult) is not provided, women responsible for such children are unable to participate (Moser, 1993; Curtis *et al.*, 1994; Claridge and Chamala, 1995).

Planning for the everyday needs of women that stem from their traditional gender positions is essential but, alternatively, can be seen as confirming these roles. For this reason it is equally important to take into account "strategic gender needs", which seek to encourage women to take up non-traditional roles and challenge stereotypes (Moser, 1993).

Women often lack confidence about voicing their opinions because they perceive their opinions and views will be ignored (Sandercock and Forsyth, 1992). Communication strategies, such as working in small discussion groups, need to be devised in order to meet the strategic needs of women in co-management groups.

3.3 Women's Involvement in Decision-making in Co-management

International research shows that although women are active participants in natural resource management groups they are not well represented in positions of decision-making within those groups (Moser, 1993; Rodda, 1994; Curtis *et al.*, 1994; Claridge and Chamala, 1995). In a UN report by the Secretary General on women and the environment it was noted that in most natural resource management groups in developed countries:

the usual inequality of power existed i.e., the pyramidal structure, with women under represented in the top managerial positions, despite the constant rhetoric praising women as natural conservationists, more connected than men to an ethic: of caring for the earth and more affected by unfriendly environmental actions (UN, 1995: 285).

This imbalance is illustrated by Landcare groups in Victoria, Australia in which women comprise only 33 percent of leadership positions and, within these positions, are disproportionately represented in secretarial and administrative positions (Curtis *et al.*, 1994: 3). A hierarchical decision-making structure can discourage women from participating in decision-making as they may feel uncomfortable in such a competitive and exclusive environment (Elkin, 1995; Hogan forthcoming).

If women do join and are prepared to take on a decision-making role they are often not given the opportunity to do so or they are offered the job of secretary or treasurer, tasks which are not regarded as being as important or as influential. Some women do not take up positions of chairperson or president because they lack confidence and they are often made to feel they have nothing of value to contribute (Sandercock and Forsyth, 1992; Curtis *et al.*, 1994; Claridge and Chamala). In addition to these barriers, women have a limited time to participate because of family, domestic and community work, which is traditionally undertaken by women, as well as paid employment commitments (Moser, 1993, Claridge and Chamala, 1995).

The reviewed literature suggests that in general women are more likely than men to join and participate in co-management groups but that this pattern does not hold for rural groups which tend to be male dominated in terms of membership and participation. As noted earlier, the lack of women in rural groups is attributed to the lack of consideration given to women's different interests in the environment and different needs in co-management groups. The literature also reveals that women are less likely than men to be in decision-making positions in co-management groups because of hierarchical decision-making structures, their lack of confidence and their lack of time. This evidence provides a basis for investigating the comparative experiences of women in co-management groups in New Zealand.

4 - Methods and Results

This research involved a combination of national surveys and two case studies. Details of the research methodology are elaborated in the aforementioned thesis (Brasell-Jones, 1997).

4.1 Gender Patterns in Co-management Groups

A survey of people involved in co-management groups in New Zealand was conducted to assess the impact of gender upon the representation, participation and involvement in decision-making in co-management groups and the difference between the interests and needs of women and men. In May 1997, a four page survey was mailed to 40 co-management groups identified by local authorities. The survey sought to explore the relations which exist between women and men, rather than women's views alone. Thus, the survey was sent to both female and male group members.

Responses were received from 22 groups, out of which only 14 completed the two surveys as requested: by involving a male and female member. This resulted in a total of 36 respondents with slightly more female respondents than male. Fifty percent of the respondents were over 50 years of age and no one under 30 responded. Survey analysis shows there were similar age distributions for women and men. The over-representation of European/Pakeha led to the decision to exclude the variable 'ethnicity' factor from further analysis. Occupations of respondents (based on census criteria) included a relatively even spread across legislators/managers, professionals, clerical workers, household workers and people who were retired. However, the largest proportion of respondents were involved in agriculture (25%).

The surveyed groups focus on different natural resources; 32 percent were landcare groups, 23 percent general conservation groups, 18 percent forestcare groups, and the remaining 27 percent comprised in equal proportions: beachcare, streamcare and town care groups. Fifty-nine percent of the groups were from the North Island and 4 percent were from the South Island and the majority of groups were from rural or minor urban centres.

