WOMEN IN FARMING FAMILIES IN THE DARLING DOWNS AND SOUTH WEST QUEENSLAND: NAVIGATING DISCOURSES TOWARDS WELLBEING, RESILIENCE AND EMPOWERMENT

A Thesis submitted by

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ABSTRACT

This research investigated how the discourses that frame women in farm families in central Darling Downs and South West Queensland, Australia, enable and constrain their wellbeing, resilience, and empowerment. The study also addressed calls in the literature for more research into the culture and dynamics of farm families. Through the process of in-depth interviewing and the application of a post-structuralist perspective to construct knowledge, this study uncovered new insights for women entering the discursive cultures of family farms, how love of the land becomes more motivational for them than is widely acknowledged, and how they employ resilience and empowerment strategies to attain their wellbeing goals.

The data analysis revealed three dominant discourses that framed the lives of women in this study: agrarianism; masculine hegemony; and neoliberal farming-as-a-business. While agrarianism generated aspirational wellbeing goals, the conservative traditional masculine hegemonic discourse often constructed obstacles for the women to navigate. Nevertheless, this same discursive reality augmented the agrarian ideal of family farming passed from generation to generation. Hence, although this masculine hegemony discourse might contribute to preventing women from achieving full participation in family farming, it simultaneously increases their belief that the family farm is the highest priority, to be worked for and protected. The discourse of farming-as-a-business has had adverse consequences for the family farming sector and their communities, but simultaneously provided women with empowerment opportunities within their farm businesses.

This study concluded that women in farming families should be acknowledged and respected for their contributions, for their innovative and wholistic ideas and for their strategic resilience and empowerment abilities. They are a key resource for the future of the agricultural sector in terms of economic viability, sustainable land management and the

vitality of rural communities, in the face of current challenges such as climate change, and unknown future adversities and threats to the rural sector.

CERTIFICATION OF THESIS

I Marlyn McInnerney declare that the PhD Thesis entitled *Women in farming families in the Darling Downs and South West Queensland: navigating discourses towards wellbeing, resilience and empowerment* is not more than 100,000 words in length including quotes and exclusive of tables, figures, appendices, bibliography, references, and footnotes. The thesis contains no material that has been submitted previously, in whole or in part, for the award of any other academic degree or diploma. Except where otherwise indicated, this thesis is my own work.

Date:

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Professor Lara Lamb
Principal Supervisor

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Student and supervisors' signatures of endorsement are held at the University.

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to the memory of my parents who passed away in October 2021. My mother and father were both intellectually curious, well-read and active, informed citizens. My father came from a farming family in Saskatchewan, Canada and we spent many summer holidays on his sister's farm. Mom and dad travelled to Australia many times to visit us on our broadacre farm here. They were wonderful people, very interested in everything, fun, lively, and steadfast. This thesis is for them.

Glenna MacDonald (nee Coughlin)
James Kerr MacDonald

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ABBREVIATIONS

ABARES	Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences
ASGS	Australian statistical geography standard
AWiA	Australian Women in Agriculture organisation
CWA	Country Women's Association
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GRDC	Grains Research and Development Corporation
ICPA	Isolated Children's Parents' Association
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PinG	Partners in Grain
QRRRWN	Queensland Rural Regional and Remote Women's Network
RIRDC	Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation
TA	Transformational adaptation
Wincott	Women in Cotton

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION, APPROACH AND BACKGROUND

1.1 Overview

Women in farm families are emerging from their invisibility to play significant roles in their family farm enterprises, communities and the agricultural sector. Building on the work of scholars investigating the agricultural sector, land management and climate change issues, family farming and gender issues, this research explores the situation of women entering the discursive culture of family farms, and how they employ resilience and empowerment strategies to attain their wellbeing goals and build the resilience of their families and the sector.

This research was conducted during 2018 and 2019, the last two years of a ten year drought, and considers the strategies women from farm families utilise to deal with climate events as well as many other foreseen as well as unexpected changes and challenges.

In an era where productivist discourses and policies have contributed to the decline of small to mid-size family farms, this research focuses on mid to mid-large-size family farm operations, run as intergenerational family, non-corporatised, broadacre farms in the central area of the Darling Downs and South West Queensland.

The agricultural sector is important to Australia for many economic, social and environmental reasons, and the sector is dominated by farm families, who own approximately 95% of agricultural land in Australia (Stephens 2020, p. 53). The sector currently contributes $70 billion a year to Australian Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (Marshall, 2022, p. 5). The federal government in combination with the National Farmers' Federation has set a goal for Australian agriculture to become a $100 billion per year industry by 2030 (Chan 2021, p. 17). This additional export income is to be achieved sustainably (Chan 2021). This is a task to be undertaken by farm families in the main, due to their predominance in

the sector. Agricultural producer families not only provide the food and fibre for Australia, and other nations, thus contributing substantially to Australian export earnings, they also provide many intangible benefits including rural social cohesion, national identity, and environmental land management. Of late, land management practices which include the unique role of carbon drawdown are being promoted as an opportunity and a responsibility of landowners, who are thus in the process of being recognised and recompensed accordingly (Rose, 2021). As part of this relatively new development, policy makers and practitioners are seeking information on the culture of farm families, their values, norms and beliefs, in order to shape their approaches to these families when attempting to engage with them (Gosnell et al., 2019). This research will assist these practitioners, policy makers and researchers, in their efforts to understand and support farm family enterprises.

Conducted through in-depth interviews with women in family farm enterprises, in the central part of the Darling Downs and South West Queensland, this research extends and enriches the existing literature to identify the dominant discourses of these women. A dominant discourse is one that has sufficient prominence in its context to be perceived as the norm, and enough impact to strongly influence people in their financial, social, familial, and personal lives. A key contribution of this research is to show how those discourses overlay to construct interconnected currents that must be successfully navigated by women in the sector through their processes of resilience and empowerment in their quest for wellbeing and satisfaction in their lives on the land. Furthermore, these insights have implications for the productivity and resilience of the agricultural sector as it faces a myriad of long-standing challenges, such as commodity price fluctuations and droughts, intensifying crises such as climate change, pandemics, stock diseases and other unknown adversities into the future.

1.1.1 Outline of this chapter

This chapter outlines the situation of women in farm families and the aims of this study (Section 1.1.2), the researcher position (Section 1.1.3), the underpinning philosophical approach taken for this study (Section 1.2), the background to the agricultural sector in Australia generally, and then specifically in the area studied (Section 1.3), the research approach and questions (Section 1.4), and an overview of each thesis chapter (Section 1.5).

1.1.2 Researching women in farm families

In this thesis, I explore the situation of women in farm family broadacre enterprises in the central Darling Downs and South West Queensland. I focus on women who married into farm families and only mention daughters of such families peripherally. This thesis does not research women in towns in rural areas, or women as employees of broadacre enterprises unless they are married to (or partners of) the landowner or son of the landowner. Broadacre is a term used, mainly in Australia, to describe farms using extensive parcels of land to grow grains or graze livestock for meat or wool (OECD 2001). Women's lived experiences in farm families are investigated through an ethnographic methodology, interpreted through the philosophical approach of post-structuralism. The thesis provides a substantive investigation of the ways in which the lives of these women have been, and are, understood by others and by themselves.

Women's contributions to their family farm businesses and to the sector historically have been rendered invisible but slowly are being recognised (Broad 2021). The pressures on family farming are many and varied, with some of the major adversities being rural restructuring and climate change. Due to these pressures, the load carried by women in farm families is increasing. Women are key to the health and sustainability of farm family units, many as full partners and most providing the flexible on-farm and off-farm work that supports the

viability of farm enterprises faced with these challenges. The issues of individual farm family units, when widespread, impact the sector as family farm enterprises comprise the bulk of the Australian agricultural industry. It is important to recognise the crucial roles women play in farm families, agricultural production and in the agricultural and rural sectors, reduce impediments to their involvement and provide support for their meaningful participation and immense contributions to this important sector. This research aims to provide knowledge to assist in that goal.

The aims of this research include contributing to a rich picture of the issues, lived experiences and challenges of women in farm families. Part of developing this nuanced understanding is to explore the discourses or systems of thought that impact upon and shape the life-worlds of these women. These insights can be used by women in family farm enterprises to understand and improve their own situations. Furthermore, the results from this study can provide insight into the values and distinct culture of farm family personal and business dynamics for a range of practitioners. These practitioners might work in different spheres, such as community and economic development, health, safety and wellbeing, disaster preparedness and recovery, adaptation in agricultural systems, drought programs and climate change mitigation, programs to decrease the severity of the impact of climate events, art and culture, education and social work. It is intended that awareness of the values, norms and beliefs of these women will reinforce the ability of those practitioners to connect respectfully and knowledgably with this cohort.

Another aim of this study is to make visible the discursive constructions that have shaped the rural world that women in farm families inhabit. This is to help women understand the power dynamics in the discourses that enhance but also constrain their lives, reduce their self-blame, and increase their "decision-making authority related to agricultural resources, management and production, and income" (Anderson et al., 2021, p. 193). This investigation also explored these women's lived experiences of wellbeing, resilience and empowerment as

well as experiences of non-resilience. It considered the historical and economic contexts of rural culture, as well as its explanatory frameworks, values, social expectations, and paradigms, or in Bourdieu's terms, the "assumptions and cultural conventions through which people make sense of their world" (Congues, 2014, p. 233). The research highlighted how, within these cultures with their constraints and opportunities, women in farm families build resilience and become empowered, and what that means in terms of strengthening and empowering their families, communities, and regions. The research outcomes will include identification of strategies for fostering and supporting farm women's resilience and enhancing the opportunities for women and their families to live and flourish within landowning agricultural enterprises.

1.1.3 Positioning of the researcher and the literature review

This study draws on my lived experience, knowledge and insights through my position as a woman married into a broadacre farm family, as well as my 20 years as a regional community and economic development practitioner and manager and latterly, a consultant in South West Queensland. My experience living on the family cattle and wheat property, with its attendant responsibilities, setbacks, restrictions, and opportunities, provided the context and impetus for this research. Development work primarily for local councils included infrastructure projects, arts, culture and tourism, Indigenous projects and organisation development, and mental health initiatives for farm families. For those years, I lived what Eversole (2010) calls "the paradox of dual embeddedness: practitioners who sit simultaneously as community members and as development workers, trying to translate across cultural divides" (p. 38). These lived experiences, as well as the dual role of researcher and woman in a farming family, combined with the chosen philosophical approach (in Section 1.2), helped me to shape the research questions and the analyses and contributed to the implications from the results.

The contextual literature review in Chapter 2, and the conceptual framework literature in Chapter 3, drew on the work of scholars who are located in rural sociology, cultural geography, feminist and gender studies, social work and practice-based research in regional and community development and resilience studies. It was necessary to engage with work in several disciplines to encompass the rich and nuanced experiences and environments of women in family farms and the complexities of the adversities and opportunities of their situations. Study of women in family farms does not sit within one or even two disciplines, but instead, across varied areas of scholarship. This literature review foregrounded the topic of women on family farms and gathered the literature where it could be found, across disciplines. Underlying the thesis as a whole is the philosophical approach of post-structuralism, and the use of qualitative ethnographic methods (see Section 4.1).

1.2 Philosophical underpinnings

The philosophical underpinnings of this research, primarily post-structuralism, are introduced here to frame the concepts and specific approach taken to knowledge creation in this work. These are covered in more detail in Chapter 4. The concepts associated with post-structuralism informed the research questions, and provided the lens used to interrogate background material, the literature, and the data. The main post-structuralist concepts supporting the research are the notions of discourse, interpellation, and the idea of knowledge production itself.

In the area of production of knowledge, post-structural researchers emphasise context and particularity. A researcher using a post-structural approach replaces questions of knowledge with questions "interrogating the production of contextual meanings" (Barrett, 2005, p. 80). Barrett asserts that "rather than looking for the meaning or essence of an experience, I am asking how particular meanings have been acquired and (re) produced in a specific place, time, and context. I want to know what discourses are at work, what they are doing (Wood & Kroger, 2000), and

how they came to be" (Barrett, 2005, p. 90). In this approach, post-structuralists follow Foucault who suggests an emphasis on "particular, local, regional knowledge" (Foucault, 1980, p. 82). He expands these ideas by saying "we should try to discover how it is that subjects are gradually, progressively, really and materially constituted through a multiplicity of organisms, forces, energies, materials, desires, thoughts etc. We should try to grasp subjection in its material instance as a constitution of subjects" (Foucault, 1980, p. 97).

Post-structural researchers seek to understand people and situations in terms of the forces that have acted upon them, combined with mutual interactions, usually conceived as power interrelationships (Foucault, 1980). However, unlike some other approaches, which perceive power as a top-down negative force, post-structuralism tends towards "a much more encompassing view of power and influence, one that likely integrates their various forms and conceives of them in both positive and negative terms" (Fairhurst, 2008, p. 516). This research therefore sought to understand women in farm families, following Barrett (2005), within their "specific place, time and context" (p. 90), and consider how they were empowered or disempowered by their discourses, and what discourses, or systems of thought, most influenced them. More discussion on the permeability of power, as described by Foucault (1976), is presented in Section 4.4.1.

The term 'discourse' needs to be explained as it is a central concept in this research. A dictionary definition of "discourse" refers to verbal conversations or exchanges of ideas, or the "formal and orderly and usually extended expression of thought on a subject" (Merriam-Webster, 2022). The term "discourse" is traditionally used to label different modes of speech, such as description, narration, exposition, and argumentation. Foucault enlarges the term to include any form of communication that not only expresses socio-historical systems of thought but constitutes reality through the "construction and negotiation of meaning" (Fairhurst, 2009, p. 1608). Discourse is 'described as an historically, culturally and socially

specific set of statements, meanings, beliefs, practices and behaviours' (Pini, 2007, p. 41). Statements can be in the form of reports, books, art, exhibitions, films, social media, and many other methods of disseminating ideas and ideologies. The construction, or what Judith Butler (1993) calls the "materialization" (p. 9) of the discourses of individuals, also occurs through iterative re-enactment of roles and the constant creation and re-creation of people as subjects within available discourses (Butler 1993).

Researchers use the concept of discourse in many ways. Fairhurst (2008, p. 512) summarised the major conceptualisations of discourse as 'little d' discourse and 'big D' discourse. 'Little d' discourse "can be analysed by drawing on a wide range of discourse approaches, such as ethnomethodology, sociolinguistics, conversation analyses and interactions analyses" (Knight, 2014, p. 72). It is used to analyse communications in detail. 'Big D' discourse in research constitutes a focus on socio-historical "systems of thoughts composed of ideas, attitudes, courses of actions, beliefs and practices that systematically construct the subjects and world of which they speak" (Lessa, 2006, p. 285). These systems of thought represent "a Foucauldian view as historically marked constellations of talk patterns, ideas, logics, and assumptions that constitute objects and subjects" (Fairhurst, 2008, p. 512). Gee (1989) contends that people have difficulty perceiving the discourses they inhabit, until they acquire other discourses which sometimes provide alternate perspectives. Gee (1989), the first to use the concept of big 'D' discourse, describes it as "ways of being in the world; they are forms of life which integrate words, acts, values, beliefs, attitudes, and social identities as well as gestures, glances, body positions, and clothes" (p. 6, 7). This thesis employs the idea of 'big D' discourse as its default but does not capitalise the word 'discourse'.

The word "discourse" is sometimes used in critical literature interchangeably with terms like narrative, script, creed, or a set of norms or orthodoxies, beliefs or creeds and values, and ideologies. The notion of discourse is similar to what Johnsen (2003) refers to as the "cultural

expectations" and "context" of farm families that "circumscribes" the actions of the people in the situation (p. 133). Part of circumscribing actions is the post-structuralist concept of abjection, wherein people are rejected or excluded for not adhering to the norms of a discourse (Butler, 1993). Often, according to post-structural theorists expanding on Foucault's panopticon metaphor, people police themselves to ensure that they stay within discourse boundaries (Caluya, 2010, p. 622).

This research included identifying the dominant discourses in the agricultural sector, particularly among farm families, as disclosed in the literature and in the data. Luhrs, following Lefebvre (1991), argues that farms are physical places produced by "the prevailing ideologies related to and bound up with hegemonic regimes of particular eras" (Luhrs, 2018, p. 77). Given that post-structuralism emphasises the role of socio-historical forces in the production of discourses, the historical, social, and environmental contexts were also investigated. The literature notes that family farms are embedded "within a socio-political- economic network of interdependent relations" (Luhrs, 2018, p. 77). These socio-historical and political-economic influences are discussed later in this chapter and in Chapter 2. These sources revealed the origins of a range of discourses prevalent in the current agricultural sector. From the semi-structured interviews and the thematic analysis emerged three dominant discourses in the specific geographical area studied. These were used as lenses to investigate the wellbeing, resilience and empowerment of women in farm families, through the thematic analysis of the interview data. In this way, the norms, beliefs and values of the women in this cohort became apparent, and it was possible to describe the main threads of their distinct culture.

The concept of interpellation is particularly important to understand as a mechanism through which people incorporate the discourses into their personal systems of thought, their goals, and actions. Awareness of these processes is useful for enriched knowledge of the participant cohort and also for those practitioners wishing to disseminate new or strengthen

older discourses, such as land stewardship. The term 'interpellation' in credited to Althusser, a French philosopher, who used the example of the policeman calling out: "hey you there!" (Harding et al., 2014, p. 1217). In this example, when a person responds to the call, the person becomes a subject of the authority of law. Most people respond unthinkingly, willingly and with no reflection on what this could mean. However, behind the response to the policeman's call, or the call of ideology, or discourse, is the "threat that repressive action might be taken if one does not submit" (Bunch, 2013, p. 47). Although in this thesis, interpellation processes are viewed as unconscious mechanisms of constituting subjects, sometimes they are used deliberately in other arenas, for example in marketing to influence people's decisions (Pajnik & Lesjak-Tusek, 2002) or to solicit donations (Hatter & Howard, 2013).

Another concept that is closely allied with interpellation is acculturation, usually employed to describe the incorporation of migrant groups into a new culture. In this thesis, it. is used to increase understanding of how women marrying into farm families is a process of learning about and accommodating to a different culture. Gee (1989) uses the term "enculturation" to describe how people take on new discourses. These theories are described in more detail in Section 3.2.

In summary, in this research, the post-structural concepts of knowledge creation, discourse, and interpellation were used to frame the study. Congruent with the idea that discourses produce the norms, beliefs and values of people in a specific culture, this study sought to identify the range of discourses operating in the agricultural sector, and their socio-historical sources. This interrogation proceeded in two steps: a) within the desktop background material and literature review to ascertain known discourses (Chapters 1 and 2), with a list of discourses in Section 2.6, and b) within the interview data to determine which of the possible discourses were most prominent among the interviewee cohort. The most prominent discourses are described at the end of Chapter 4, and then used to frame the explorations of wellbeing, resilience and empowerment in the results

chapters (Chapters 5, 6 and 7). In response to the imperatives of post-structuralism, following Barrett (2005), the intent was to find out which discourses were in play, how they came to be, and what work they are doing, specifically regarding their impact on the wellbeing, resilience and empowerment of women in farm families. In the next section of this chapter, some salient aspects of the agricultural sector background of women in farm families are presented, in order to sketch the foundations of the major systems of thought, challenges and opportunities in the sector.

1.3 Background

The aim of this section is to outline some of the discourses about rural Australia present in both urban and rural areas. Where possible, the work that those discourses did and continue to do in developing the sustaining and constraining narratives that influence policy makers to voters to families on farms is outlined. Additionally, the physical and practical considerations of life in the agricultural sector in Australia are sketched. This includes the historical forces that impacted on the sector as well as some factors in the life-worlds of landowning producer and grazier families.

1.3.1 Impressions of rural Australia

There are several general discourses about rural Australia in the public sphere, which impact on decisions and trends in policy (Cockfield & Botterill, 2012), politics (O'Keeffe, 2017) and personal decisions (Wallis, 2017). Although Australia is very urbanised (Wyeth, 2017), rural images and social imaginaries figure large in the Australian imagination (Wallis, 2017). Collectively, Australian identity owes much to its rural heritage, with agricultural motifs contributing substantially to the accepted national characteristics (Pini, 2005). Early European explorers and settlers constructed contrasting images of Australia, ranging from fear of the land as a monstrous all-consuming wilderness to embracing its Eden-like bounty (Schaffer, 1989). These contrasts continue to the present day. A

well-known Australian film and fiction genre is the outback gothic, which depicts the darker side of the Australian bush (Doolan, 2019). In early years, writers and artists explored "… the violence of colonisation, convicts' experiences of exile and entrapment, settlers' feelings of alienation, and European fears of the racial Other" (Doolan, 2019, p. 4). Modern writers and filmmakers overturn these and other tropes to depict the colonisers as the monstrous Other, and deal with anxieties about racism and environmental decline (Doolan, 2019). Indigenous people were prevented from farming, except as indentured labour (Frawley, 2014). Governments developed policies and actions to exclude Indigenous people because the "state imagined white people as the settlers of this land" (Frawley, 2014, p. 152). This "settler colonial project working to deny Indigenous sovereignty and to legitimate white possession" (Pini et al., 2021, p. 3) produced a predominantly white farming community in Australia. Pini et al. (2021) suggest that in the rural sector, whiteness should be interrogated as a difference and that the power structures used to maintain colonialism be noted.

Whether portrayed in a positive or negative light, the Australian zeitgeist is conscious of regional, rural and outback motifs, metaphors and images. Current tropes include the idea of the rural idyll, that is, the "positive image of rural living including peace, security, health, prosperity, home, family and a close-knit community" (Harvey, 2009, p. 356), and the "rural dull" conceived as "a lack of cultural and leisure facilities" (Trussell & Shaw, 2017, p. 435). Colloquially known as 'the bush', rural areas and lives, past and present, hold deep significance in the Australian collective identity (Schaffer 1989, Wallis 2017). The more positive discourses of rural life and of farm families are a product of historical forces, discussed in this chapter, and contributed to the maintenance of agrarianism as a prominent discourse in policy contexts until the 1980s (Cockfield & Botterill, 2012), as well as contributing to decisions by some families about the value of living in country areas (Wallis, 2017).

Although many of the agricultural sector discourses persist over time, the emphasis changes. Both the COVID-19 pandemic and climate change are impacting upon and adding to the discourses in the agricultural sector. Government policies in the rural sector have shifted from post-war efforts to try to balance the discourses of agrarianism, environmentalism, spatial equity and market liberalism to privilege market forces as the dominant policy over the last 30 years (Cockfield & Botterill, 2012). Recently, climate change concerns have impacted on policy formation and contributed to a shift in rural discourses away from the prevailing productivist view of land, back towards a land stewardship perspective, with accompanying changes in notions of optimal land management in rural Australia (Gosnell et al., 2019). Although the rural sector has been long portrayed as being in decline, recent events such as the COVID-19 global pandemic contributed to a net increase in migration from urban to rural areas in Australia (RAI, 2021). Although net migration to rural areas has since lowered, it is still much higher than in pre-pandemic years (RAI, 2022). This trend supports the literature which suggests that Australians in general have a positive perception of rural areas as places of "authenticity, rural abundance and escape from the city" (Wallis, 2017, p. 23). Agrarianism, the notion of the high value of rural life and farming, although diminished in policy initiatives (Cockfield & Botterill, 2012) persists as a high value supported by the general public (Cockfield & Botterill, 2012b). Despite withdrawals of services and supports to rural Australia by successive governments as part of rural restructuring, surveys of urban dwellers have indicated strong support for farm families and a willingness to assist in tough times, such as during droughts (Cockfield & Botterill, 2012b). Discourses often compete and conflict in this way. To sum up, discourses in policy, art and culture, and media include the notions of agrarianism, rural abundance, close-knit communities, safety and prosperity, fear of the unknown, environmentalism, spatial equity and market liberalism, with the weight on each of these discourses shifting as events unfold.

1.3.2 Agricultural sector background

The agricultural farm sector is not homogenous. There are a wide variety of agricultural farm enterprises determined by factors such as location, soil types, rainfall patterns, types of production, historical developments, government policies and many other elements. These impact on property size, function and viability, and result in differences between regions and districts. This leads to many distinct areas, each with their own demographics, socio-economic profiles, and local cultures. Important determinants are the types of production and the level of remoteness.

Types of production are often determined by the geophysical terrain. Figure 1.1 shows the types and locations of agricultural production in Australia.

Figure 1.1

Map displaying three main Australian regions. Cobon et al. (2019)

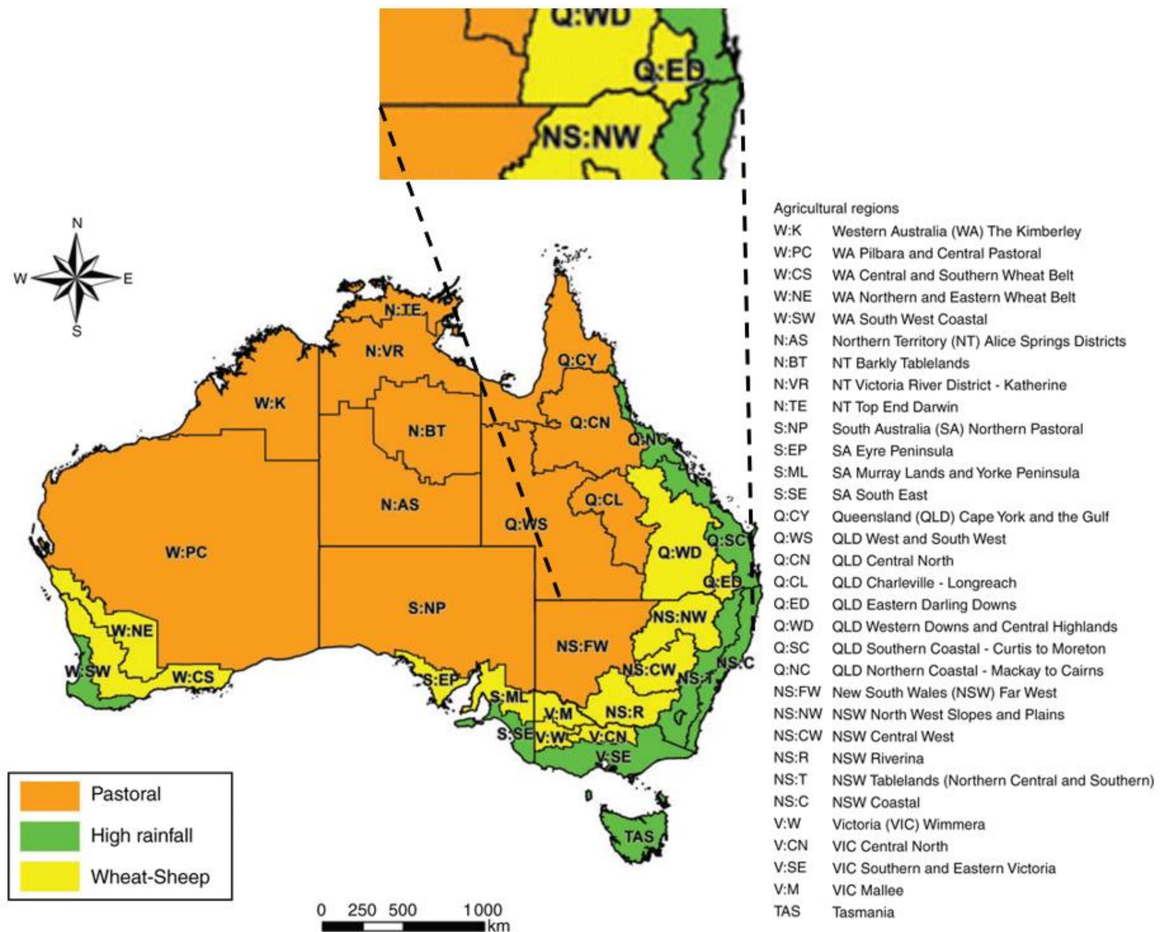


Figure 1.1 above identifies three main regions. The high rainfall zone follows the east coast. The wheat/sheep zone entails a strip beginning just south of the Queensland Central North and continued down through New South Wales, into Victoria and over to the southern coast of South Australia. This land-use type is also predominant in the southwest corner of Western Australia. The third type, which covers the majority of Australia, is the pastoral zone. The subject area is highlighted in Figure 1.3 below, showing that that this research focused on the situation of women predominantly on properties in the wheat/sheep zone, with a few in the pastoral zone in South West Queensland, Western Downs, Southern Downs, and the border areas.

Another way of categorising regions is by their remoteness. The second map (Figure 1.2), The Australian statistical geography standard (ASGS) remoteness structure (2016), differentiates between inner regional, outer regional, remote and very remote regions.

Figure 1.2

The Australian statistical geography standard (ASGS) remoteness structure (2016) (ABS) (ASGS) (2016)

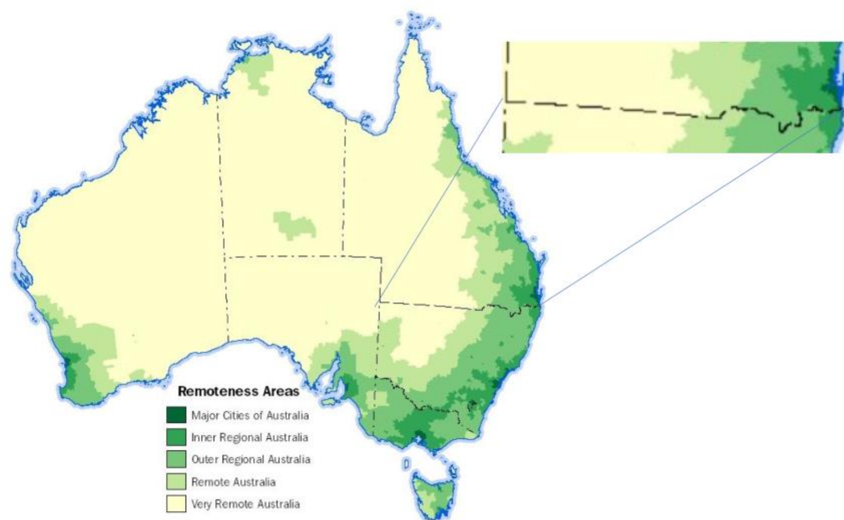


Figure 1.2 illustrates the areas where Australia is divided "into 5 classes of remoteness on the basis of a measure of relative access to services. Remoteness Areas are intended for the purpose of releasing and analysing statistical data to inform research and policy development in Australia" (ABS ASGS, 2016).

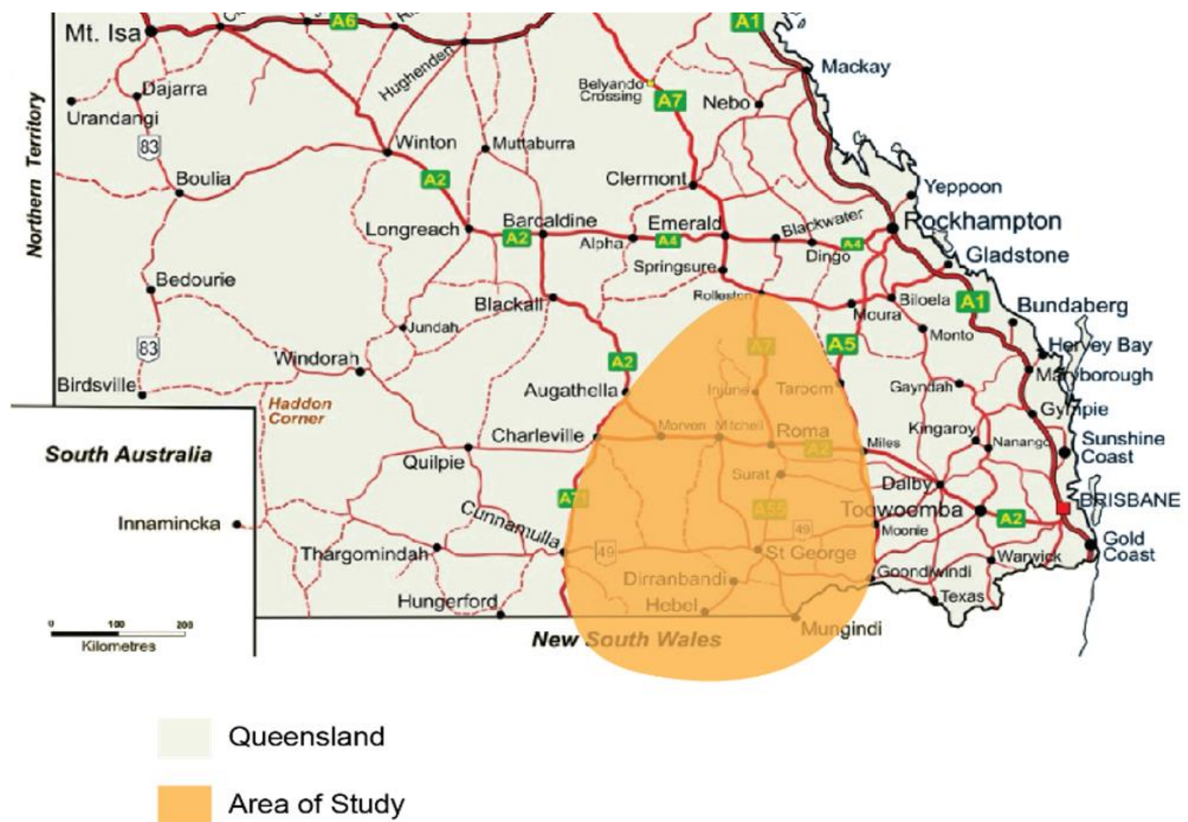
Each of those regions supports different types of towns, industries and farming businesses. This study focused on women who are on broadacre properties in the Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences (ABARES) wheat-sheep zone that is mainly within the Queensland regions which are classified as remote. This includes western and southern areas of the Darling Downs and eastern

areas of South West Queensland (see Figure 1.3). In this region, broadacre properties primarily produce grain, wool, and cattle.

The area of study is mainly in the remote wheat-sheep land use strip of the Western Downs, Southern Downs and South West Queensland (Figure 1.3). Some participants lived in Northern New South Wales just southwest of Goondiwindi. In summary, the participants lived on remote broadacre properties producing a combination of grain, sheep or cattle, and some cotton.

Figure 1.3

Area of the study superimposed on Queensland highway map



Source: World Maps, 2021

As indicated above, this study investigates the lived experiences of women who are part of farm families on relatively large-scale or broadacre agricultural properties in remote Australia. This study does not

directly examine the situation of women in more closely settled areas in inner or outer regional Australia, on smaller farms (less than 7,000 acres), involved in intensive farming such as fruit or vegetable growing, or value-adding. Value-adding includes such enterprises as agri-tourism, marketing products directly to the consumer, and on-farm processing (Wright & Annes, 2016, p. 8).

In conclusion, the women involved in this study live on large properties ranging from 7,000 acres to over 100,000 acres, in a semi-arid climate, on soils that are most suitable for grazing but in some areas can support broadacre farming. Due to remoteness, they face significant challenges in accessing off-farm work and live at considerable distances from their neighbours and small or large towns.

1.3.3 Agricultural sector demographics

Although in this thesis, the terms "farm women" and "women in farm families" (see Appendix 1 Terminology), are often used, the women investigated are in families that most often refer to themselves as 'graziers', 'producers' and 'growers' (See Appendix A Terminology). This is the terminology used by industry to denote operators of large broadacre enterprises (for example in AgForce publications and *Country Life*). The terms 'cropping' and 'farming' are sometimes used for the specific activity of growing produce on broadacre properties, but more often used in horticulture and smaller operations. Although people in cities tend to use the term 'rural' to describe non-metropolitan areas, people in rural areas tend to say that they live in the country (Wardell-Johnson, 2008). The women refer to themselves as country women, women on the land, women married to a grazier or grain-grower, and sometimes as graziers, growers and farmers themselves. They refer to their properties as 'our place', 'the property' or by the name of the place. As one participant demarcated the names, they perceive places between 1,000 acres and 10,000 acres to be farms, 10,000 to 100,000 to be properties, and over 100,000 acres to be stations. By that classification, most of the women in

this study lived on properties. Nonetheless, for consistency, and following Johnsen (2003) (see Section 2.2), this thesis will use the terms farm, family farm and women in farm families.

Another important note is that the category of "rural women" is very diverse. Women outside metropolitan areas include Indigenous and non-Indigenous women in towns and women on the land (Grace and Lennie, 1998). The category 'women in towns' includes locals, temporary professionals and fly-in and fly-out workers. Women who live in the country on rural properties include owners, workers, partners of workers, caretakers and renters. There are also backpackers and tree-changers (Wallis, 2018). In spite of the range of people living in rural areas, with different interests and socio-economic positions, the areas under study are politically conservative, and considered safe seats for the National Party, a party with a mixed heritage, formerly the Country Party, currently representing conservative interests (See Appendix A Terminology). Federally the seats are Maranoa and Groom (held by the National Party since 1974), and in state elections, the electoral districts are Warrego (National Party since 1974) and Southern Downs (National Party since 2001).