4.1.1 Women's Representation in Co-management Groups in New Zealand

From the survey it appears that women are under-represented in co-management groups across New Zealand. In total the groups were made up of 42 women and 222 men. The most common reason for both women and men to join was an interest in sustainability or conservation (48/43 and 22% respectively). Women appear to have a greater interest in sustainability than men which supports the findings of the Project Green Survey that found that 70 percent of those concerned with the environment in New Zealand are women (MfE, 1993). However, when asked, 69 percent of all respondents in the co-management survey said they did not think women had different interests, regarding the group, compared with men. The fact that some groups have taken a narrow approach to resource management could be one explanation for the lower representation of women in these co-management groups despite their interest in sustainability issues.

4.1.2 Women's Participation in Co-management Groups in New Zealand

The participation of women in co-management groups differs significantly from the representation of women in co-management groups; women are found to participate more actively than men. For example, 68 percent of female members attend meetings regularly compared with 62 percent of males. In support of this finding, 75 percent of respondents did not think there were any barriers to women's participation. Answers of men and women to this question were similar, but 60 percent of those aged 30-39 years believed there were barriers. This contrasted with the majority of those over 40 years old who believed there were no barriers. This was very similar result to that derived from the question on women's needs.

The fact that younger respondents were more likely to perceive barriers and different needs for women than older respondents may be due to the fact that younger members are more likely to have constraints of a young family. This difference of opinion between age groups could also indicate a difference in generational attitudes, concerning gender issues. Barriers to participation were perceived by younger members to exist within the group structure and also between women in the group and the local authorities. The behaviour of some local authority planners towards women was described by one respondent as "patronising and dismissive" (survey response: 30-39 year old, Pakeha, female office worker).

4.1.3 Women's Involvement in Decision-making in Co-management Groups in New Zealand

Women are under-represented at the decision-making level of co-management groups in New Zealand and disproportionately represented in secretarial roles. Within the groups surveyed most had a chairperson or president, 65 percent of whom were male. Of those groups that had a treasurer half were male and half were female and 78 percent of all secretaries were female. These figures highlight a gender division of labour in power positions with men taking on the prestigious leadership roles and women taking on the 'administrative housework'.

Despite these results, 89 percent of respondents, when asked about barriers to women's involvement in decision-making in the group, said they thought there were none. This answer was supported by both sexes and all the age groups. If everyone has been given an equal opportunity to participate in decision-making but women are under-represented in decision-making roles this suggests women choose not to take up leadership positions within co-management groups. As already discussed, research shows that women are not motivated by status and power and are more comfortable with consensus based decision-making systems rather than hierarchical ones (Elkin, 1995), which co-management groups are inclined to be. For this reason the structures and cultures of the co-management groups may be affecting women's choices not to take on leadership roles. On the other hand, there also may be constraints to women's involvement in decision-making that are very subtle. These 'invisible' barriers such as the belief that "women do not understand how the 'real world' works" (survey response: 40-49 year old, Pakeha, male artist) or the fact that "women have to be twice as convincing, twice as persuasive" (survey response: 40-49 year old, female environmental educator), are touched on by the 11 percent of respondents who did perceive barriers to women's involvement in decision-making.

In summary, women are under-represented in co-management groups, in terms of membership. In contrast, women tend to participate more actively in co-management groups than men but still face access anti attitudinal barriers to participation. In addition, there are barriers to women's involvement in decision-making in co-management groups. These barriers stem from the fact that some members do not always recognise (be different needs of women. Planners' perceptions are discussed below.

4.2 Planners Attitudes to Gender Issues in Co-management Groups

To ensure effective, inclusive policy development, women's needs and interests must be identified and addressed as a part of everyday planning practice (Little, 1994). Surveys were sent to 20 councils that acknowledged involvement with co-management groups to find out if planners in New Zealand incorporate women's needs and interests into the planning process and what strategies have been established to encourage women's representation, participation and involvement in decision-making. Twelve of these councils responded. Ten of the respondents were women and two were men. The respondents viewed their role in co-management groups as (in order of frequency mentioned) facilitators, participants, co-ordinators and technical advisers.

4.2.1 Gender Policies

Local authority policies guide planning practice and, therefore, the policies were investigated to provide insights into opportunities for incorporating gender issues into planning. It appears, however, that there are no references to the representation, participation or needs and interests of women in council policy documents in New Zealand. Not one council surveyed had gender policies regarding co-management groups. This is in contrast to other developed countries where there are increasing initiatives to encourage women in planning (Foulsham, 1990). Planning for women in relation to the environment does not seem to be on the political agenda for councils in New Zealand and nor does it seem to be a personal interest for individual planners. Only three respondents indicated that they take into account gender issues when facilitating co-management groups.