The study is focused on women in farm families who are part of the ownership structure in large broadacre properties, in the central parts of the Darling Downs and South West Queensland. These large broadacre properties are worth considerable sums on the market and can produce high returns in good years. The value of farm properties in Australia continues to rise, ensuring high net worth for farm families (Rural Bank, 2021). The median price per hectare of Australian farmland increased by 12.19% in 2020 to $5,907 per hectare (Rural Bank, 2021). Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics (ABARES) asserts that the larger farms, that is, those with receipts above $1 million a year, are more productive, with higher output per hectare than smaller farms, and more financial return to the family landowners (ABARES, 2021). Although government uses the term hectares, colloquially the term acres is often

preferred. Due to large farm sizes in South West Queensland, necessary due to soil types and optimal land use, most of the participants in this study were involved in this type of farm, with turnover in excess of $1 million per annum. Interestingly, ABARES notes that although smaller farms are considered less profitable on average than large farm enterprises, farming families in general are still better off than the average Australian household, with comparable incomes, lower debt and greater net worth (ABARES, 2021). In 2021, ABARES estimated that average farm cash incomes for broadacre farms was expected to increase to $184,000 per farm (ABARES, 2021a). In March 2022, the farm cash income for all broadacre farms was "projected to increase by around 34% to average $278,000 per farm in 2021-22" (ABARES 2022). In South West Queensland, comprised of large properties, where most of the study participants lived, the average farm cash income was $412,000 and the average farm profit was $206,000 (ABARES, 2021b). ABARES calculates farm cash income as total revenues minus total costs and farm profits as farm cash income plus build up in trading stocks minus depreciation and the imputed value of labour of owner-operators and family labour (ABARES, 2021b). In 2021, Queensland's "farmland prices leapt 31.3% … The most dramatic rebounds were in western Queensland where farmland prices leapt almost 34% after chalking up a 39% increase the year before" (MacDonald, 2022). The land prices and incomes indicate the relatively high socio-economic position of the families in this study. Nonetheless, these families, like many similar farm families around Australia, are under considerable financial pressure to increase the size and scale of their holdings to achieve efficiencies (Newsome, 2020, p. 57). Commodity prices have fallen as input costs have risen, causing a decline in terms of trade of 25% from 1981/82 to 2007/08 (Newsome, 2020, p. 57).

Even among a cohort of farm families experiencing relative financial success, the financial situation of women on the land can be very insecure. As described in Chapter 2, women in farm families, who

contribute substantial unpaid on-farm labour and off-farm earnings to the farm business, are often not included in farm ownership structures, do not build up sufficient superannuation, are not able to obtain a range of insurances and as a result, are exposed to considerable financial risk (Broad, 2021). In Australia, it is estimated that women contribute 49.2% of the total output of the agricultural industry, yet are unrecognised and inadequately recompensed (Broad, 2021, p. 4). Many researchers attribute this disadvantage to the enduring "masculine hegemony that tends to erase, mask or diminish the contributions of women to farming" (Luhrs, 2018, p. 78). In the next chapter, the literature describing the patriarchal, patrilineal, conservative discourses that contribute to this situation is outlined.

1.4 Research approach and questions

Using a post-structuralist approach, this study focused on four areas of inquiry and activity to interrogate context-based discourses about this particular group of women in their specific locality. The first of these concerned the identification of the broader discursive framings of women in family farming. Following on from this, the second reflects the challenge that Foucault set for researchers, namely, to try to understand how those narratives or discourses have constituted those subjects (Foucault, 1980, p. 97). The third imperative was to analyse how women in farm families handled these forces, that is, became resilient and empowered to gain wellbeing, through strategies of navigation and negotiation and tactics including accommodation and resistance. The fourth challenge was to make recommendations based on the suggestions by the women about how to support desired transformative change.

The overall research question addressed in this thesis arose from these imperatives as well as the aims and purpose of the study. It is:

> ***From the perspectives of the participants, how do the discourses which framed women in farm families enable and constrain their wellbeing, resilience and empowerment?***

The research sub-questions that follow from this are:

- RQ1. From the perspectives of the participants, what are the dominant discourses of women in farm families?
- RQ2. How do these discourses work to enable and to constrain their wellbeing, resilience and empowerment?
- RQ3. How do women in farm families navigate and negotiate through and within their discourses to increase or decrease their wellbeing, resilience and empowerment?
- RQ4. Given the answers to the preceding questions, how could rural women's organisations, industry bodies and governments better support women in farm families to increase their wellbeing, resilience and empowerment for the benefit of themselves, their families, their farming enterprises and the sector?

For clarification of the research questions, in this thesis a dominant discourse is one which influences the lives and actions of actors because "the mastery of which, at a particular place and time, brings with it the (potential) acquisition of social 'goods' (money, prestige, status, etc.)" (Gee, 1989, p. 8). There are many discourses, but not all of them are influential in every sector. Although discourses can be viewed as omnipresent, like air, navigation in this thesis is action taken to interact with the dominant discourses, similar to navigating a boat on a river taking into account the currents and rocks or a plane noting wind directions, aka discourses: the discourses are strong, but once an actor is aware of them, she can make decisions regarding moving with, between, diagonally across, and if circumstances allow, against the dominant discourses. Negotiation is usually, in the context of this thesis, about "attempting to reach consensus" (Wardell-Johnson, 2008, p. 22) within discourses and with family and business relationships.

1.5 Outline of thesis chapters

Chapter 1 has outlined the research motivations, aims and purposes of this research to investigate the situations of women on the land,

focusing on broadacre farms in the central area of the Darling Downs and South West Queensland. To provide background, some of the historical, geographic, demographic and policy factors of the agricultural context were described. This background is an essential component of the underpinning philosophical approach taken in this research, namely, post-structuralism, which requires an examination of socio-historical forces and issues of power relations in any situation studied. Post-structuralism was also described in order to frame discussions of discursive identities or subjectivities.

Chapter 2: Literature review – Context, again foregrounds Foucault's exhortation to consider each situation studied within its power relations from the wider contexts to the most local and all elements between in the web of points of power and "the plurality of resistances" (Foucault, 1976, p. 96). It includes a model of the farm family unit and how it functions within its local and wider socio-historical contexts. The history of women in agriculture, and the rural women's movement, are then described and the situations of daughters and daughters-in-law are compared. These contextual elements contribute to an understanding of the issues, limitations and opportunities of women currently in farming families, and where and when these enabling and constraining factors were produced. Emerging from this discussion is a portfolio of discourses which shapes the norms, beliefs and values of women in grazing and grain production family operations.

In Chapter 3: Conceptual Framework, the three main concepts of wellbeing, resilience and empowerment are explained in the literature as theoretical concepts and concurrently, in rural literature, in papers which focus on women in rural areas and on farms. Other concepts of subjectivities or discursive identities, and acculturation, are introduced. The chapter concludes with a conceptual framework, a synthesis of the ideas and literature from Chapters 2 and 3.

Chapter 4: Research design expands on post-structuralism as the philosophical base of this study and explains the ontological and

epistemological underpinnings of the research. The position of the researcher in reflexive ethnographic methodology is narrated, with some discussion of the insider/outsider research approach. The dominant discourses, which emerged from the thematic coding and analysis of the data, are identified, to be used as lenses in the data analysis. Other areas of the chapter include ethics, methods, participant selection, coding, and analysis.

Chapters 5, 6 and 7 are the results chapters, presenting the women's lived experiences of their processes of acculturation, wellbeing, resilience and empowerment within the discourses of agrarianism, masculine hegemony and farming as business. As mentioned, these dominant discourses are described and used as lenses in the data analysis chapters to discuss how they formed and influenced the identities and lived worlds of women on the land, and in turn, the resistance strategies undertaken by the women.

Chapter 8 presents the discussion with conclusions, implications, recommendations, and further areas of potential research. Below is Table 1.1, which outlines some of the major concepts used in this thesis.

Table 1.1

Summary of concepts table

Concept	Usage
Discourse Section 1.2	Discourse in this thesis is used to denote a constellation of norms, beliefs and values that shapes people in a particular context. There can be many discourses in any context. Discourse in research constitutes a focus on socio-historical “systems of thoughts composed of ideas, attitudes, courses of actions, beliefs and practices that systematically construct the subjects and world of which they speak” (Lessa, 2006, p. 285). “Discourses are ways of being in the world, they are forms of life which integrate words, acts, values, beliefs, attitudes, and social identities as well as gestures, glances, body positions, and clothes” (Gee 1989, p. 6-7).

Concept	Usage
Dominant discourse	A discourse that has sufficient prominence in the context to be perceived as a central norm, and enough impact to strongly influence people in their financial, social, familial, and personal lives. Again, there can be several dominant discourses in any context, and they can overlap, conflict or complement each other.
Acculturation Section 3.2	Acculturation in this thesis is about the processes women undertake to learn the norms, beliefs and values of the family farm culture they enter upon marriage, and the actions and advice of the receiving family to the newcomers. Acculturation occurs when people learn about and adapt to a culture (Berry, 2005). There are self-reconstruction processes that are part of acculturative integration (Paloma et al. 2009).
Wellbeing Section 3.3	A context-specific state of flourishing and life satisfaction. It is determined by the mix of values of the individual, which are informed by the discourses framing the individual.

Concept	Usage
	For this study, wellbeing is defined in each different context by the values and goals of the individuals and groups in that situation (White, Gaines Jr., & Jha, 2014). This thesis follows Harvey (2009) who broadly defines wellbeing for rural women as "life satisfaction" (p. 353) as determined by their rural social context and values. She draws on feminist ecological views which "conceptualise human flourishing as highly contextualised, changing, and interdependent with the social and ecological surroundings rather than universal, fixed and located within the body" (p. 357)
Resilience Section 3.4	This thesis differentiates between types of resilience actions, such as transformational resilience, which attempt to change power relations, and adaptive resilience measures. Efforts to change power relations are referred to in this thesis as empowerment actions. In this thesis, the concept of resilience is understood as a suite of adaptation capacities used to safeguard wellbeing in situations of risk and adversity and enacted iteratively with empowerment to mitigate adversities. Resilience is "a process linking a set of adaptive capacities to a positive trajectory of functioning and adaptation after a disturbance" (Norris et al., 2008, p. 130). In this thesis, resilience is also used if there is a threat of a future disturbance.

Concept	Usage
	Thus, resilience is “not a ’thing’ that can be seized, held or measured, it is not an attribute or property of a farm or a farmer. Rather, resilience is the emergent result of ever changing patterns of relations, relations that are material, social, cultural” (Darnhofer et al., 2016, p. 118).
Empowerment Section 3.5.1	Empowerment in this thesis are actions which, like transformational resilience, change the power relations to decreased current and future risks, adversities and inequities that impact negatively on wellbeing values and aspirations. Empowerment is “a process through which people reduce their powerlessness and alienation and gain greater control over all aspects of their lives and social environment” (Mullaly, 2007, p. 299 cited in Harvey, 2009, p. 359). Following Anderson et al. 2020, this research considers “women’s empowerment as the ability to make or express strategic and meaningful choices and decisions related to one’s own life” (p. 193).

1.6 Conclusion

This post-structural ethnographic research analyses the lived experiences of women on farms within the discourses, policies and outside factors that impact on farm family enterprises, and thus the challenges and opportunities women face to achieve wellbeing within farm families. Women in farm families must negotiate and navigate many hurdles to achieve wellbeing for themselves and their immediate families. Once achieved, they are in a better position to deal with the outside forces impacting on farm families, such as climate change. Women in farm families are key to the sustainability and resilience of their enterprises, and in aggregate, to the sector. With more being asked of the agricultural sector, including increases in productivity and production, as well as implementing climate mitigation measures, it is important to support the women who contribute so much to the success of the sector. Women's right to visibility, recognition and equality, includes women in the agricultural sector. This thesis provides background information and new knowledge of how women in farm family enterprises navigate and negotiate the dominant discourses, and achieve wellbeing, resilience and empowerment, which not only strengthens themselves and their families, but cascades through their farm enterprises and the agricultural sector. The thesis concludes with recommendations about how researchers, policy makers and practitioners can best support these women.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW - CONTEXT

2.1 Introduction

Chapter 1 introduced this study of women on the land in the central Darling Downs and South West Queensland, and described the rationale behind the overarching research question:

> ***From the perspective of the participants, how do the discourses framing women in farm families enable and constrain their wellbeing, resilience and empowerment?***

The purpose of this chapter is to outline the existing literature regarding the situations of women in farm families in order to provide context for the research, and the research analysis. Following the precepts of post-structuralism, this chapter begins at the local level: literature on the structures of the family agricultural enterprise (see Section 2.2). From there, the chapter outlines socio-historical influences on the agricultural sector including the farm family unit, noting the formation and manifestation of discourses in these "cultural landscapes" (Johnsen, 2003, p. 133) (see Section 2.3).

This chapter explores the perspectives offered by the literature regarding the unique discourses that women in broadacre producer and grazier families inhabit and how these cultural expectations or discourses were formed, and how they impact on women. Some of the challenges and opportunities of the family farm situation are canvassed, such as climate events, rural restructuring, and the nexus of family and farm interactions. Due to the nature of qualitative research, this literature review was an iterative undertaking. Different strands of literature were accumulated throughout the study as considerations emerged from the data. New insights generated by the data required new literature searches. The final outcomes of these processes are incorporated into this chapter.

In this chapter, throughout the five context sections, literature which illustrates and explains some of the ‘systems of thought’ or discourses in the Australian agricultural sector is examined. The purpose of this review is to outline the range of factors contributing to the development of the discourses, as well as to illuminate the many discourses at play in rural areas. This identification of prevalent discourses available to women on the land supports the analysis section in Chapter 4 which reveals which discourses emerged as the most significant to the interviewees.

2.2 The family farm unit

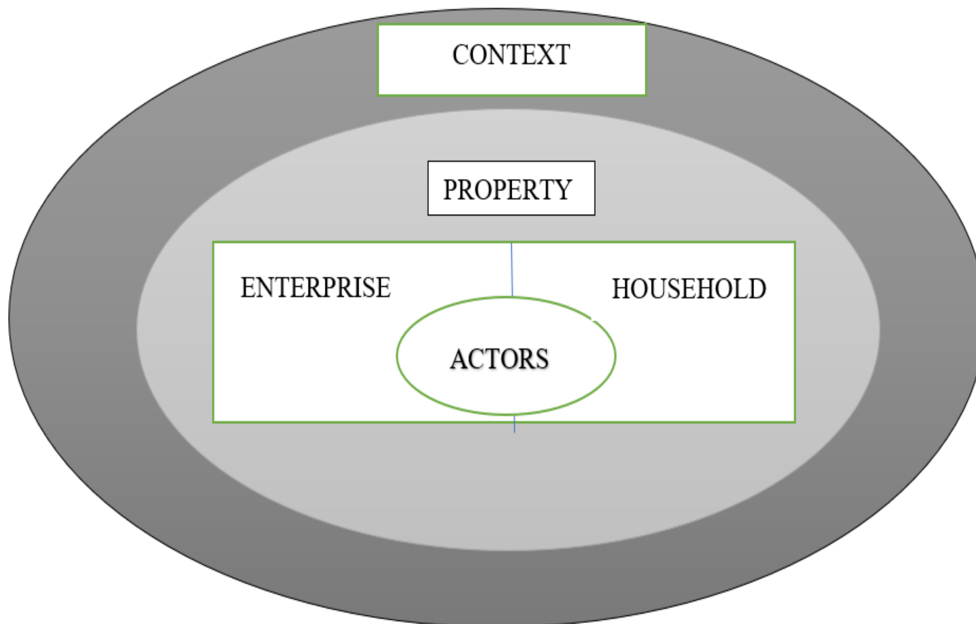
In Australia, in 2018-19, there were approximately 87,800 farms of which 57,300 were categorised as broadacre farms (ABARES, Insights 2021, p. 4). Johnsen (2003) devised a conceptual model to illustrate the main elements of most broadacre farms. This model is discussed in this section. In the following section, a modified version of this model is introduced. It provides a touchstone schema for this thesis.

2.2.1 Johnsen’s model

Sarah Johnsen (2003) developed a model (Figure 2.1) to illustrate the unique interdependency of the elements of the family farm, that is, its configuration comprised of the farm enterprise or business and the farm household (p. 131).

Figure 2.1

Johnsen's model of the farm unit situated contextually (Johnsen 2003, p. 131)



The people or actors in the household are the same people who work in the enterprise. Differentiating this arrangement from other family businesses is the land (property) component, which anchors and makes possible the other domains. Figure 2.1 also shows the other important contribution of Johnsen's model in locating the three domains of the family farm within the cultural landscapes or context of the farm situation.

Johnsen's model emphasises that the family farm unit is not just a farm business. The household where the family lives is co-located with the agricultural business on a specific property, which in some situations is called the farm. Johnsen calls attention to the farm unit configuration which usually consists of a household and a business co-existing on the land that is the necessary resource to operate an agricultural business. Johnsen asserts that her model highlights the interconnectedness of those three factors, which she notes have been "curiously absent from geographical analyses" (Johnsen 2003, p. 132). Furthermore, Johnsen contends that context has also been markedly absent from literature

analysing family farms (2003). As a result, she added context to her model in order to foreground its significant impact on the family farm and its relationship with the other elements. She notes that "the family farm is not just an economic and social entity, but also a physical space invested with socio-cultural meaning, much of which is embodied in material and symbolic phenomena such as land and stock" (Johnsen, 2003, p. 132).

Johnsen explains the role of the actors, living in the household, who simultaneously own, or partially own, the enterprise, and are responsible for its operation. She draws on Hindess (1986) to characterise actors as people "endowed with the ability to develop strategies and act within a certain set of opportunities and constraints" (2003, p. 133). Johnsen asserts, following Gray (1998), that the identities of the land, the farm and the family conflate, contributing to the "consubstantiality" of "beings and a place [which] become united in a common substance" (Gray, 1998, p. 345 cited by Johnsen, 2003, p. 132). Smith (2015, p. 40), following Johnsen (2003), concurs with the idea that "people are connected to land and places through the social institutions of property". In post-structuralist terms, the context is infused with and constituted by discourses, or systems of thought, such as the social institutions of property. Johnsen describes context in her model as including the biophysical type and conditions of farming for a particular farm family unit, the economics of the time and place, and local cultural factors including "culturally embedded expectations" (Johnsen 2003, p. 143). Johnsen claims that her schemata provide "a means of assessing the degree to which the contours of change in any given locality are contingent upon its economic, biophysical, socio-demographic, political, and cultural landscapes. Seen in this way, context is not an impassive backdrop for human action (Thrift, 1996), but something that may powerfully circumscribe actors' 'room for manoeuvre'" (Johnsen 2003, p. 133).

Johnsen aspires to broaden rural research analyses of family farming, and to offer a more nuanced and contingent understanding of

the range of farm family responses to exogenous change, such as agricultural restructuring (Johnsen 2003, p. 146). Her diagram is therefore a useful way to conceptualise the interrelationships between the actors and their domains of household and enterprise on their land within their given socio-economic discourses.

The co-location of the household, the workplace and the land, or place where actors live in farm situations, gives rise to other factors that inform the realities of farm families. Casey (2001) describes the philosophical importance for people of both their "work-world" (p. 684) and their "place-world" (p. 687). For people living in farm unit configurations as conceptualised by Johnsen (2003), absorption in the work-world, meaningful engagement with the place-world and family relationships all occur at the same location. The "concernful absorption in whatever work-world lies closest to us" contributes significantly to a sense of self (Heidegger 1962, p. 101 cited in Casey 2001, p. 684). Likewise, Casey (2001, p. 684) uses that concept to discuss the development of a "concernful absorption" in a place-world, especially in "thickly lived places". He suggests that there can be a sensory and kinesthetic connection between the body and the place, especially a place-world that "is not only perceived or conceived but also actively *lived* and receptively *experienced*" (Casey, 2001, p. 687; italics in original). In this way, he posits that place and self co-constitute especially where they are "intimately interlocked in the world of concrete work" (Casey, 2001, p. 684).

The intertwining of the home life, or household, with both the farm enterprise workplace and the land owned place is important to highlight in order to understand the implications of discourses which construct the worlds and identities of women who are in that interconnected "place world" (Casey, 2001). The property or 'farm' is the physical, emotional and financial site where this construction takes place. It is worth noting that "while discourse constructs subjects and their lives, this construction is never complete and final. Rather a constant formative process implies

action and agency from all involved as a permanent state of mutual formation and shaping" (Lessa 2006, p. 286). Family farm members tend to have a greater commitment and involvement than members of non-farm family businesses (Luhrs, 2018, p. 78). Family farms are also constituted by outside influences and ideologies which shape attitudes and practical considerations such as farm ownership structures and other management decisions (Luhrs, 2018, p. 78). In other words, the intensity of the lived situation of farm families, their attachment to their work-world and place-world, combined with discursive influences from the wider culture contribute to the mutual formation and shaping of their norms, beliefs and values, or discourses, and consequent actions.

2.2.2 The household, the enterprise, the land and the actors

This subsubsection outlines the literature pertaining to what Johnsen (2003) refers to as the farm unit, that is the enterprise, the household and the property, occupied and worked by the actors, or the members of the farm family. The general business and legal structures employed by farm families is overviewed. The role of women in sustaining farm enterprises through their unpaid on-farm work and off-farm wage contributions is described.

The family farm is one of the most successful business models worldwide. This is due to several factors including its ability to respond quickly to new situations, and its reliance on family willingness to make sacrifices and learn from mistakes (Stephens, 2020). Feminist researchers have pointed out that the family farm's high productivity and success is in part due to highly motivated family contributions, including women's unpaid labour (Alston, 2009; Pini, 2007). Without understanding the physical, economic, social and familial dynamics of family farming, and common norms, beliefs and values of farm families, it is difficult to comprehend how it is, for instance, that over a third of all female farmers and farm managers in Australia are unpaid, leaving these women in a situation of high financial risk (Broad, 2021). Without pay, women do not

accrue superannuation, and records of their contributions may be difficult to source. If there is a marriage breakdown, women can suffer great financial hardship (Broad, 2021).

The following is a description of the typical farm family configuration, with the caveat that there are always families, and individuals, who will vary from this. Farms are "structured as single owner farms, as varying forms of partnerships between family members and as complex entities such as trusts or companies with family members acting as directors, managers and/or paid employees" (Luhrs, 2018, p. 81). Referring to Johnsen's diagram (Figure 2.1), the household, or home, and the enterprise are usually physically located on the same piece of land that the family owns and which provides the basis for their agricultural business, whether that is growing crops or stock (Johnsen, 2003). Many elements of the enterprise, in fact, are conducted typically from an office within the home. The other, more operational aspects are conducted from the work shed, the paddocks, and sometimes from vehicles. Many farm women have embraced the technical and computer requirements of modern farming and work in the farm office (Hay, 2018), and many work outside with animals as well as machinery (Pini, 2005b). The household and the enterprise are inextricably intertwined, with men in general working in the enterprise and women working in both spheres, taking on the bulk of the home duties as well working in the enterprise, both indoors and outside (Alston, 2003; Broad. 2021). Conway et al. (2016) assert that farm family life "throughout the world is characterised by the almost inseparable intimate integration of home, work, memories and family tradition" (p. 166).

The structure of the farm family includes a household and an enterprise on the land that is being used to generate income and wealth, operated by family members, paid and unpaid, united by close family ties and connected with expectations of sharing the work, the risks, the downturns and also the benefits of the farm family unit. The physical, emotional and financial connection between the household and the

enterprise contributes to family members functioning as unpaid or underpaid labour. Such a labour arrangement is both a disadvantage and an advantage to the family farm unit (Stephens, 2020, p. 63). Being able to utilise underpaid or unpaid family labour when needed contributes to the viability of many farm enterprises. The disadvantages include the difficulties men, women and older children on farms face when seeking off-farm work, when they are required to be available for work on the farm, and the challenges and distress that arises if expectations are not met.

Rural women are vital to the functioning of family farms, rural communities, and regional Australia. Women are estimated to contribute 40% to 50% of the output of Australian farm families (Broad, 2021, p. 4), which includes the office work of planning, management, bookwork, technology and finances, as well as outside work in production (Pini, 2005b). Although men also undertake off-farm work to support the household and the enterprise, women contribute 84% of the total off-farm income of farm families (Broad, 2021, p. 5). Women take on the primary care of children and family and extended family through their "nurturing roles" (Alston, 2018, p. 12) as well as domestic duties (Broad, 2021). Further, they are the mainstays of community volunteer services and community organisations, thus building and maintaining the social capital of rural areas (Harvey, 2009). Broad asserts that for the Australian sector, "when considering on- and off-farm work, domestic duties, and volunteering, the work of women in agriculture is valued at $23.6 billion, equalling 49.2% of the total output of the industry" (Broad 2021, p. 4).

Despite this, the women's share of decision-making power, ownership and financial benefits is limited (Broad, 2021). Climate change related events have increased the level of work expected of women in farm families without commensurate increases in influence (Alston, 2018). Despite the contributions and sacrifices women in farm families make, their own financial security is at risk. Broad (2021) identifies a challenge for the industry being the "cultural tendency to exclude women

from financial decision-making power" (p. 6) in primary producer families. There are also issues with lack of superannuation, caused by the farm structure custom of reinvesting excess funds back into the farm rather than into superannuation, and the practice of farm enterprises to discourage the drawing of wages (Broad 2021). Broad (2021, p. 6) asserts that women face legal barriers "implemented through trusts and Binding Financial Agreements [which] may also see women receive little to no monetary remuneration for what can be a lifetime of work for them". Off-farm income earned by women is often used for household expenses as well as financial support for the enterprise, leaving women with very little chance to accumulate their own funds (Broad 2021).

The reward for provision of unpaid or underpaid labour, particularly for the children in farm families, is eventual ownership of the enterprise and the land (Stephens, 2020, p. 63). The processes of intergenerational land transfer are therefore very important for farm families (Stephens, 2020). However, farm daughters report that "fathers represented the position of authority within the farming families, and that their own life choices would be determined by rural ideology that generally favoured patrilineal intergenerational family farm transfer …" (Luhrs, 2016, p. 1088). Whether co-owners or not, women are at particular risk should their husband die or the marriage break down. Farms can be passed on to the next generation, leaving women with small allowances and Rights of Residence, but effectively limited financial independence (Broad, 2021). Women in divorce situations can be torn between their own needs and those of their children in inheriting a viable property, and often forego a fair settlement to support the future needs of their children (Wendt & Hornosty, 2010, p. 56). At any rate, fighting for a fair settlement can be complex in situations of no records of unpaid labour (Broad, 2021). A disquieting scenario is that of women who work hard all their lives, on farm and off-farm, supporting the household and the farm enterprise, without ownership, and without financial decision-making power regarding such issues as superannuation, debt levels, insurance and other matters

that might affect them (Broad, 2021). Even worse is the situation of farm women experiencing domestic violence who remain in the relationship because "they valued their property and risked losing their economic investment, risked jeopardising their children's future inheritance, wanted to protect the family name, and often had a personal attachment to the family farm" (Wendt & Hornosty, 2010, p. 55). Researchers in Canada also found that concern for the financial viability of the farm was a major deterrent for women considering leaving family violence situations (Leipert & George, 2008).

With respect to official, that is, political and legal, recognition, the invisibility of women's contributions and roles in agriculture have been noted by researchers (Alston, 2018) and the media (Pini et al., 2021). Although many women work in the farm enterprise itself, it is difficult to gather statistics on their actual hours as often they do not fit into categories such as farm self-employed, or they may not self-identify as agricultural workers on the Census due to lack of pay or historical narratives which discouraged them from such identities (Broad, 2021). The lack of statistics regarding on-farm work of women in the family aids the invisibility of women's contributions in agriculture (Alston, 2018; Broad, 2021).

Another factor is that agriculture in Australia and other western countries is "a masculine domain of social practice where men see themselves as the farmers and the name 'farmer' is analogous to the identities and practices of men" (Coldwell, 2010, p. 171). In Australia, women were not legally able to identify themselves as farmers for statistical purposes until 1994 (Newsome, 2020). Recently, social media, and mainstream media have attempted to make visible women's roles and contributions through projects like "The Invisible Farmer", a collaboration between Museums Victoria and the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, which generated a series of television episodes highlighting individual women farmers (Pini et al., 2021). Agricultural organisations and advocacy groups such as Agrifutures have instituted rural women's

awards to further highlight their contributions (Agrifutures, 2020). However, these measures do not directly improve the ability of women to be involved in decision-making or improve their financial security (Broad, 2021).

Most women involved in family farm enterprises have married into the situation as most farm businesses and land are owned primarily by men (Broad, 2021), due to common patrilineal succession practices (Voyce, 2007). In this study, all the participants were or had been either married or in long-term relationships with the male landowner, or the landowner's son. In the situation of most women in farm families, a salient micro system is her immediate family comprised of herself, her husband and her children as well as her husband's extended family, who are often involved in the family farm business and maintain a proprietary interest in the farm unit (Wendt & Hornosty, 2010). The women enter the situation as daughters-in law, which can be a difficult role on an intergenerational farm "where women may feel excluded or devalued" (Gerrard, et al., 2004, p. 63) and where they are widely distrusted by the receiving families for their potential to damage the financial strength of the farm enterprise in the event of marriage breakdown (Broad, 2021). The women enter the situation as outsiders, often unaware of the automatic distrust accorded to them, their position as "outlaws" (Pini 2007), and the complex family and legal situation they are about to inhabit (Voyce, 1993).

In the micro system of the family agricultural situation, women contend with the challenges of invisibility, lack of recognition, issues of agency and empowerment, as well as the family business issues of sustainability in the face of climate events, structural change and global trends (Alston, 2018; Anderson, 2009; Broad, 2021). They often ensure the viability and continuation of the family farm through their off-farm income (Cassidy, 2019). Their workload and responsibilities are not commensurate with their ownership, decision-making power or financial advantage (Broad, 2021). Yet, they remain committed to their family

farm unit (Wendt & Hornosty, 2010), to the idea of the farm, and to farm survival (Chiswell, 2016).

The literature conveys several overarching ideas about the nature and role of women on farms, portraying them as satisfied and happy, "stoic, accustomed to adversity, self-reliant and with a focus on family and volunteer community roles" (Harvey, 2009, p. 355). Teather (1996) contends that until the 1970s when the baby boomers came of age with their ideas of gender equality, women in the countryside were happy with their "domestic ideology". She quotes Parker (1988) who, speaking of the New Zealand situation, asserted that women were in a "cocoon subservience to an inherited set of patriarchal and matriarchal requirements" (Teather, 1996, p. 4, quoting Parker, 1988, p. 184). More current explanations of this loyalty attributes it to "their own patriarchal indoctrination and compliance" (Chiswell, 2016, p. 114, citing Price and Evans 2006, p. 291). Luhrs (2016) states that the "role of farmers' wives … is to look after their husbands' wellbeing and their sons' prospects as future farmers, to prepare their daughters for life off the family farm and to help their husbands when needed. Wives thereby, either consciously or unconsciously, uphold the patriarchal order in farming communities" (Luhrs, 2016, p. 1087).

Furthermore, the wives "help to ensure continued adherence to and a reshaping of particular norms through their role in the cultural and biological reproduction of the family" (Cassidy, 2019, p. 239). Harvey (2009) suggests that another important role taken on by women as wives and mothers is to sustain the notion or imaginary of the rural idyll.

In summary, the literature suggests that women in primary production families work very hard, are essential to the survival of the family farm unit but are not empowered to attain acknowledgment or adequate remuneration, decision-making power or financial security. They are seen in the literature as subservient, and possibly complicit in that status. They are also seen as pivotal in creating and recreating patriarchal norms in their culture and families to pass down to their children.

2.3 Context: socio-historical, cultural, political

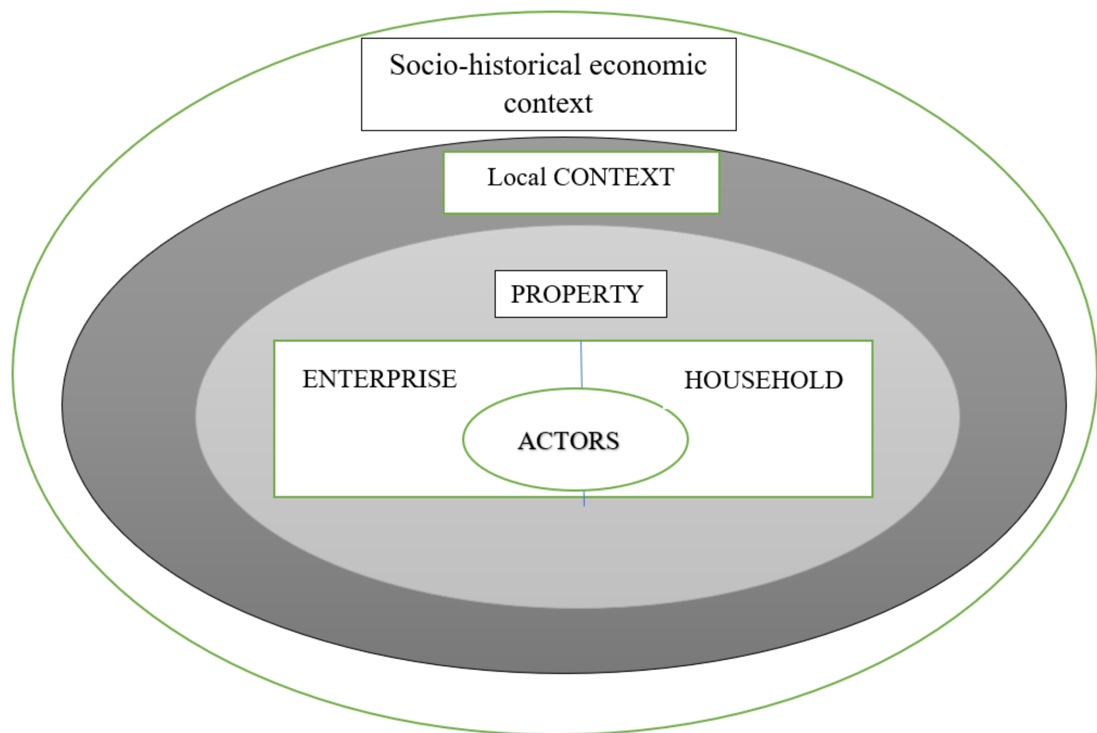
The purpose of this section is to provide an overview of the socio-historical forces that shaped the discourses prevalent in the rural sector. Some indicative discourses are introduced at the end of the section. This overview introduces a new extended version of Johnsen's model that has been done for this study.

2.3.1 Johnsen's model extended

In Johnsen's (2003) model (Figure 2.1), the context part of a farm unit is comprised of local and regional biophysical, economic and cultural fabrics. Biophysical aspects included weather and climate considerations as well as land types and appropriate land use. Economic, in her model, encompassed economic opportunities for off-farm work. Cultural fabrics included culturally embedded expectations, privacy constraints, cultural prescriptions of behaviours or farm orthodoxies, cultural drought strategies and, in the area studied by Johnsen, conservatism or cautious attitudes to change (Johnsen, 2003, pp 143-145). Most of these local cultural norms are embodied in and expressed by the local community.

Figure 2.2

Johnsen's model extended by this study's researcher



In this reconfiguration of Johnsen's model (Figure 2.2), another layer of context has been added. Where Johnsen contributed the concept of the importance of the local context (Johnsen 2003), this thesis asks how the discourses in broader contexts enable and constrain women. Therefore, for this study, the researcher has extended Johnsen's model (Figure 2.2) to include the idea that discourses are formed in the local context as well as in the larger socio-historical contexts (Lessa, 2006). This extended model is used to frame the following component of the literature review as well as to ground the thesis in the physical and economic structures of family farming within the broader context of the historical, economic and political forces which have shaped the cultural fabric of rural communities.

2.3.2 History of rural Australia

To understand the formation of discourses in rural Australia, it is important to consider the history of its settlement. The development of rural Australia was a complex and contradictory process of land grants, policies and settlement schemes that were disrupted and reconfigured by squatters, settlers, governments, and administrations (Dutton, 1985). Governments encouraged the development of a stable rural sector to produce food and fibre, occupy and build the nation, and displace Indigenous people (Frawley, 2014; Miller, 2015). Various governance proposals, such as instituting a formal landed gentry class in Australia, were considered, some used with modifications, some tried and rejected (Dutton, 1985). Administrators sought ways to transform convicts and other anti-authoritarian early citizens into conscientious law-abiding agricultural producers (Voyce, 2007).