4.2.2 Planners' Perceptions of Women's Representation, Participation and Involvement in Decision-making in Co-management Groups

The survey of local authorities found that planners perceived women to be well-represented in membership, participation and decision-making. This response conflicts with information from the group survey that indicates that women are under-represented in membership and that positions of power within co-management groups are male dominated. Only two planners had attempted to increase this participation. This indicates that planners believe there is no problem with women's representation, participation and involvement in decision-making in co-management groups simply because women are involved. This attitude does not take into account the fact that involvement alone does not translate into equal representation or power sharing.

4.2.3 Planners' Perceptions of Women's Interests and Needs

Overseas planners, through policy and gender conscious programmes, are being forced to become responsible for meeting the interests and needs of women. The first step in doing this is obviously the recognition of these interests (e.g. environmental issues relating to home and health) and needs (e.g. childcare facilities and encouragement to voice opinions). The survey revealed that most planners in New Zealand do not even acknowledge the different interests and needs of women and men let alone actively promote the interests and needs of women within co-management groups.

Only half the planners considered women had different interests, regarding the group, compared with men. These planners thought women were more interested in health, safety and broader environmental issues than men. When asked how they met these different interests, most cited open communication and discussion. Concerning needs, however, only two planners thought women had different needs, regarding the group, compared with men. One of these planners was involved in a forestcare group and cited different physical needs between men and women concerning tree planting, especially for older women. The other planner believed women "need more reassurance" and that they "can feel intimidated by a lack of knowledge". She had attempted to alleviate these feelings by "encouraging and validating their contributions" (survey response: 40-49 year old, Pakeha, female planner).

In summary, the findings show that most planners in New Zealand do not incorporate the needs and interests of women into planning practice and there are very few planners who have developed strategies to encourage women's representation, participation and involvement in decision-making.

4.3 Gender relations in Two Case Study Groups

In order to gain in-depth insight into the experiences of women in co-management, two co-management groups were chosen as case studies, the Whaingaroa Environment (WE) group and the North Otago Sustainable Land Management group (NOSLaM). These two groups were chosen because of their close relationship with local authorities: in the case of WE the Waikato Regional Council (or Environment Waikato (EW)) and the Waikato District Council; and in the case of NOSLaM - the Otago Regional Council (ORC) and the Waitaki District Council. Both groups are concerned with sustainability in rural areas. The similarities stop there, however, since they focus on different aspects of the environment, NOSLaM on land sustainability and WE on sustainability of the catchment. Whaingaroa Environment was established in March 1997 with the aim of "achieving a healthy, sustainable environment for the Whaingaroa Harbour and Catchment" (WE, 1997: 3) and the broad objective of NOSLaM, which started in 1994, is "working to improve our environment, community and income from the land" (NOSLaM, 1996:1).

The establishment processes were also quite different, as was the resulting membership and running of meetings and workshops. These differences affect the way each group has dealt with the issue of women's participation. In order to assess the experiences of women within these two groups, the issues of representation, participation, and involvement in decision-making were explored through interviews and observation.

Individual interviews were carried out with male and female members of the two co-management groups and with the local authority personnel involved with the groups. These interviews were

semi-structured and followed a guideline of common questions. In each group a random selection of women and men were invited to participate in interviews. Three women and three men were interviewed from each group as well as two planners from the Otago Regional Council, the senior planner from the Waitaki District Council, three planners from Environment Waikato and one from the Waikato District Council. Each interview was tape-recorded and fully transcribed. For the sake of confidentiality all interviewees have been given pseudonyms. Two committee meetings for both WE and NOSLaM were attended as well as two open meetings: the Te Uku and the Waingairo WE open meetings and the NOSLaM Macrae's 'Know your Soils' Field Day and the Wider Community Workshop on Landscapes.

4.3.1 Women's Representation in WE and NOSLaM

The number of women in a group is a graphic indicator of women's involvement and the NOSLaM group has 25 members, 22 of whom are male. Due to the recent establishment of the WE group, an official membership list has not yet been drawn up, however, the different "gendered interests" of women and men concerning the environment, explain why some women may not want to join co-management groups. The concept of gendered interests in natural resource management was supported by interviewees from both case studies:

Men are more interested in dollars, the financial side. Women are more interested in aesthetics, like tree planting . . . Women are also more interested in health and safety, chemical residues and sprays. (Dwayne, NOSLaM member)

My feeling in general is that women tend to care a lot more about the land values rather than the economic values. I think men, this is sort of generalising in a big in a big way, men tend to have a more pragmatic, economical view of the environment. (Jerome, WE member)