In the early settlement period, a class known as the squattocracy developed, creating and sustaining an informal landed gentry (Dutton, 1995). Initially, government policies and land prices were set deliberately to create a landed class and a class of "propertyless workers" to ensure that there were enough landless people to provide labour, with the hope that they would work hard for the property owners and eventually save money to purchase their own holdings (Miller, 2015, p. 142). Many of the settlers quickly breached the limits of surveyed land and occupied vast tracts of Crown land as squatters, unable to be reined in by the governments of the day (Miller, 2015). By the end of the 19th century, those squatters had achieved great wealth and influence as pastoralists and had been able to obtain freehold to much of their land (Dutton, 1995; Miller, 2015). Purchasing land by that time required a considerable capital outlay. As a result, rural society became even more stratified (Waterhouse, 2000).

A major aim of settlement policies in Australia in the early 19th century was to populate the country with hard-working, capable, practical

people who would produce the food needed by colonies and provide independent revenue for the administration (Voyce, 2007; Miller, 2015). It was decided that white (Frawley, 2014) respectable families headed by physically strong men were best placed to fulfil this mandate (Voyce, 2007). Voyce explained:

> A stable economy was believed to be most effectively achieved through a patriarchal form of family structure based on the values that privileged productive male labour. Such a goal endorsed the notion of classical economics that defined women in terms of their status as dependents and as mothers and housewives (Pujol, 1995). This prioritisation was seen as necessary to keep the farm viable in the long term. The hegemonic values of male labour ('power') were endorsed in a variety of different discoveries of 18th-century science ('knowledge') (Voyce, 2007, p. 138).

Policies were set to encourage stable families to take up settlement and prosper (Voyce, 2007), and infrastructure projects such as irrigation and rail links were established to assist settlers (Wardell-Johnson, 2008) Concurrently, the image of the typical rural Australian was created, promoted, changed and re-created by Australian popular culture in the 19th and 20th centuries, including journals such as *The Bulletin*, stage plays and melodramas, and later, films (Waterhouse, 2000). Waterhouse claimed that some of the traits originally attributed to itinerant bush workers expanded to include landowners and their families, such as being "tough and resilient, committed to mateship, resourceful, and defiant of authority" as well as utilitarian and pragmatic (Waterhouse, 2000, p. 221). At least until the 1980s, farmers were perceived as embodying these characteristics by policy makers and in the public imagination (Cockfield & Botterill, 2012).

Governments have had and have significant control over land use, shaping it by policies to deliver current priorities (Voyce, 2007; Chan, 2020, p. 19). In the 19th century, governments sought to replace to large

squattocracy stations with small to medium-sized family farms in order to increase food production both domestically and for export (Chan, 2020, p. 16). This change in land use was not easily accomplished. There was a clash of ideologies in the settlement of Australia with conflicts and uncomfortable overlaps between a range of discourses.

There were those who, inspired by emancipation movements in Europe in the mid 19th century, supported the rights of Indigenous people, and those who sought to displace them (Miller, 2015). The British government's attempts to grant usufructuary rights for Indigenous people within pastoral leases in the late 19th century gave way to ideas of closer settlement that did not include Indigenous people (Miller, 2015). Frawley contends that the "desire for closer settlement was simultaneously a desire for white settlers of British heritage" (2014, p. 152) but demonstrates that despite government rhetoric, Indigenous people and many non-white immigrant groups played significant roles in settlement in Australia (Frawley, 2014). There was a fear that white men might not be able to handle the heavy physical demands of settlement, for instance clearing prickly pear in Queensland (Frawley, 2014). However, drawing on Waterhouse (2004), Frawley identifies the white settler archetype, the "yeoman farmers, graziers, cockies, squatters, bushmen and battlers … [with an] intertwined emphasis on labour and industry" (Frawley, 2014, p. 148). This white male archetype contributed to the current discourse of rural Australia as a masculine domain (Coldwell, 2010).

Although there were early attempts to develop a formal feudal tradition in Australia based upon European settlement, complete with landed gentry (Dutton, 1985), Australia followed its European counterparts in the 19th century into democracy, a capitalist free-market economy and agrarian capitalism (Price, 2010). The agrarian discourse "draws on perspectives of farming as a moral occupation that offers independence and is based on self-sufficiency" (Wardell-Johnston, 2008, p. 11). As in most other western nations, agricultural regions were shielded against the excesses of capitalism through the 19th and most of

the 20th centuries with protections such as tax concessions, subsidies, price floors and government agricultural extension services (Cockfield & Botterill, 2012; O'Keeffe, 2017). Wardell-Johnson (2008) identifies the *Country Life* era from 1900 to WWII, wherein a nation ideal of "country-mindedness" was fostered (p. 15). Policies were developed to encourage closer settlement, partly by decentralising, basing state agencies in rural towns which provided "critical human and social capital to maintain resilience in rural Australia" (Wardell-Johnston, 2008, pp. 15-16). It was considered important to protect rural landscapes and people, "ahead of the imperatives of market forces" (Wardell-Johnston, 2008, p. 15). Following that was the "Post-War Reconstruction" era, driven by government "planned social ideals" and supported by other organisations such as the Catholic Rural Movement and the Country Party, both promoting the value to Australia of healthy farming families (Wardell-Johnston, 2008, p. 16).

Until the 1980s, most developed countries protected farming by encouraging production while instituting policies and safety nets which protected farm incomes from market fluctuations, droughts, and other risks of agricultural production (Cockfield & Botterill, 2012, O'Keeffe, 2017). Cockfield and Botterill suggest that this tendency was "supported by the agrarian cultural and political narratives about the special economic, cultural and social roles of agriculture" (2012, p. 343). These roles included the already mentioned purposes of populating rural areas, providing food and fibre for domestic consumption and export, and land stewardship. Examples of government support included decentralising power infrastructure, such as hydro power and brown coal, resourcing regional towns (Wardell-Johnson, p. 16), and the work of departments of primary industries in disseminating information such as the latest research on methods, varieties and processes (Cockfield & Botterill, 2012; Pomeroy, 2015). Protection included the direct assistance of input subsidies such as fuel rebates and drought payments; indirect aid encompassed price floors, income smoothing, tariffs, grower-controlled

commodity boards and statutory marketing arrangements (Cockfield & Botterill, 2012; Pomeroy, 2015; O'Keeffe, 2017).

Some of these supports were originally instigated to offset the negative effects on producers of other government policies such as pressures to increase exports (Cockfield & Botterill, 2012; Pomeroy, 2015). In short, the societal discourses and policies of governments performed the functions of establishing a stable, conservative, white male-dominated sector to claim and populate rural Australia, create a white settler society, contribute to a national identity, provide food and fibre to the Australian population, then to provide export revenue for the country.

Australia maintained these state-centred policies until the early 1980s, at which point the discursive constructions of farmers and farming by policy makers began to change (O'Keeffe 2017). Partly this was due to urban challenges to the "moral and eugenic discourses that favoured rural life" (Wardell-Johnston, 2008, p. 18). Mostly the impetus was a neoliberal trajectory in many western nations in all facets of policy (O'Keeffe, 2017). Since the 1980s, in Australia, policies have evolved from protected agricultural development to a "hybrid neoliberalism" (Baldwin et al., 2019, p. 567). This ideology promotes the ideas of competition, individual responsibility, and economic benefits as the criteria for all policy decisions (Birch, 2017). With the removal of regulations, the wealthy profit "… at the cost of shifting risk and burdens onto communities and ecosystems" (Baldwin et al., 2019, p. 569). This shifting of risk and burden is particularly evident in the rural sector (Baldwin et al., 2019). Food-growing inherently incurs high risk, which is why it has been the provenance of family farmers (Chan, 2021, p. 16). Now farm families are being asked to be responsible for the risk of climate events on their own businesses and to help to ameliorate the emissions footprint of the rest of the country (Baldwin et al., 2019). Yet they are simultaneously expected to accept the individualist rationale that denies support to farms and rural communities (O'Keeffe, 2017).

Neoliberal policies in Australia have resulted in the withdrawal of supports from the agricultural sector, and a gradual reframing of issues outside of the control of agricultural producers, such as extreme climate events, to become the responsibility of individual primary producers (Bryant & Garnham, 2015, Baldwin et al., 2019). Neoliberal policies use "market rule as the mechanism for individualising the cost of environmental degradation in the productivity agriculture" in Australia (Wardell-Johnson, 2008, p. 22). Although the economic rationalism defining rural policies may have been hybrid for some time, there are very few supports left from the post-war period of protection (Cockfield & Botterill, 2012; O'Keeffe, 2017). O'Keeffe (2017, p. 324) argues that government policy changes from the 1980s onward served to atomise farmers. For instance, post-war statutory marketing authorities for the wheat, dairy, wool, barley and egg industries "emphasised the collective interest of farmers" (p. 324). New policies since the 1980s encouraged and rewarded farmers to act in self-interest. The theory was that individuals could bargain more effectively and efficiently alone. The outcome was that farmers became "re-constituted as tools assisting the productive use of resources" (O'Keeffe, 2017, p. 325), thus facilitating farmer exits, mental health issues and the deterioration of rural communities. Researchers contend that such policy changes failed to consider the multiple factors that constitute productive farming, including value sets, reciprocal community support, judicious use of land markets as a sustainability tool, land stewardship, family energy and not least, passion for the vocation itself (Pomeroy, 2015; Darnhofer et al., 2016). Privileging neo-liberal policies above all others runs the risk of losing other important discourses, such as land stewardship and community responsibilities (O'Keefe, 2017).

Other developed countries leaning towards market liberalism instituted much more comprehensive measures to compensate for the withdrawal of support for rural areas than did Australia (Cockfield & Botterill, 2012b). Both the EU and the US continue to directly subsidise

farm products, connect environmental protection funding to landowners, and support ongoing regional development initiatives (Cockfield & Botterill, 2012b). Most other Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries shifted course away from productivist regimes in the 1990s, recognising the need for multifunctional agriculture (environmental protection, heritage, food production) and maintaining support and subsidies (Newsome, 2020, p. 58). In Australia, most assistance has been intermittent and based on grants, thus, easily discontinued (Cockfield & Botterill, 2012b). Farming families have been told to "get big or get out' (Newsome, 2020, p. 57). Further, while withdrawing support from agricultural family enterprises, government maintenance and development of rural infrastructure and services, such as railways, schools, hospitals and government services also were eroded (Stehlik et al., 2000). These measures have undermined family farming as a social construct, instead encouraging industrial agriculture (Bryant & Garnham, 2015; O'Keeffe 2017). O'Keeffe suggests that these powerful policy changes may backfire, and criticises:

> "… the subtle discursive shifts which have helped shift responsibility for farming, from the State to the self-reliant individual, and most recently, towards the private sector. Whereas the construct of the self-reliant, independent farmer has been used to facilitate deregulation of agricultural industries, this recent shift in power towards the private sector may potentially undermine farmers' autonomy and increase dependence on private sector investment" (O'Keeffe, 2017, p. 318).

Dependence on corporate investment may have undesirable impacts on the strengths, including productivity, innovation and efficiency, brought to grain and animal production by flexible, experimental, passionate family farm producers (Pomeroy, 2015; O'Keefe, 2017). Farming is best "understood in terms of the relations in which it is

entangled … the interdependency of farm, farmer and context” (Darnofer et al., 2016, p. 117).

The productivist regime adhered to by government in Australia affects women who wish to farm in several ways. The high costs of capital to buy land and resource inputs to access and maintain the viability of a farm enterprise discourage women from entering the industry (Newsome, 2020). The productivist agriculture regime in Australia contributed to the exclusion of women “from spaces of knowledge and decision making roles” (Newsome, 2020, p. 58) (see also Section 2.4.3).

Furthermore, the small to medium size family farm is being hollowed out as farms get bigger and more corporatised (Chan, 2021). The combination of these socio-political and historical forces forms a constellation of discourses that women in primary production families must negotiate. In recent times this sector has seen agrarianism in government policies supplanted by neoliberal discourses emanating from governments and amplified by media which undercut family farms and also rural communities (Cockfield & Botterill, 2012). This has featured climate events being framed as a personal responsibility for those who farm (O’Keeffe, 2017). A related change is the emerging discourse of land management as a climate change mitigation process, that is, reducing the potentially serious consequences of future climate events, which may draw on older discourses, such as agrarianism (Rickards & Howden, 2012). As a result of these societal ideologies, farm families face government and industry media exhorting them to produce more with diminishing returns, deal with droughts, bushfires and floods on their own, and recently, to assist the country to solve its carbon neutral commitments (Chan, 2021).

2.4 Women in the agricultural sector in rural Australia

2.4.1 History of women in rural Australia

Although since the beginning of European settlement, women contributed substantially to the development of agriculture in rural

Australia, cultural cringe and the desire to appear refined in the eyes of Europe worked to encourage the colonists to present a façade to the international community of a masculine agricultural sector devoid of the participation of women (Alston, 2003). To this end, the Victorian parliament in the 1890s passed legislation expunging women from the statistics in the agricultural sector (Alston, 2003). Alston suggests that this erasure of statistics regarding female contributions to agriculture continues and suggests that "documenting agricultural work by gender in developed countries is long overdue" (Alston, 2018, p. 2). Women were not permitted to claim to be farmers in the Australian Bureau of Statistics Census until 1994 (Bliss, 2017). In western countries, women contributed to do on-farm work, as well as cottage industries associated with their farms (Wright & Annes, 2016). However, the post WW2 era saw agriculture in developed countries focus on productivity with more dependence on machinery and chemicals (Wright & Annes, 2016). Women were sidelined in part due to the masculinity discourses of big machinery (Wright & Annes, 2016) which clearly positioned the operation of machinery as a male domain (Pini, 2005). The productivist agriculture regime in Australia contributed to the exclusion of women "from spaces of knowledge and decision making roles" (Newsome, 2020, p. 58). As in other developed countries, women were "pushed out of the fields and either into the home or off the farm" (Wright & Annes, 2016, p. 551). Feminist analyses in Australia emphasise the hegemonic masculinity of the rural sector (Newsome, 2020), the continued invisibility of women's contributions to farming, and the "deeply embedded gender relations that shape, and are essential to, family farming" (Alston et al., 2018, p. 2). An exception is the acknowledgment that women have harnessed computer technology to achieve a measure of influence within their farm operations (Hay & Pearce, 2014). Recently, productivist policies combined with climate change events have increased the workloads for women both on and off-farm (Alston, 2018). Alston (2018) cautions against perceiving this increased involvement as necessarily implying empowerment, if

women’s contributions continue to be invisible, and not adequately recompensed.

2.4.2 Patrilineal system

A salient feature of many rural areas is the patrilineal system where agricultural properties are inherited through the male line. Estimates in Australia are that 10% of farm properties are now passed down to daughters (Hough & Early, 2016). This is a change from a few decades ago when the figure was only 5% (Alston, 2003). However, the predominant configuration remains succession from father to son (Price, 2010). This material reward for being male has been termed the “patriarchal dividend” (Newsome, 2020, p. 58). This practice contributes to masculine hegemony in rural areas (Price, 2010; Cockfield & Botterill, 2012), and disenfranchises farm daughters (Luhrs, 2016). It also creates a situation for young women marrying into farm families that as daughters-in-law, they are “always an outlaw” (Pini 2007, p. 40). Often initially unbeknownst to them, they must negotiate a “web of feudal-like arrangements” (Voyce, 1993, p. 122) in their new family and in the distinct culture of families on the land.

Australia is not alone among developed nations in producing and maintaining a conservative patriarchal rural sector. Price (2010) suggests that this phenomenon of patriarchal inheritance patterns is situated within “global agrarian capitalist structures” (p. 83) and is “stubbornly persistent” (p. 81). Her paper focuses on the patriarchal inheritance patterns of Welsh farm families, but she also outlines the patrilineal situations in the UK and Norway (Price, 2010). Cassidy describes the farm transfer challenges for women in the Irish farming context (Cassidy, 2019). Similarly, women on farms in the United States are constrained by social structures, informed by “patriarchy, heterosexism, and agrarian ideology … organised economically, politically, and socioculturally exclusively, marginalising women from land ownership” (Wright & Annes, 2016, p. 548).

2.4.3 Women on farms in times of drought

Women take on extra off-farm work, community work and extra emotional responsibilities during droughts. Given the increase in male suicide during droughts, women have the difficult emotional role of monitoring their husbands, and "… watching the impact of drought eat away at their husbands, children, extended family and communities (sic) mental and emotional wellbeing" (Congues, 2014, p. 237). Some women also must cope with an increase in family violence during periods of rural socio-ecological stress such as times of drought. This impacts on their own physical and mental health and constrains their abilities to maintain the community social capital so necessary for rural family and community resilience (Wendt & Hornosty, 2011). Studies have shown that the burden of rural decline has fallen disproportionately on rural women, especially during droughts, when women add extra off-farm work to their already onerous farm, family and community workloads (Alston, 2009). Even after the droughts, women took on extra workloads to rebuild not only their own family operations but their much-depleted communities (Stehlik, 2000).

2.4.4 Women in rural areas collective action

Women in rural areas have developed a range of approaches to advocating for better conditions for themselves, their families and their communities. They have participated in and sought leadership positions in agricultural organisations, have organised traditional rural women's organisations such as the Country Women's Association (CWA) and women's auxiliaries of men's agricultural bodies and formed their own rural women's advocacy groups. Participation and leadership by women in male-dominated agri-political organisations were constrained by the "central and seemingly unmoveable place men and dominant masculinities occupy" (Pini, 2005a, p. 86) in agricultural organisations, resulting in less than 20% of female representation on state and national agricultural boards (Pini, 2005a).

The situation appears to be changing, with a female president of the National Farmer's Federation elected in 2016, and in 2018, a woman elected as Chair of AgForce (a peak organisation representing Queensland's rural producers). Nonetheless, Galbreath, writing about the Australian wine industry, warns against misleading conclusions: when a few women in the male-dominated wine industry attained high profiles and media exposure, the impression was created that the industry culture had changed significantly (2015); however, there was no empirical evidence to support this contention. This phenomenon is "the halo effect of positivity, where a deeper understanding of what helps (or hinders) women's advancement is either ignored or becomes irrelevant" (Galbreath, 2015, p. 144). Thus, although a few women have attained high profiles in current traditional agricultural organisations, researchers posit that "the tough and powerful masculinities embedded in on-farm constructions of agriculture permeate the construction of masculinities in agri-politics" (Pini, 2005a, p. 77). Furthermore, women who express interest in and take steps towards agricultural leadership have been stymied by the responsibilities they have towards family and farm operations, as well as the complicated and time-consuming processes of succession planning within the family farms (Ressia et al., 2020), discussed in detail in Section 4.6.1 below.

As well as seeking leadership in agricultural organisations, farm women have sought influence through a range of other platforms (Pini, 2007). Women who were interested in effecting change in the agricultural sector were compelled to form their own organisations because women's representations in traditional agri-political organisations had been minimal (Alston, 2003). Farm women's political activism with women's rights on the agenda swept Australia in the 1990s, leading to the development of regional and national women's organisations such as the Victorian Women on Farms Gatherings (Pini, 2007), the Australian Women in Agriculture (AWiA) organisation (Pini, 2003), and the Queensland Rural Remote Regional Women's Network (QRRRWN). Rural women's units were created

in federal government departments but were slowly dismantled in the Howard era in the late 1990s under the banner of gender mainstreaming, that is, where gender specific concerns are taken out of autonomous policy bodies, and integrated into general government departments, "if applied in a superficial, non-reflective way … can … reinforce existing gender inequalities" (Alston, 2009, p 141). Alston described the 'velvet triangle' that was built in the 1990s between women activists, women bureaucrats and scholars and how productive those collaborations were for advancing the interests of rural women (2009). Pini and Brown (2004) referred to this movement as a "femocracy" (p. 161). Currently, rural women are continuing to find other ways to make their voices heard and create change, through networking, social media, rural women's organisations and other "multiple spaces in which politics may occur" (Pini, 2007, p. 580).

Industry specific women's organisations developed in the early 2000s. Women in Cotton was established in December 2000 to "help develop knowledge, opportunities and learning for women involved in any aspect of the Australian cotton industry" (Wincott, 2021). Wincott evolved to offering workshops on personal and professional development, from "Food and Fibre with Flair" to "Banking and Financial Markets" (Wincott, 2021). Other agricultural industries developed similar programs. Grains Research and Development Corporation (GRDC) funded groups of women in each state to develop Partners in Grain (PinG) organisations. Like Wincott, several of the PinG groups incorporated and began to offer professional services, principally "localised, relevant professional development opportunities for farm businesses" (Grower Group Alliance, 2021). Although initially intended for women on farms, many of these initiatives now invite male farmers as well. A range of agricultural awards for women are now given by these organisations and the mainstream agricultural organisations. For instance, the Grains Research and Development Corporation (GRDC) presents an annual Grains Women in Agriculture Award and inaugurated a Women in Agribusiness Award in

2014 (Jeffrey, 2016). Agrifutures, formerly known as Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation (RIRDC), sponsors the prestigious Rural Women of the Year Awards (Agrifutures, 2020). Rural women are increasing their involvement in agricultural organisations, women's advocacy groups and special interest groups in social media. The traditional invisibility of rural women has been questioned, and the phenomenon has begun to reverse due to such programs as described above and others such as The Invisible Farmer project (Museums Victoria, 2017).

2.4.5 Family farms: benefits and drawbacks

The literature covers both benefits and drawbacks for women living and working in family agricultural farm units. Even when the situation on the farm is challenging, women describe how the farm provides employment, a home, and a future for them and their families (Wendt & Hornosty, 2011). Luhrs (2016) quotes Schwarz's (2004, p. 13) model which describes "the farm as an asset; the farm as a unit of production; and the farm as an employer, a livelihood and a source of intrinsic value" (p. 1081). This intrinsic value encompasses the opportunity to live in a beautiful natural setting and have access to an outdoor workplace and recreational space (Trussell & Shaw, 2009). This aesthetic and emotional appreciation is noted in the literature as something that differentiates farm businesses from other family businesses (Luhrs 2016, p. 1081). However, the feelings of women and their "attachment of farm property are not well understood" (Wendt & Hornosty, 2010, p. 56). There is also a notion of the "symbolic capital", the respect, status and prestige accorded to people on the land (Conway et al., 2016, p. 168) and the social standing accrued (Coldwell, 2010). Families with considerable land holdings and a multi-generational presence in the community accrue high status, similar to landed gentry (Bryant & Pini, 2009, p. 49). The accumulation of social, cultural and symbolic capital can be conceptualised as a class consideration (Pini & Previte, 2013). Indeed,

Pini (2021) highlights that research about rural women is dominated by studies about white middle-class women on the land (Pini et al., 2021). More often mentioned in the literature are the constraints for women within the family farm situation, especially regarding power imbalances in ownership, decision-making and women's financial security, explored further below (Broad, 2021; Luhrs, 2016; Price, 2010).

2.4.6 Farm ownership: implications for women

The literature contends that a major aim of farm families is to maintain a legacy and pass the farm down to their children (Nuthall & Old, 2016; Stephens, 2020). Chiswell asserts that the "script of continuity" is "the most important script governing farmers' way of life – which acts as a perpetual and acute organising force for all members of the farm family" (Chiswell, 2018, p. 106). However, this "script of continuity" has not traditionally applied to the daughters in the farm family (Luhrs, 2016). According to the literature, the options of children in farm families are restricted, as first-born males were expected to farm and girls were expected to make their lives elsewhere (Luhrs, 2016; Price, 2010). Several scholars have criticised this tradition for its contribution to the stultification and lack of innovation in the rural sector (Cavicchioli et al., 2018; Cassidy, 2019). For girls from farm families the necessity to leave is fraught. Luhrs (2016) in her paper, "Consider the daughters; They are important to rural families and communities too: family farm succession", notes this phenomenon. For two daughters in her study,

> tears well when they speak of not having access to the farm property and the ability to wander the paddocks or to ride horses across the home farm landscape … [This] contradicts the assumption that it is the men only who have affinity for the land (Saugeres, 2002), that in fact, women can experience and value their embodied relationships with the land and nature (Luhrs 2016, p. 1086).

Although Luhrs (2016) documented resentment among Australian farm daughters for not being considered for succession, Chiswell (2018), in commenting on this "rigid gender discourse" (p. 115), following the research of Cassidy and McGrath (2014), asserts that "female non-successors in their cohort were glad and proud that their male siblings would eventually succeed to the farm, even when there was little or no chance of any financial reimbursement for 'their' portion of the farm, because of the collective importance of farm continuity" (p. 115). Either way, girls who grow up on the land, and wish to pursue agriculture on the land as owner-operators are left with few options other than marrying into another farm family (Pini, 2007).

When women marry into farm families, whether they are from a background on the land or not, they become daughters-in-law, a family member category sometimes viewed with suspicion by receiving families, fearful of marriage dissolutions threatening the financial viability of the farm units (Pini, 2007; Wendt & Hornosty, 2011; Broad 2021). The evidence indicates that this concern is unfounded, and that women in farm marriage breakdown situations put the interests of the farm and their children ahead of their own (Wendt & Hornosty, 2011). Nonetheless, many incoming wives are excluded from decision-making processes about the farm business including finances, for example, superannuation, that are likely to impact on their futures (Broad, 2021). Their husbands, for many years, sometimes decades, may also be excluded from these conversations, dominated by the husbands' parents who maintain ownership of the assets (Chiswell, 2018). The transfer of assets and control to the son, and inclusion of the daughter-in-law in decision-making are complex processes, and few consider the emotional toll on the women and their young families (Conway et al., 2016). The impact on women during this process was reported in a Queensland Farmer's Federation Report which notes that succession processes were taking up the time and energy of farm women who would otherwise be interested in leadership training within the setting of an agricultural advocacy group.

The complicated and time-consuming negotiations of some succession processes are described below, and in Sections 2.4.6 and 7.5.4.

As noted in Section 1.3.3, the family farm structure for growing food and fibre in the world is remarkably prevalent, with over 95% of farm businesses in Australia owned by families (Stephens 2020, p. 15 quoting ABARES, 2017-18). Stephens (2020) claims that

> Efficient farm businesses contribute to the performance of the national economy and the welfare of the Australian people. Specifically, for farm businesses to continue to perform well over time in the hands of more than one generation, meeting the goals of families of more than one generation means effective, efficient processes of transferring ownership and control of family farm businesses are fundamental (p. 15).

Much critical literature has explored various features of the financial aspects of family farms, and the challenges of intergenerational transfers (Conway et al., 2016; Luhrs, 2016; Santhanam-Martin et al., 2019; Nuthall & Old, 2016; Pitts et al., 2009; Stephens, 2020). Traditionally, in Britain, there was a staged approach to the life-long apprenticeship of sons to their fathers, with sons normally not achieving the penultimate stage of access to financial records and participation in high-level financial decisions until the father was in the 60s with actual transfer of assets and management not occurring until the very old age or death of the father (Chiswell, 2018). The practices and theories about the optimal timing of succession have changed, with the literature suggesting that postponement or avoidance of succession planning is detrimental to the vitality and viability of the farm business itself, and in aggregate, to the agriculture sector (Nuthall & Old, 2016; Conway et al., 2016; Stephens, 2020). Stephens' (2020) research within Australian farm families supported Crosby (1998) who "found that poorly handled transfer of the ownership of a family business could often result in high levels of stress, financial hardship and deep divisions between family members" (p. 17).

The uncertainty and stress in these situations could lead to lack of investment in the farm and poor or nonexistent strategic management with financial consequences (Santhanam-Martin, 2019).

Critical literature emphasises the risks of delayed or absent intergenerational transfers being “adverse impacts of not only the development trajectory of a farm but also the productivity and innovativeness of the agricultural industry as a whole” (Conway et al. 2016, p. 166). Nuthall & Old (2017) assert that the succession process should begin early, for two reasons. One is that the early transfer of assets and management control to the younger generation increases the probability of innovation and experimentation, which would be beneficial to the agricultural sector. The second reason is that it is fairer to the young people to know earlier rather than later their prospects, so they can make appropriate life choices. Chiswell (2016) outlines the importance of granting “successor identity” to young people to increase their confidence, encourage their quest for industry knowledge and “reinforce their commitment to succession” (p. 108).

Succession practices in the agricultural sector are crucial for establishing each successive farm family. A brief survey of the literature describing overseas western agricultural family experiences around intergenerational transfers yields similar patterns to Australia. Conway et al. (2016) notes that in Ireland, like Australia, those who wish to enter the farm sector do so through inheritance or purchase, as differentiated from other countries where leasing of land or partnership agreements are more common (Conway et al., 2016). Conway et al. contend that intergenerational transfers in these situations are crucial to bringing new ideas and energy into the sector, but are “emotionally loaded”, like the farm family unit itself (2016, p. 165). They assert that farming is a complex, emotional passion intertwined with identity, purpose and a sense of belonging, and that there is dearth of research into the emotional and psychological issues associated both with relinquishing control of farms and taking up succession (Conway et al. 2016). While

acknowledging that the process is difficult for all the family members, their research focuses on the emotional complexities of the incumbent, that is, the older male farmer, in his journey to transfer the ownership and the control of the farm to the younger generation (Conway et al. 2016). They do suggest that there is scope for more research into the emotional dynamics of farm families which may be more important than financial considerations in decisions such as intergenerational transfers (Conway et al., 2016). Cassidy, also in Ireland, suggests that succession is "a preservation of societal norms underpinning the family and the farm's internal relationships, with social and cultural communities" (2019, p. 239). Stephens (2020) asserts that to successfully manage the retirement aims of the older generation, strengthen a viable enterprise worth handing on, and maintain good family relationships, "farm families need to start building the business early in life, work hard, consistently perform well, keep the family engaged, have a plan and keep open and honest communication between all family members" (p. 229).

Succession is an important process to be considered when analysing the position and empowerment of women in farm family units. Furthermore, the patrilineal norm of succession combined with long and difficult succession processes contribute to the stultification and lack of diversity and innovation in the agricultural sector. Cavicchioli et al. (2018), extrapolating from data regarding family firms, assert that the risk of primogeniture in Italian farm successions may be "conservative and non-innovative behaviour" of the successors (p.75). The literature indicates that companies and sectors that have diversity in their decision-making processes are innovative, productive and have above average financial success (Cassels & Duncan, 2020). Gender diversity is known to contribute to more effective and successful determinations, with "greater diversity of thought delivering new ideas, new management styles and ultimately better business outcomes" (Cassels & Duncan, 2020, p. 8).

2.5 Gaps in the literature

To round out the literature review and to motivate this study, the pertinent gaps in the literature are briefly overviewed in this subsection.

As outlined in Chapter 1, among the objectives of this investigation is the intention to present a rich picture of the context and culture of women on the land for use by policymakers, researchers and practitioners intending to work with women in farm families in a range of areas, including health and wellbeing, arts and culture, community and economic development, business and entrepreneurial projects, disaster interventions, agricultural innovations and climate action initiatives, such as drought mitigation projects.

The literature notes that more research needs to be undertaken on the socio-cultural contexts of farm families. Johnsen (2003) calls for "greater attention to the way cultural expectations influence farm practice and the way these constructions might be time and place specific" (p. 133). Coldwell suggests that a more inclusive account of "the social relations of agriculture" is needed (2009, p. 192).

Although there is research regarding women on farms, especially their contributions to the farm sector, and separate bodies of work on wellbeing and resilience, it "is not clear how women negotiate rural identity and the broader social, cultural and physical environment in which they live, in order to achieve health and wellbeing. Research which draws on the voices of women themselves is needed to explicate this further" (Harvey, 2007, p. 10). Furthermore, the "issue of gendered power relations in family farms has not been subject to analysis" (Pini, 2007, p. 46).

In community resilience literature, several scholars note that the constructs of community resilience are "culture-specific" and that resilience studies need to feature "local culture and mores prominently" (Norris et al., 2008, p. 145). There are calls in the literature for research focus on "particular, local, regional knowledge" (Foucault, 1980, p. 82)

(See Section 1.2) and the “need to make local knowledges and logics visible” to institutions (Eversole, 2018, p. 338). As well, the complexities of processes like resilience need to be explored “from the participants’ perspectives” (Gerrard et al., 2004, p. 60).

Another area for research that needs to be included are “potentially relevant social science concepts about communities that have been overlooked or underappreciated in social-ecological resilience thinking” (Berkes & Ross, 2012, p. 17). Furthermore, as mentioned in Section 3.5.2, there has not been much systematic investigation in the literature of empowerment processes for people who are dealing with change, shocks and stressors (Berkes & Ross, 2012).

Social-ecological climate change thinkers are also calling for more attention to be paid to the decision-making processes in farm families, the roles of values, goals and beliefs in transformational thinking, and a deeper understanding of the flows of farm units, including “social norms and expectations” (Gosnell et al., 2019, p. 5). Those calling for major paradigm shifts towards sustainability in the agricultural sectors recognise a knowledge gap in the literature regarding the personal level of deeply held values in farm families (Gosnell et al., 2019; Rickards & Howden, 2012), and “call for further attention to social processes, in particular with regard to hidden voices, interaction among stakeholders, and participatory processes of technology development” (Sherwood et al., 2016, p. 4) The hidden voices of women in farm families in Australia warrant investigation.

Scholars from several fields have called for more research on the “human dynamics” (Conway et al., 2016, p. 174) of farm families, from those seeking best-practice approaches to engagement for different land-use management practices (Gosnell et al., 2019) to those advising families on processes such as succession, and for policy makers encouraging farm transfers (Conway et al., 2016, p.174). Smith (2015) notes the social institutions of farm families such as “land ownership and proprietary arrangements have been under-researched” (p. 41). There is

an assertion that research into the emotional dynamics of farm families may be more important than financial considerations in decisions such as intergenerational transfers (Conway et al., 2016).

In short, there appears to be a need for investigations in the identified knowledge gap around the dynamics of farm families, and the role of women in these processes, to contribute to knowledge, and enhance the understanding of policy-makers and practitioners in multiple fields in rural Australia, to improve the situation the wellbeing, resilience and empowerment, of women and their families on farms.

2.6 Conclusion

This chapter provided an overview through relevant literature of the issues affecting the worlds of women on the land, specifically, women in farm family units in Australia. The contributions of Johnsen's model of the farm unit (2003) to Figure 2.1 include an emphasis on the role of the property (agricultural land) for families in family farm units, and on the cultural context of the farm unit within which the family operates. The literature notes that cultural context, which includes sets of norms, orthodoxies, beliefs, creeds and values, is expressed through cultural narratives, scripts and creeds (Chiswell, 2018; Johnsen, 2003; Teather, 1998). These notions align with the post-structuralist concept of discourses, or systems of thought, which describe norms, beliefs and values in the critical sense of assuming that discourses are products of and create and maintain power relations (Foucault, 1980).

Also outlined in this chapter are key socio-historical events and forces that have shaped the discourses and the context of farm families, and the lives of women who are on the land. This influence of socio-historical context is captured in the extension of Johnsen's model as part of this study. The history of land settlement produced many complex and contradictory combinations of discourses: of egalitarianism versus class stratifications, of pastoralism vs closer settlement, of support for Indigenous people but also their disenfranchisement, of feudalism,

capitalism, and agrarianism, of masculine dominance and female invisibility and subordination. These historical processes and policies contributed to an agricultural sector that in many areas is male-dominated, conservative and stratified.

The literature notes the roles of women in farming families and the important contributions that they make to their family farm enterprises and their communities, especially in times of adversity such as during droughts and rural restructuring. Overall, there is a trend in the literature to highlight the disadvantages that women face. This is in terms of invisibility, lack of acknowledgment or appropriate recompense for their contributions, and lack of control over decision-making (lack of empowerment) as well as risks for their financial security. Simultaneously, their commitment to the place-world of life within a farm family is affirmed. Theories advanced for their continuing adherence to social and financial structures that are not of benefit to them include their indoctrination into patriarchal discourses. However, there is a gap in the literature exploring the cultural factors that might be contributing to their participation and commitment. Further research is needed into the social-ecological environments or cultures that women on the land inhabit as well as the internal dynamics of farm families.

Discourses or cultural scripts that emerged from the literature review are masculine hegemony including patrilineal succession practices, conservative traditionalism, agrarianism, community-mindedness, importance of family, neo-liberalism, life on the land as a lifestyle, life on the land as a business, environmental stewardship, resilience, consubstantiality of land and people, the script of continuity, the importance of community and the symbolic capital or status of farm ownership.

This chapter finished off with a brief overview of the gaps in the literature that motivate this research. The next chapter, Chapter 3: Conceptual Framework, explores the concepts relevant to this research such as acculturation, wellbeing, resilience, empowerment, and related ideas.