Interviewees thought men were more likely to be interested in the financial, economic and technical aspects of sustainability and women in the aesthetic, social, health and environmental aspects. The idea that interests in the environment are gendered was recognised by NOSLaM members as a deterrent for women joining the group:

Sustainability is as much a woman's interest as a man's interest, especially the way NOSLaM defines it - the intersection between economic, environmental and social concerns. Maybe one of the reasons that there are fewer women actively involved, certainly on the committee, is perhaps because they [the committee] have started with the economics and the environmental. (Liz, NOSLaM member)

For some of them it's a very practical orientated, very farming orientated day and for some people ... that's not their role. They would view that as their partner's expertise ... some women who marry' farmers don't want to be farmers themselves so they won't go to the likes of soil days. (Jody, NOSLaM participant)

In comparison, although acknowledging different interests, WE members did not see this as a barrier to women's representation. The reason for the difference of views between NOSLaM and WE members lies in the fact that WE embraces much broader values and functions including a more holistic view of 'environment'. While NOSLaM claims to integrate social, ecological and financial factors of sustainability, it is obviously production focused, which is expressed through

its objective of "improving income from the land" and its field days which are directed at land managers who are typically men in North Otago. The fact that the values and interests held by women are different corresponds with the gendered division of labour that connects women with social and conservation issues more than men. By ignoring such issues NOSLaM has limited women's potential involvement.

^{1.} 'Gendered interests' are the outcome of the different socialisation processes which men and women are subject to. For example, men socialised as breadwinners tend to be interested in environmental impacts on production, while women socialised as carers tend to be concerned with environmental impacts on health outcomes.

4.3.2 Women's Participation in WE and NOSLaM

Although representation is one indicator of women's participation in a group it is not always the most accurate as some members do not participate in group activities while some women, who are not members, do. Despite NOSLaM's low numbers of official female members, women have participated in NOSLaM field days and workshops, however, none of the field days or workshop, apart from the landscapes workshop, had more than 17 percent women attending (NOSLaM attendance registers, 1997). Whaingaroa Environment's public meetings have been somewhat more successful in attracting women, however, the initial 'kitchen' workshops set up for community members to voice their concerns about environmental issues were noticeably male dominated (WE attendance registers, 1997)

In the overseas literature, discussed earlier, the recognition of needs was intrinsically linked with the extent of women's participation in co-management groups. The needs of women become barriers to participation when their needs are not met. The 'practical' needs for women in both groups were identified as the provision of childcare, and the recognition of women's off-farm work and other community commitments:

In a rural setting, generally speaking, men work on the farm and more and more women are working in town so the men can get away from the farm for a couple of hours but the women can't just walk away from their jobs for a couple of hours. Plus they've got to be back by 3 o'clock to pick up the kids from school.

(Mark, Environment Waikato)

Wives have got family commitments and second jobs. Sixty percent have off-farm work. If there is no dollar benefit then they are not interested. Play centre and school groups etc. take up their time. (Dwayne, NOSLaM member)

The field days and wider community workshops run by NOSLaM, except for the landscapes workshop, were held during the week, ended late in the afternoon and did not provide a crèche (NOSLaM observations April - June, 1997). This can be partly attributed to the fact that committee members themselves do not have the same needs:

WAG [Women's Agricultural Group] days almost always have a crèche or finish in time for people to get back for school buses and that sort of thing. People on the committee haven't

got 'school age kids anyway so they wouldn't be worried about that. (Liz, NOSLaM member)

In comparison, the WE group are more aware of women's needs in relation to childcare and this is probably because the chairperson is a woman with children, who schedules committee meetings in the evenings when partners are available to take care of children and organises field days for the weekend (WE observations, May -July, 1997). This feedback demonstrates the importance of having women in leadership roles as they are more likely to understand the needs of other women. It must be pointed out, however, that sole parents would have trouble attending meetings and field days because no crèche is supplied and, as interviewees suggested, getting a babysitter can be difficult, not to mention expensive.

Meeting 'strategic' needs helps women achieve greater equality and encourages greater participation by women in co-management groups (Moser, 1993). The importance of strategic needs were stressed by several interviewees, particularly the need for groups to recognise women's lack of confidence when participating in public forums:

I also wonder if there are different needs in what people get out of a group. I think, there are probably some men who go into a group like that, specifically to get on the committee and to be 'movers' and 'shakers' and this is one place they can move and shake. And that could be a worthy objective, not necessarily a selfish one, not just, "hey; I've got some thing to offer and here's a place where I can do it". Where perhaps women don't feel either they want to direct people or that I've got this thing to offer. (Jody, NOSLaM participant)

I think women sometimes feel that they're not listened to and in some respects, like we had today, there has to be more effort to bring women out than with men, who I think, in our society still seem to dominate in many ways. (Russell, WE member)

These comments draw attention to the fact that sometimes women feel too shy to voice opinions and offer skills because they are socialised to believe they have little to offer publicly whereas men have been socialised to be "movers and shakers". Breaking into smaller groups and having more informal style workshops rather than lecture style meetings appeared to be more conducive to women's participation in both the NOSLaM and WE field days (WE and NOSLaM observations, April - July 1997). The use of a women speaker also seemed to encourage women to be more vocal and voice their opinions (NOSLaM observations, June, 1997). These communication techniques are, therefore, ways to meet the strategic needs of, and assist women in achieving a greater role in the planning process.

The comments of both the NOSLaM and WE groups highlighted the difficulty of both partners attending field days/workshops/meetings because of women's commitments as mother, housewife, worker, and volunteer, which leave them little time for much else. The comments also emphasised rural community attitudes about what public roles are appropriate for women --- causing women to hesitate about leaving the private sphere to participate in co-management groups.

4.3.3 Women's Involvement in Decision-making in WE and NOSLaM

It has been demonstrated in the survey that women are under-represented in leadership roles in decision-making in New Zealand co-management groups. This is confirmed by the NOSLaM case study, as there are no women on the NOSLaM committee. In contrast, six of the ten WE committee members are women and the main decision-making positions of chairperson and co-ordinator are both occupied by women. The male dominance of the NOSLaM committee was attributed by interviewees to the focus of the group and the greater involvement of men in physical farming activities. Gender divisions of tasks and patriarchal traditions are still strong in the rural community (Curtis *et al.*, 1994; Sachs, 1994). These traditional attitudes can deter women from becoming involved in decision-making roles in co-management groups:

I think it's basically the attitude that the men make the decisions in the area, they're the ones who are the stakeholders because they're the farmers, there's that belief. There's the belief that the men go off and do these things and they go to Federated Farmers or Young Farmers. The vast majority are males who turn up to those sorts of gatherings so that's their role. The husband will have gone off and got his diploma at Lincoln or whatever and he's the knowledgeable one on farming and so he's the one who should go. (Rodney, Waitaki District Council)

The perception that public and political space is male presents a significant challenge to women who wish to participate. A public/private division is not so obvious in WE because the group focuses on a common property resource, the Whaingaroa Catchment, and everybody feels they have a right to participate in its management. In contrast, in landcare groups, such as NOSLaM, the land is privately owned. Over half of New Zealand's farms with a working owner have one or more female owner/operators (Ministry of Agriculture, 1996: 21) yet the day today running of farms is primarily managed by men (Millard, 1992). Many farm women have interests that do not necessarily correspond with the technical and economic focus of NOSLaM. A lack of confidence was expressed by two NOSLaM female members when asked if they would consider joining the committee:

No, I'm just there to help. I think it's very technical too. It's a bit beyond you at times really a lot of the stuff. (Martha, NOSLaM member)

I think, all the active committee members are farmers and there are some women who can say they are farmers. They take that role practically out on the farm and do the bookwork and that sort of thing and I'm not one of them ... I'd be happy to be involved if I had a skill or something that they needed. (Liz, NOSLaM member)

These two comments give the impression that a high level of technical expertise is required to understand sustainable land management, expertise that men, as farmers, have acquired and women have not. However, natural resource management does not require only technical expertise. Women are often involved in financial and administrative aspects of the farm and have acquired skills for long-term planning. These skills are just as important and relevant to resource management as day to day production skills.

There is also evidence to suggest that women feel more comfortable in less hierarchical groups (Sandercock and Forsyth, 1992; Elkin, 1995; Claridge and Chamala, 1995) and this is supported by one NOSLaM interviewee:

I think there are some women who are repelled by the idea that in a committee like that they would have to adopt, if you like, male tactics, to succeed and they don't want to do that because that's not their style of negotiating things or discussing things and I think there are women who have the view that if you go to a male dominated committee, if you want to get a word in, you'll have to shout over the top like the other guys do and all that sort of thing. So why bother?