CHAPTER 3: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 Overview

This study employs a post-structuralist lens to investigate through the literature review and the interviews which socio-historical discourses are at work in the family farm context and how they were constructed and evolved. It then explores the impacts of these discourses on the wellbeing, resilience and empowerment of women on the land within family farm enterprises. In the next section, acculturation is discussed as one mechanism for the acceptance of the discourses by the women. This chapter then specifically focuses on the concepts of wellbeing, resilience and empowerment which are the primary concerns of this study's research questions (see Section 1.4). It narrows down the various approaches to the concepts taken in the literature to those that are pertinent to this research on women in farm families and its framing through a post-structuralist lens. In turn, three sections of this chapter (Sections 3.3, 3.4 & 3.5) overview each of these concepts, focusing on theoretical literature, and relevant research findings involving farm families, and rural men and women. The relationship between the three concepts as presented in the literature is then discussed in Section 3.6. The final section draws together and extends the preceding discussion to establish the conceptual framework for this thesis concerning wellbeing, resilience and empowerment within the post-structural discourses approach.

It should be noted while these concepts are commonplace in popular publications as well as in academic work, there is a tension in the literature between a focus on them being located within extra-individual cultural contexts which align with a post-structuralist approach, compared to the "intra-psychic and intra-personal level" (Brodsky & Cattaneo 2013, p. 335). In the social sciences, there are several approaches to each of these concepts, although there are relatively few papers on the former (Brodsky & Cattaneo 2013). Nonetheless, this thesis follows post-

structuralism in considering the discursive concepts of wellbeing, resilience and empowerment as constructed, not essentialist, and contingent on cultural contextual factors (Giroux 2005, p. 56). This thesis uses an active lens for these concepts, as in considering actions to support wellbeing goals, resilience measures and empowerment actions.

3.2 Enculturation, interpellation and acculturation

The question of how the socio-historical discourses or ideologies of the agricultural sector in a particular era are inculcated into women on farms, and the processes by which they adopt these norms and beliefs are addressed in the data analysis chapters (Chapters 5, 6 and 7). The three main concepts used in this thesis to explore how women adopt their discursive identities are enculturation, acculturation and interpellation. Gee (1989) posits that acquiring a discourse is akin to acquiring a language. The first discourse, or primary discourse, is the easiest. Subsequent discourses, he claims, cannot be taught alone, but must be experienced and practiced in a social context. This process he names "enculturation" (p. 7). People acquire what Gee (1989) calls secondary discourses at schools, organisations, businesses etc to the extent that they have access to and practice within these "secondary institutions" (p. 22). Within Gee's theories, acculturation might be considered the scaffolding within an apprenticeship for learning a new discourse, and interpellation might be both an indication of acceptance and a method of inscribing the discourse upon a person. Interpellation, a post-structural idea introduced in Section 1.2, posits that subjectivities (see Section 4.4.3) or discursive identities are partially formed by how individuals are treated and spoken to, or 'interpellated' repetitively by the people around them, by the discourses that permeate the social world they inhabit, "the multiple hailings of families, the media and the education system" (Bunch, 2013, p. 42). Closely aligned with this idea is the concept of acculturation. When people are spoken to or included as if they are already acculturated, that is one example of interpellation.

The process of acculturation, put simply, is a series of "cultural and psychological changes that involve various forms of mutual accommodation" (Berry, 2005, p. 699). In other words, the young women as well as the family they are entering are likely to make changes in their attitudes and behaviours to ensure all parties are comfortable and coping with the new situation. However, there are often asymmetries of power between the groups. Usually, the receiving group is dominant (Kelly, 2016). In multicultural literature, the receiving group is usually the group that was in the geographical region first, such as Americans in the United States who "receive" groups of immigrants (Kelly, 2016). Success or otherwise of acculturation of groups and individuals is dependent to a large extent on the policies, attitudes and strategies of the dominant receiving group (Kelly, 2016). Power differentials can have a significant effect in the case of a single person entering a new culture, such as young women entering an established extended family.

The process of acculturation contains both cultural and psychological dimensions for newcomer groups encountering a host group (Berry, 2005). Acculturation theory is employed in situations where different cultural groups encounter each other (Paloma et al., 2010). These situations include the experiences of Indigenous groups, of immigrants, refugees and others moving to new countries, and of individuals or groups travelling for tourism, study or work (Berry, 2005). Acculturation theory considers contextual factors to be crucial (Lopez-Class et al., 2011), consistent with post-structuralism. For this thesis, acculturation theory is extended to analyse the situation of a single newcomer coming into a different culture, that is, the young woman marrying into a farm family.

Acculturation occurs when people learn about and adapt to a culture (Berry, 2005). Interpellation is one way in which such subjects of a new culture can be constituted. It can be viewed as an acculturation mechanism. This is even though the word interpellation has come to mean 'the call' or the way that figures of authority 'hail' us into subject

positions. Drawing from Bunch (2013), it also means the ways that people are 'hailed' into social groups, consciously or unconsciously, as interpellation is "embedded in the materiality of social rituals and social context" (p. 42). Carrying out the expectations of the group shows that a person understands the rules on some level and accepts them. This "results in a positive and reinforcing feeling of belonging to the group" (Hatter and Howard, 2013, p. 228). Rather than direct instruction, interpellation works by hailing or addressing the person as if they are already acculturated, already belonging to the group. However, interpellation can also be used to exclude people, to highlight the "abject" (Butler 1993). Examples include racial slurs and other derogatory comments that position individuals as outsiders.

Applied acculturation theory is often used to assist immigrant groups to integrate into their new communities, using various interventions including cultural mentoring, facilitating social support and social engagement, and skills development (Ward & Kagitcibasi, 2010). Acculturation can occur through processes such as "cultural shedding and cultural learning" (Berry, 2005, p. 707). Cultural shedding involves "the selective, accidental or deliberate loss of behaviours" (Berry, 2005, p. 707) from the previous culture. Cultural learning involves the development of new behaviours for a better fit in the new situation (Berry, 2005). These adaptations are mostly adopted by the acculturating individual, rather than the dominant culture.

Learning new ideas, absorbing new knowledge, and practicing new or modified behaviours can be challenging. Developing additional identities is a complex and sometimes uncomfortable process. The experience of uncertainty undergone by most people in a new situation can promote heightened awareness, attentiveness, experimentation, and willingness to learn (Albertyn & Bennett, 2020). The benefit of heightened attentiveness is that it can facilitate learning and contribute to individuals identifying with new role identities (Stets & Burke, 2000). However, if the uncertainty is prolonged, and appropriate affirmations and support are

not offered, anxiety and disengagement can occur (Stets & Burke, 2000). It is important for the receiving culture, community or receiving family to affirm and support new people.

Berry (2005) developed an acculturation model, reproduced in Figure 3.1, with four outcomes: integration, assimilation, separation or marginalisation. Integration means the newcomer retains a high affiliation with their original culture as well as developing a high affiliation with the new culture they are entering (Berry, 2005). In post-structural terms, this means that they add new discourses to their already existing varied discourses. Integration is part of positive acculturation, where there is respectful and mutually accommodating interaction between the old and new groups and is associated with higher levels of wellbeing (Kelly, 2016). Acculturative integration can also be understood as an empowerment process where new people embark on “an active, multidimensional and ecological process” (Paloma et al., 2010, p. 101). In this way, they develop critical awareness and the capacity to take advantage of opportunities to integrate while maintaining connections with the previous culture.

The term assimilation is used when the original culture of the newcomers is shed or suppressed, and they attempt to exclusively embrace the new culture. They become assimilated into the new culture and lose their original cultural identity (Berry, 2005). For both integration and assimilation, the newcomer needs high cultural competence, to develop an “aptitude for the beliefs and values of the majority culture…demonstrate proper behaviour … have an ability to navigate institutional structures of the dominant culture” (Kelly, 2016, p. 158).

Separation indicates that they have retained their high affiliation with their culture of origin and do not connect with the new culture. In examples of immigration, incoming groups who stay within cultural enclaves, associate only with their home country compatriots, and avoid learning the new language and new cultural norms, are staying separate (Berry, 2005). Sometimes, this separatism is a form of resistance to the

assimilationist strategies of the dominant culture. It can also indicate stress, or ambivalence caused by rejection or feelings of inferiority (Kelly, 2016). The marginalised are individuals or groups who lose connections and affiliations with their original culture but also do not relate to the new culture or people in the new setting. These people can become isolated (Berry, 2005).

Figure 3.1

Adaptation of Berry's acculturation framework (Grigoryev & Berry, 2021, p. 8)

+←---New-Cultural Affiliation		
	Assimilation	**Integration**
	Marginalisation	**Separatism**
	Original Cultural Affiliation -----------→ +	

Acculturation theorists agree that integration is the least stressful and most effective acculturation strategy (Kelly, 2016). Integrating individuals maintain their original cultural affiliations as well as seek to participate fully in the new culture (Berry, 2005). This increases their self-esteem, confidence, and cultural competence (Lopez-Class et al., 2011). If they are interested in transformational change, they can effect change

in the new culture "… through building strong relationships and alliances with those of the dominant culture" (Kelly, 2016, p. 163).

Within the integration strategy, newcomers need to gain knowledge of the new and often unfamiliar cultural values within the new society, and then make connections or establish friendships and relationships through involvement in activities, clubs and organisations (Lopez-Class, 2011). Success is tied to contextual factors of acceptance and support of the host culture, social networks, and available resources (Lopez-Class, 2011). In the cross-cultural space, support groups for immigrant groups, asylum seekers, overseas students, and travellers, can offer information about the dominant society's cultural narratives or discourses, mentoring for capacity and skills building and social support (Ward & Kagitcibasi, 2010). These supports can also be offered to women entering rural families in remote communities in Australia. The most crucial support entity is the receiving family.

Community psychology perceives acculturation as an empowerment process and cultural psychology emphasises the self-reconstruction processes that are part of acculturative integration (Paloma et al., 2009). Nevertheless, newcomers, whether immigrant groups or women entering a self-sufficient and self-protective rural family situation, may struggle "for wellbeing and legitimacy" (Paloma et al., 2009, p. 111).

This study explored the ways in which women acculturated to the dominant discourses, taking into consideration the ways they gained knowledge about the prevailing norms, beliefs, and values of the agricultural setting they were entering, and how the adoption of, or resistance to, the discourses impacted on their wellbeing, resilience and empowerment.

3.3 Wellbeing

Like resilience and empowerment, there is no one generally accepted definition for wellbeing, but there are many approaches (Harvey 2009, p. 357). For this study, wellbeing is defined in each different

context by the values and goals of the individuals and groups in that situation (White et al., 2014). It is understood to be both the motivator and the reward for the processes of resilience and empowerment, as discussed further in Section 3.6. Individuals and groups strive to attain their goals informed by their values, and how aligned their lives are with those values and goals constitutes their wellbeing (White et al., 2014). In this section, theories of wellbeing are considered leading to an approach to the literature relevant to wellbeing issues for women on the land.

3.3.1 Theories of wellbeing

Concepts of wellbeing are illustrated in the literature by a marked difference between psychology-based perspectives centred on the individual and more social-ecological viewpoints (Harvey, 2009). Fullagar & O'Brien (2018) critique individualistic biomedical and psychological approaches in rural health for not giving enough consideration to contextual factors. They call for more relational approaches that include people, place, animals, and are "material and discursive, spatial and temporal" (p. 13). There may be value in objective measures of wellbeing which include human capabilities such as bodily health, use of senses and imagination, ability to form emotional attachments and have feelings, affiliation, play and control over one's environment (Hamilton and Redmond, 2010). Nonetheless, critics argue that measures which may apply in one context may be irrelevant in another (White et al., 2014). For instance, Maybery et al. (2009) in their study of rural New South Wales found that the participants nominated indicators of wellbeing which differed from those proposed by the World Health Organisation. Harvey (2009) draws on feminist ecological views which "conceptualise human flourishing as highly contextualised, changing, and interdependent with the social and ecological surroundings rather than universal, fixed and located within the body" (p. 357).

Another concern from social ecology and post-structuralist viewpoints is the assumption by the medical model, that is, individualistic

biomedical and psychological approaches, that there is a cohesive autonomous individual to be supported to return to "a normative state of productivity" (Fullager & O'Brien, 2018, p. 13). The medical model perceives a lack of wellbeing or any sort of impairment as something that needs to be fixed; therefore the individual needs an intervention. The social model says that the impairment "is caused by the way society is organized" and therefore society needs to change (Disability Nottinghamshire). Thus, in the social model, the problem is not located within the individual. Further, as outlined in Chapter 1, post-structuralism proposes that there are multiple identities or "subject positions people occupy" (Giroux, 2005, p. 13). Therefore, there is no one person to be returned to their usual state of being. This perspective highlights the complexity and subjectivity of notions of wellbeing. Proponents of this perspective assert that "people, through their social interactions with other people and with the material world, are constantly constructing and reconstructing their wellbeing; their actions are inherently subjective" (Hamilton & Redmond, 2010 explaining White, 2008, p. 56). In a social ecology approach, wellbeing is considered in relation to what is meaningful for the participants. This may be more about acceptance, belonging, "contentment and welfare" (Harvey, 2009, p. 358) than about meeting objective criteria. Harvey (2009) broadly defines wellbeing for rural women as "life satisfaction" (p. 353) as determined by their rural social context and values. Indicators of such wellbeing are subjective. They are different in every situation, reflect and are determined by local values and are "lived" (White et al., 2014, p. 744).

In line with the post-structural viewpoint mentioned previously, this thesis follows Harvey's life satisfaction and rural values concepts (2009). It also adopts the subjective social-ecological perspective on wellbeing which shares the post-structural view that such constructs are produced within cultural contexts, themselves informed by dominant discourses (White et al., 2014). The next section outlines a range of context-specific rural wellbeing goals as described in the literature, to sketch a picture of

how wellbeing values, that is, the social context and values that determine wellbeing for women, might manifest in rural areas (see Table 1.1).

3.3.2 Wellbeing in the rural context

To frame the questions for this study, it was necessary to understand how wellbeing is viewed in rural-focused literature. Research into the wellbeing of rural women divides into two broad areas. One focuses on physical and mental health combined with wellbeing. The other concentrates on wellbeing coupled with contextual values. This subsection considers the main findings in each of these areas.

The literature is mixed regarding the state of health and wellbeing of rural women, with different studies presenting conflicting outcomes (Fullagar & O'Brien, 2018; Harvey, 2007). In a meta-synthesis of the literature on the health and wellbeing of rural women, Harvey (2007) found that rural women were less stressed than their urban counterparts. Harvey attributes some of this equanimity to a spiritual connection to the land which one of the women who participated in Harvey's study described as "a sense of wholeness derived from a personal connection and sense of intimacy with the land … engendering a healing quality" (p. 6). Women between 45 and 64 living on farms reported even higher life satisfaction, feelings of belonging and a sense of personal power (Harvey, 2007, p. 6). Then again, Youl et al. (2019) note that Australian rural women with breast cancer have a poorer five-year survival rate than their urban counterparts due in part to distance from health services. Harvey (2009) notes that although rural women do not present with higher rates of mental health issues, on surveys over the previous decade, they did indicate feelings of lower levels of health in general than did urban women.

Rural restructuring and persistent droughts have increased workloads; women maintain their traditional gendered values and roles, such as mother, wife, housekeeper, educator, community worker, but add

work on and off-farm, which leads to “physical burnout, overextension of women’s energy and time, and high stress levels” (Leipert & George, 2008, p. 215). Fullager & O’Brien (2018) assert that women in rural areas present more often than rural men with depression and self-harm issues but that this is consistent with the statistics for women in Australia generally. They posit that recovery from depression for women in rural areas is most successful when rural social determinants are emphasised, and recovery “is enacted through place-based relations that invoke human and non-human relations” (p. 18). This finding is supported by Malatsky & Bourke (2016) who promote perspectives “that seek to improve rural health systems from a (rural) place-based context” (p. 158). They criticise the “deficit discourse” of rural health, asserting that rural health outcomes are only slightly worse than urban outcomes “despite lower patient-health professional ratios and less access to specialist care” (p. 158). In summary, although there are some contrary studies, the literature in general indicates that rural women report relatively high levels of positive health and wellbeing, at least as high as if not higher in some age brackets than their urban counterparts, and that part of this might be attributable to living on the land, “a whole way of life that shaped day-to-day living and personal, family and community relationships” (Harvey 2007, p. 6). The ability to develop a “whole way of life” around contextual values defines and contributes to wellbeing (White et al., 2014). For this reason, among others, it is important to understand the values of women on the land.

In the literature, there are in general three main themes about the wellbeing of rural women, when considered in conjunction with their values. First is that rural women’s values and wellbeing are linked to rural men’s in several ways: they share similar values, the role of rural masculinities affects both genders and they are mutually bound in gender disparities. Second, the literature identifies a specific female rurality, and third, especially for women in farm families, a high value and sense of

place-based wellbeing is accorded to the farm life and the place-world itself.

Rural values have been considered synonymous with masculine identities as rural areas in the Western world are seen to be a "masculine domain of social practice" (Coldwell, 2010, p. 171). The concept of rurality is often associated with the masculinist agrarian values of "control, toughness, hard work, self denial and of pride and pleasure of working in farming as a way of life" (Hay & Pearce, 2014, p. 319). The literature describes a range of values informed by their "bush culture" that are important to men in Australian rural areas such as "stoic independence, resourcefulness and strength" (McColl, 2007, p. 108) originating in "constructions of masculinity built around traits such as stoicism, physical strength and [being the] breadwinner" (Bryant & Garnham, 2015, p. 68). The literature asserts that the extremities of rural masculinist values may influence the high rates of farm accidents and suicide for rural men (Alston, 2012; Arnautovska et al., 2016; Bryant & Garnham, 2015; Coldwell, 2010), which, in turn, contributes to the stressors for rural women (Congues, 2014; Murray et al., 2019). A different perspective associates rural masculine values as well as suicide prevalence within "social and cultural contexts" and "agrarian discourses of masculine subjectivity and shame" (Bryant & Garnham, 2015, p, 69).