(Jody, NOSLaM participant)

This comment suggests that the decision-making structure in co-management groups is frequently more suited to men than women and women may not feel comfortable in male dominated groups. In addition to organisational structure, the lack of women on committees may also impact on the number of women willing to be involved in decision-making in the group. An interesting comment is made by one NOSLaM member who reflects on what the committee would have looked like if they had chosen a women co-ordinator:

When we called for applications for the sustainability co-ordinator position, how many women applied there? I suppose a quarter of them were women there and 3/4 men and we only interviewed two people, one of which was a woman, and it was a very' tough decision as to whether we appointed Dwayne or this other lady . . . It was a tough call. I think if she had got the job it very' well may have had a different bearing on the representation of the committee now. (Fergus, NOSLaM member)

This suggests that more women may have joined the NOSLaM committee if the co-ordinator had been a woman. When women are seen in leadership roles other women become confident in their abilities to do the same. However, this also works the other way round - when women are not seen in leadership roles, they may be regarded as not having leadership ability (Rivers *et al.*, 1997). Indeed, the male dominance of leadership roles in co-management groups becomes self perpetuating. Male dominance of the NOSLaM committee alone, could be construed as a barrier to women's involvement in decision-making.

A comparison between NOSLaM and WE has revealed a number of barriers to women's involvement in decision-making in co-management groups. These barriers include a perception that a high level of technical expertise is required for leadership roles; a lack of recognition of women's roles as decision-makers on the farm; organisational structures that are not conducive to women's decision-making styles; and the numerical male dominance of committees.

4.4 Planning for Women in Co-management Groups

The co-management groups, WE and NOSLaM, are partnerships between local resource users and local government. Planners are the link between the two partners. Planners are not only members but also have special roles as co-ordinators, facilitators, technical advisers, and responsibility for liaison. As local authorities do not have any formal policies on gender issues relating to Co-management groups, gender planning is reliant on the initiative of the individual planners. The case studies highlighted the constraints and opportunities for gender conscious planning facing planners

in the Otago Regional Council, the Waitaki District Council, Environment Waikato and the Waikato District Council.

4.4.1 Opportunities for Encouraging Women's Participation

The Community usually needs council resources, advice and expertise to establish the group. Case study evidence shows that the manner in which a co-management group is formed has an important bearing on the gender balance of that group. Neither NOSLaM or WE made a conscious effort to involve women when establishing the group. The lack of women in the WE workshops and the NOSLaM group in general implies that planners do have a responsibility to 'artificially' encourage women at the consultation stage of establishing a co-management group in order to avoid their absence in the subsequent planning process: decision-making, implementation and managing. The fact that women do not automatically participate indicates that there are broad social constraints to women's participation that need to be overcome. The female co-ordinator and the female Environment Waikato planner attempted to overcome some of these social constraints by organising a women's only workshop with childcare facilities. This workshop was held very early on in the WE formation process and once women's views and interests were incorporated in the group's objectives and activities, women's participation has not been a problem. On the other hand, it took NOSLaM two years before it organised a women's workshop; two years in which few women participated in the group.

After establishing a group the next step is for the community members and the local authority to shape their goals and objectives. As already ascertained, women have different interests in the environment and if these interests are not addressed by co-management groups many women will not participate. It is, therefore, imperative that their input is encouraged by planners at the goal definition stage of the planning process to ensure their interests are encompassed in the objectives of the group. A WE women's kitchen workshop went some way to achieving this by highlighting issues that had not been raised in previous workshops. The WE group took into account the concerns raised at this workshop when identifying their goal which embraces ecological, economic and social aspects of sustainability of the Whaingaroa Harbour. In contrast, the NOSLaM objectives were decided upon by the committee, which comprises 10 farmers, an Otago Regional Council planner, a Ministry of Agriculture policy consultant and the co-ordinator all of whom are male. The views and concerns of women were not incorporated into the group's goals and, as discussed previously, this has resulted in women's limited involvement in the group because they are simply not as interested in NOSLaM's objectives.

Although the bulk of responsibility for encouraging women's participation is accepted by Co-management group members, there are opportunities for planners to help them. Planners can educate co-management members on: effective consultation procedures to involve women at the initial stages of a group and; how to identify the needs and interests of women in co-management.

4.4.2 Constraints to Encouraging Women's Participation

Despite the opportunities for planners to encourage women's participation in co-management groups as discussed above, there are also constraints that prevent planners taking up these opportunities. Planning has been accused of being one of the most male-dominated professions with

its guiding theories and ideologies seen as narrow and reflective of men's interests and concerns (Sandercock and Forsyth, 1992; Greed, 1994). This background has a major influence on decision-making and the treatment of women by planners in co-management groups. Planners need their own gender awareness training to enable them to integrate gender issues into planning and educate co-management members on the interests and needs of women in co-management groups.

The lack of gender awareness within the planning profession also relates to the numbers of women in planning. It has been suggested that changing the numerical dominance of men can also change attitudes (Foulsham, 1990; Greed, 1994). This proposal is particularly in relation to increased numbers of women in senior positions in planning, whereby more women at this level would influence policy-making. Interviews, however, also revealed a need for women planners in the field:

I've had heaps of positive feedback because when I first started here I went round and did a little bit of interviewing, like you're doing, with care groups and I just specifically asked, "what's the role of women in your group?" and "is it good enough?" and "should we be doing more to involve women?" and the women and the men would sit there and say; "look, the regional council need more women staff they need to talk more with women"... Well, there are women in the council but on the whole they don't actually go and help people do things --so more women in the field. Having women come out from the council means that probably women just feel that there's a female presence and that also probably legitimises it. (Jacqui, Environment Waikato)

The increased visibility of women planners in the field can encourage women to participate in co-management groups by letting them know women have just as much right to participate in natural resource management as men. They also represent role models for other women who feel intimidated by the male dominated organisational culture of co-management groups. However, while acknowledging the importance of women planners' presence in the field, it is important to remember that it is not the sole responsibility of women planners to encourage women's participation in Co-management groups. Gender conscious planning must have the support of all planners to be successful and male planners need to be just as gender aware as female planners.

The lack of importance accorded gender issues in planning in New Zealand is reflected in the resources councils are willing to devote to gender initiatives. Councils work on a user-pays basis and, as a result, financial limitations are imposed by the local authority on consultant work, such as special women's days, restricting the time and money planners can spend on what is considered "unproductive work" (L.M, 1981 21). This work is seen as unproductive because it is hard to quantify the intangible benefits gained by encouraging more women to participate. Taking on the additional responsibility for planning for women can place extra demands on planners who are expected to do so "without timescale, budgets or priorities" (Greed, 1994: 5).

These constraints are a product of the wider institutional environment in which co-management groups are set. Women's needs and interests are not addressed by planners because of a culture which does not currently adequately value a holistic and participatory approach to natural resource management, as well as to a lack of training at the tertiary level preparing planners on how to plan to meet women's needs and interests.

5- Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1 Women's Experience of Co-management in New Zealand

It was found that, consistent with overseas findings, there are barriers to women's representation, participation and involvement in decision-making in New Zealand co-management groups. This was demonstrated in the survey analysis of 22 New Zealand-wide co-management groups which found that men were more likely to be members than women and more likely to take on leadership roles in co-management groups. The survey found that, overall, women were more likely to participate than men, although there were physical and attitudinal barriers to women's participation.

This report concludes that co-management groups need to embrace a balance of social, economic and environmental issues in order to cater for the interests of both women and men. Due to their experiences of gendered division of labour, women have different environmental concerns which are often linked to health and family well-being. Interviews with members from the two case study groups, Whaingaroa Environment (WE) and North Otago Sustainable Land Management (NOSLaM), confirmed that women were more interested in aesthetic, social and health aspects and men more interested in financial, economic and technical aspects of the environment. Rural groups retain an exclusive focus on production aspects (as in the case of NOSLaM) women are less likely to participate.

Co-management groups in New Zealand must address the needs of women as well as of men. Survey results show there is a considerable degree of ignorance regarding women's needs. Interviews with WE and NOSLaM members revealed two types of needs: practical (including needs relating to childcare, community, off-farm work and economic commitments), and strategic (including needs relating to traditional gender roles, attitudes of men and the lack of confidence of women).

These case studies highlighted the need for co-management groups to be more aware of women's triple responsibilities which leave little time to participate in co-management groups. In addition, the case studies emphasised the importance of communication strategies to assist women in meeting their strategic needs.

Special attention was given to women's experience in decision-making, as women are often absent from leadership roles in co-management groups in New Zealand. These public leadership roles present a challenge to women, especially farm women, as traditional attitudes still place women in subordinate roles which hold them in the 'private' domain. Farm women are often perceived (by women and men) to lack the technical expertise or knowledge to talk about resource management if they are not involved with the day to day work of the farm. The sustainable management of land is therefore naturalised as the men's domain and, as a result, fewer women participate in decision-making in co-management groups, which focus on land and production issues. Rural co-management groups need to recognise the contributions that women make to strategic decision-making on the farm and in business and acknowledge the value of work women do in the home that assists the farm or business operation.

It is evident that leadership roles in co-management could be more attractive to women if committees were more open to different decision-making styles. Women who do have access to public space are not always comfortable with the hierarchical structure of male-dominated groups and choose not to become involved in leadership roles. When there are a number of women on the committee it influences the way in which it is run. More women in decision-making positions also encourages women's participation in general.

5.2 Gender and Planning

Many co-management members are unaware of the barriers to women's participation in groups and to decision-making and, as a result, are unable to address them. It is part of a planner's role in co-management groups to encourage awareness of women's concerns and needs and to assist in the understanding of actions required to overcome barriers. Planners have input into how the group is established, how the committee is formed, how its goals are shaped and how the field days and workshops are organised all elements of co-management that can influence the participation of women. Additionally, the attitudes and actions of planners are also seen as crucial to addressing the needs and interests of women in co-management groups.

Overall, planning in New Zealand was found to be 'gender blind'. Surveys of 12 New Zealand local authorities revealed there are no formal policies for consulting women, providing for their needs or monitoring their involvement in the planning process. The decision to encourage more women was left to the individual and most planners did not actively encourage women's representation, participation or involvement in decision-making because they were already thought to be "well" represented. "Well" represented, however, does not translate into "equally" represented.

Interviews with planners from the Otago Regional Council, Environment Waikato, the Waikato District Council and the Waitaki District Council revealed that those few planners that did attempt to address barriers faced several constraints. The greatest constraint related to the lack of support from other planners, who are not interested in women's concerns. This lack of gender awareness is thought to be caused by the absence of women in senior and policy-making positions in the planning profession, the masculine culture of planning and the inadequate coverage of gender issues at the tertiary level. The second major constraint to women's participation refers to a lack of resources due to the user-pays approach of councils.

Similarly to co-management community members, planners must recognise the unequal power relations between women and men. Planning can contribute to changing the position of women. Once planners realise they can influence gender equality within co-management groups they can devise planning strategies to overcome the barriers to women's participation.

5.3 Recommendations

5.3.1 Recommendations to Increase Gender Awareness

The involvement of more women in natural resource management is crucial if there is to be balanced decision-making. This is because women offer different perspectives on the environment. Community members and planners in co-management groups need to:

- Recognise the different concerns and interests of women and men which arise from their different roles in traditional gender divisions of labour.
- Accord equal value to these roles, ensuring that the reproductive and community work of women are visible.
- Recognise the power relations between women and men and the inequalities experienced by many women as a result of traditional power relations.
- Assess the practical and strategic needs of women to enable them to participate in natural resource management and to participate on equal terms with men.

5.3.2 Strategies to Address Women's Needs and Interests

It is evident from the study that a major barrier to women's representation, participation and involvement in decision-making in co-management groups in New Zealand is lack of awareness or women's needs and interests. In order to address these needs and interests co-management committees should:

- Involve women in the early stages of group formation, especially in setting objectives.
- Make women feel comfortable about voicing their opinions by inviting women speakers to field days, encouraging discussions in small groups and organising women only workshops.
- Insure meeting leaders pay special attention to soliciting comments from women at meetings.
- Listen to women when they speak and respect their knowledge and skills.
- Provide childcare facilities at meetings and workshops or contribute to childcare costs.
- Schedule meetings at appropriate times for those minding children or with children at school.
- Recognise women's lack of time because of work and community commitments.

- Integrate, wherever possible, a broad range of environmental issues rather than focusing upon economic aspects of sustainability thus ensuring workshops/field days reflect women's interests and concerns.
- Encourage the involvement of women in leadership roles
- Ensure women have access to decision-making positions based on their skills rather than 'technical expertise'.

5.3.3 Provisions for Gender Conscious Planning

This study found that planners in local authorities recognised gender issues but did not address because of several constraints. To remove these constraints local authorities need to:

- Develop policies pertaining to: consultation procedures with women, provisions for practical and strategic needs and monitoring of women's participation in co-management groups.
- Encourage the promotion of women to senior levels of management and the employment of more women in the field.
- Provide gender awareness training for all staff.
- Distribute evaluation sheets at field days and workshops to find out more about women's interests and needs.
- Develop communication strategies to encourage women's participation, such as working in small groups, and eliciting women's views on issues prior to public meetings.
- Encourage male dominated committees to adopt strategies to involve women in decision-making

Allocate financial resources to assist co-management groups to actively encourage women's representation, participation and involvement in decision-making.

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