As previously noted in Chapters 1 and 2, another strand of literature explores the rural identities of women through the lenses of feminism and post-structuralism, noting their subordinate positions in a gendered culture (Alston, 2009; Alston, 2018; Grace & Lennie, 1998; Harvey, 2009; Luhrs 2016, Pini 2005b, Pini, 2007). Australian rural women are portrayed "as stoic, accustomed to adversity, self-reliant and with a focus on family and volunteer community roles" (Harvey, 2009, p. 35). Rural culture includes traditional gender roles, conventional and conservative views, and male patriarchal values reinforced by the community (Leipert & George, 2008). McColl (2007) contends that in Australia, rural identity intensifies to become a specifically Australian

“constructed bush identity of a settler society with penal origins” (p. 108). The values of family unity and patriarchal dominance, which are also part of rural culture, are respected by many women on farms in Australia (Wendt & Hornosty, 2011). As a result, according to this perspective, women accept their multiple and often subordinate roles and make sacrifices to maintain the farming way of life (Luhrs, 2016). Sacrifices include the significant efforts women make to ensure the education of their children in situations where government services such as resourcing for schools have been reduced (McInnerney, 2020).

Harvey (2007) suggests that the key to rural women’s health and wellbeing is in their specifically female rural identity, which, although constantly evolving, incorporates a range of values, such as being “responsible, self-reliant, organised, physically and mentally strong, positive, competent, caring and supportive” (p. 7). Women mention rural pride as a strong wellbeing value (Leipert & George, 2008). Women value the resourcefulness of farm families, their abilities to solve problems, find solutions with few resources, and help each other without fanfare (Leipert & George, 2008). As part of their value system, they are proud of their own abilities to cope with adversities, to take on extra roles in times of difficulty, such as during droughts, to shoulder responsibility even at the expense of their own health, and, to continue their “heavy load of unpaid domestic and farm work” (Harvey, 2009, p. 355).

Women on farms incorporate into themselves and introduce into their offspring the idea of the family farm as a high value (Chiswell, 2018; Luhrs, 2016). Daughters on farms, for instance, often perceive the family farm as an “ideal place to live and to raise a family, and that farming itself is an enjoyable, productive and important occupation” (Luhrs, 2016, p. 1090). Luhrs (2016) also found that although many would like to be considered for succession, they understood that their brothers are more likely to be successors. The women expressed a degree of resentment but supported the right of their parents to make these decisions. The daughters were happier about their brothers taking ownership if they and

their children were assured of continued access to the family farm (Luhrs, 2016, p. 1088). The notion of the continuity of the family farm becomes a value, a marker of wellbeing and a motivating force.

In conclusion, the literature suggests that women on the land value the traditional and conservative way of life in rural areas, accept patriarchy and facilitate patrilineal succession, and embody the values of hard work, competence, pride in work and in the family farm, love of the land, care and support, and community. These values contribute to their general life satisfaction and wellbeing as women living on family farms, working hard, feeling proud of their farms, families, and situation (Harvey, 2007). Adverse consequences of these values include burn-out and role overload due to the women trying to meet new layers of expectations as the rural regulatory landscape changes and other adversities, such as climate change and pandemics, come into play. In these circumstances, as discussed in the next section, resilience becomes an important factor and, when circumstances permit, so does empowerment, as discussed in Section 3.5.

3.4 Resilience

Within the remit of this thesis, the concept of resilience is understood as a suite of adaptation capacities used to safeguard wellbeing in situations of risk and adversity and enacted iteratively with empowerment to mitigate adversities (Brodsky & Cattaneo, 2011). As with the concepts of wellbeing and empowerment, the literature describes the two main streams of thinking about resilience. In psychology, resilience is viewed as a trait individuals can acquire. Other disciplines understand resilience as a quality of the social ecologies of individuals and communities (Berkes & Ross, 2012; Cavaye & Ross, 2019; Ungar 2018). Berkes and Ross (2012) propose an integration of the two strands with a "focus on the adaptive capacity of a system (individuals, communities, larger societies, corporations, social-ecological systems, ecosystem) in the face of change" (p. 7). The co-dependence of individual, community

and ecological perspectives is especially apparent in rural communities where "the vitality of the communities relies on environmental sustainability" (Cavaye & Ross, 2019, p. 182).

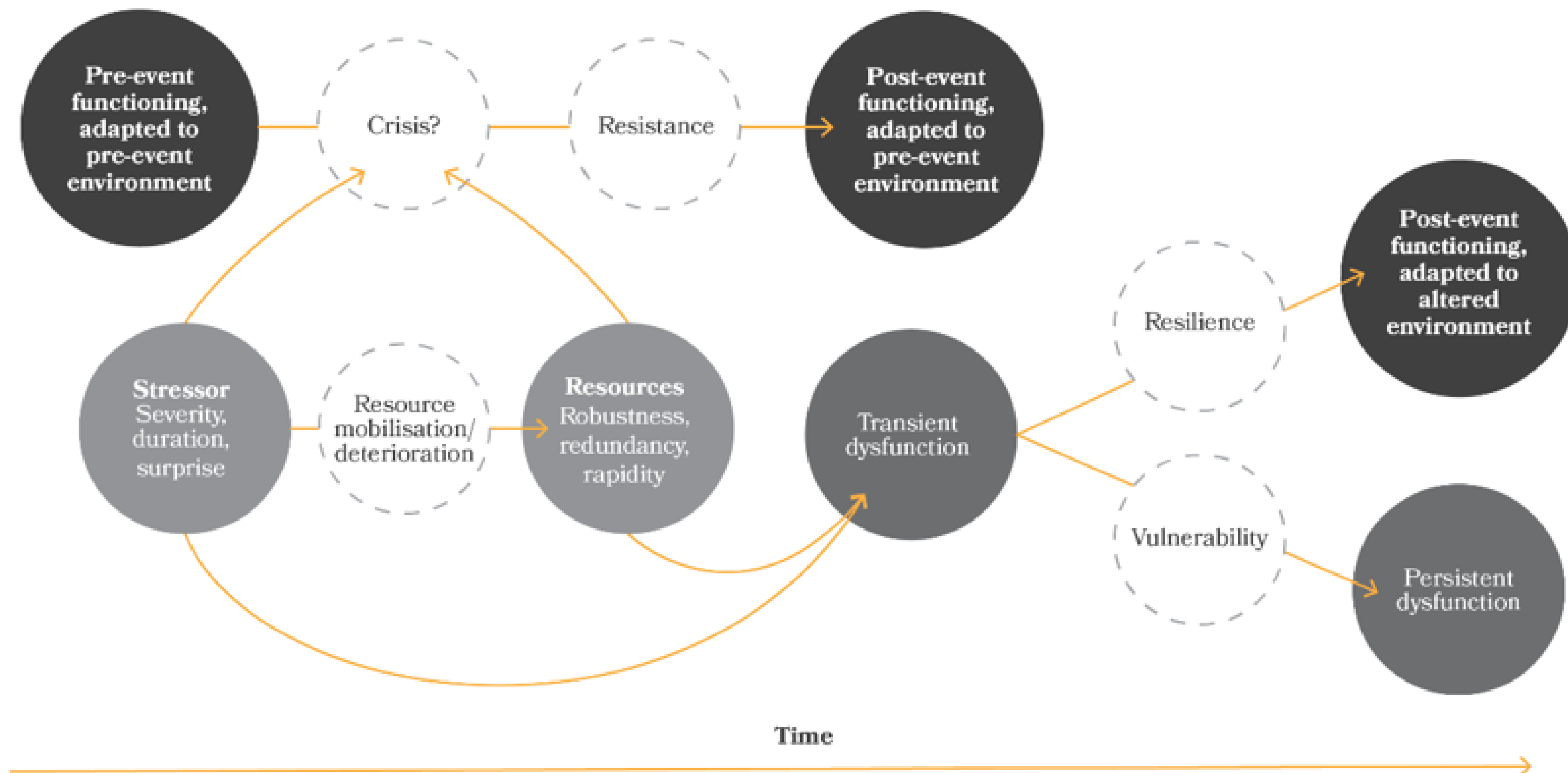
3.4.1 Theories of resilience

In this subsection, two resilience models are discussed, and four variations on resilience theories. In their widely cited paper on resilience in community settings, Norris et al. (2008) define resilience as "a process linking a set of adaptive capacities to a positive trajectory of functioning and adaptation after a disturbance" (p. 130). In their model of Stress Resistance and Resilience (p. 130), Norris et al. (2008) contend that the process of resistance begins with a crisis stressor. Their model, depicted in Figure 3.2, while focused on crises such as natural disasters, terrorism acts, and climate extremes, also incorporates adversities of any kind as well as "surprises" or unanticipated crises.

In this model, the ability of the community to draw on key resources is crucial to the deployment of resilience processes, such as adaptation. If the community is unable to mobilise resources rapidly and effectively, they risk vulnerability and persistent dysfunction (Norris et al., 2008, p. 130). Their starting point is pre-event functioning with a general notion of community wellness, or wellbeing, defined as "high and non-disparate levels of mental and behavioural health, functioning and quality of life" (Norris et al., 2008, p. 127).

Figure 3.2

Model of stress resistance and resilience over time (Norris et al., 2008, p.130)



On the other hand, in developing their model of community resilience, Cutter et al. (2008) begin with antecedent conditions that include overlapping pre-existing vulnerability as well as resilience (p. 602). Their model is like the Norris et al. (2008) schemata (Figure 3.2), with the pre-event functioning replaced by antecedent vulnerability. They propose a place-based resilience model that recognises that social systems are interconnected with natural systems. They also acknowledge the exogenous impacts of government policies and regulations as well as the societal human impacts on the environment. Cutter et al. (2008) add the notion of social learning as an optimum outcome of resilience thinking. Such learning they assert occurs in the process of adaptation, improvisations and learning in an event, and at its most successful contributes to policies for developing better preparedness and mitigating the impact of future events (Cutter et al., 2008, p. 603). This is similar to the concept in the literature of iterative and "multiple loop learning" on transformational adaptation in agriculture (Gosnell et al., 2019, p. 10), transformational resilience (outlined below) and empowerment, that is, as defined in Section 3.5, action to change the situation to decrease current and future risk.

Resilience as a concept has many detractors. Critics express the concern that "individuals might suppress their hopes and aspirations as they try to become more 'resilient'" (Harris et al., 2018, p. 199), and that their energy is being expended on learning "the complex skills of adaptation and bouncebackability" (Evans & Reid, 2014, p. xii), rather than questioning "the structural causes of vulnerability and the political economy that shapes entitlements" (Harris et al., 2018, p. 198). Other critics claim that the concept of resilience in the literature is "overly simplified, neglecting questions of power, discouraging transformative action, and hence perpetuating crises over the long run" (Smirnova, Lawrence and Bohland, 2021, p. 4). Even more troubling, according to some scholars, was a move to reframe adversity as an opportunity to practise resilience in a permanently dangerous world and give up the idea

of changing that world for the better (Evans & Reid, 2014, p. 42)). Thus, individuals might be positioned to feel responsible for coping with whatever came their way and if they were not able to cope, to self-blame for not being sufficiently well-practised in the skills of resilience (Prowell, 2019). Building resilience skills is becoming the objective, rather than changing the conditions necessitating resilience (Harris et al., 2018).

Emerging from these critical resilience discussions are several theoretical approaches to resilience that align with the post-structural lens used in this study. These concepts include transformational resilience, negotiated resilience, regional development resilience theories and relational resilience. Transformational resilience or transformational adaptation theories ("TA") reject the notion that a return to the status quo is always desirable, especially if the status quo is upholding systemic power inequities (Badahur & Tanner, 2014; Gosnell et al., 2019; Rickards & Howden, 2014). Whereas incremental resilience seeks to maintain the current system as much as possible, transformational adaptation seeks to change more than it maintains (Rickards & Howden, 2014). It may not be needed in every situation but could be a useful option to consider as part of any approach to resilience, in "focusing attention on people, politics and power" (Bahadur & Tanner, 2014, p. 200). TA proposes a shift in the type of change towards a co-evolutionary process where humans can reframe "accepted 'inevitabilities'" (Rickards & Howden, 2014, p. 241). Transformational resilience is like empowerment in recognising the need to change systems and circumstances which constitute the adversities and dangers which make resilience necessary. Also, it aligns with post-structural thought in assessing power dynamics in situations of concern (Rickards & Howden 2014, Smirnova et al. 2021).

Negotiated resilience recognises that resilience for one group in a region might be a disaster for another group in that region. Resilience projects, therefore, need to conduct a process of negotiation that asks "who is deciding the pathways and projects for 'resilience' [and] … defining what would constitute resilience in ways that are attentive to

local context, cultures …" (Harris et al., 2018, p. 200). Negotiated resilience segues with transformational resilience in querying who is making the decisions, which is analogous to determining what the power dynamics are and who will benefit from these decisions (Harris et al., 2018). Further, being attentive to local cultures aligns with the intents of regional community development resilience, which theoretically describes "a process of engagement, empowerment, and action that fosters … adaptive capacity, interactions within overall systems and equity" (Cavaye & Ross, 2019, p. 194).

Darnhofer et al. (2016), when analysing resilience in family farms in Europe, suggest that one perspective focuses on the roles of structural forces, a second is interested in farmer agency as well as social context, and a third is a relational approach. In their view, the relational approach acknowledges the interdependency of all elements. They contend that "resilience is not a character or attribute of the farm, nor seen as primarily located in the capability of the farmer to navigate change, but in relations that are never stable, that must be enacted, performed every day" (Darnhofer et al., 2016, p. 117). Thus, resilience is "not a 'thing' that can be seized, held, or measured, it is not an attribute or property of a farm or a farmer. Rather, resilience is the emergent result of ever changing patterns of relations, relations that are material, social, cultural" (Darnhofer et al., 2016, p. 118).

The definition of resilience used in the conceptual framework for this study (discussed in Section 3.5) is a combination of some of the ideas, presented above, and of place-based incremental resilience focusing on the adaptive and relational capacities of a system (individual or farm or community). A distinction is made here between adaptive resilience and other types of resilience. The combination of transformational resilience thinking, negotiated resilience concepts and regional community development theories connects to the Brodsky and Cattaneo (2013) model as being analogous to empowerment actions.

3.4.2 Resilience in the rural context

This subsection reviews the literature pertaining to resilience in rural communities and on farms for families, both men and women, which is often from the perspective of community development. It includes articles discussed above such as Norris et al. (2008) and Cavaye and Ross (2019). Community resilience, community development and community psychology as disciplines are based in a strengths-based approach which perceives and seeks the positive physical, social, environmental and interpersonal assets and resources that communities contain (Cavaye & Ross, 2019; Norris et al., 2008; Prowell, 2019).

If resilience is understood as a process of deploying adaptive capacities to cope with extreme change, disasters and adversities, then it is necessary to identify the adversities rural communities have faced and are likely to face. A substantial portion of the resilience literature of relevance to rural communities, farm families, and men and women on the land explores how the rural sector copes with and adapts to the long-term challenges of adversities. Adversities include economic pressures, geography and isolation, resource limitations, loss of infrastructure and services (Cockfield & Botterill, 2012) environmental degradation, droughts, floods and bushfires (Anderson, 2009; Rickards & Howden, 2012). The literature identifies that the most concerning issues, particularly in combination, are rural restructuring and climate change events such as drought (Anderson, 2009; Pomeroy, 2015).

Natural disasters and extreme climate events such as prolonged and intense drought pressures agriculture in two ways: "through demands that it [agriculture] contributes to reducing greenhouse gas emissions, while at the same time having to cope with the impact of an increased frequency of extreme weather events, reduced availability of water for irrigation, and the impact of rising temperatures on crop and herd management" (Darnhofer et al., 2016, p. 111). The impacts of drought "have the greatest direct impact on mental health and wellbeing by

heightening vulnerability and adverse outcomes, particularly where changes to the vitality of the natural landscape are profound" (Tonna et al., 2009, p. 297). Australian rural communities, including producers, during the "millennial drought" (1997 – 2010) (Congues, 2014, p. 229), faced an "existential crisis as rural change (socio-economic, structural and environmental change) posed a threat" (Anderson, 2009, p. 341) to identities and livelihoods.

Rural restructuring was a process undertaken by many countries in the developed world beginning in the 1980s, but more intensely in New Zealand and Australia, to dismantle the array of institutions and programs previously set up to support and encourage the many desired outcomes of agricultural sectors and instead, reduce farming to productivist economic market goals (Cockfield & Botterill, 2012a). A related development was the dismantling of services and infrastructure in rural areas and putting more pressure on community members, especially women, to compensate for withdrawals of staff and services (Anderson, 2009).

Drought was originally defined as a natural disaster, with concomitant support for farmers affected, but in 1992, the Australian Government "introduced a neoliberal, risk management policy, commonly referred to as the National Drought Policy, that delisted drought as a natural disaster and required farmers to manage drought as they would any other risk to their business" (Congues, 2014, p. 229-230). Although the Australian government officially supported four value sets: "agrarianism, spatial equity, environmentalism and market liberalism" (Cockfield & Botterill, 2012, p. 343), market liberalism dominated (Cockfield & Botterill, 2012). Women have not been considered in the government responses to drought, which have viewed droughts as events of "failed agricultural production and economic prosperity rather than one that requires attention to social and gendered impacts" (Alston, 2009, p. 140). The policies discounted the many other services and purposes of people and land in rural Australia, including land stewardship, environmental sustainability, community support, and the development

and maintenance of a web of relationships that constitute the agricultural sector, the land, and the people and wildlife that inhabit rural areas, and climate change amelioration for Australia and the world (Darnhofer et al., 2016).

In the rural community space, an important resilience process is the capacity to strengthen and mobilise social capital resources, such as local organisations, clubs, schools and other institutions, activities and people who build connectivity and trust (Congues, 2014; Kilpatrick et al., 2002; Mayberry et al., 2009). Community events, such as festivals, "foster resiliency by contributing to a sense of place, self, and community" (Gerrard et al., 2004, p. 59). Working with existing community leaders in agriculture and finance as well as local trusted community organisations was the key to the success of a mental health and resilience intervention funded by the New South Wales government during the millennial drought (Tonna et al., 2009). These community leaders and community builders are often women, who contribute significantly to the organisational infrastructure of rural communities (Luhrs, 2016).

Additional to these adversities experienced in rural towns and communities in general are another two stressors, specific to the farm sector. One is the nature of agricultural work, including exposure to chemicals, the frequency of farm accidents, and hard physical work (Fraser et al., 2005). Another is the unique structure of farm family businesses, which exacerbate family tensions, position the younger generation to be under the control of the older generation much longer than their urban counterparts, and combine work, family and financial issues (Chiswell, 2018; Fraser et al., 2005). Many scholars note the importance for farm families to draw on their own and community resources to cope with these adversities (Pomeroy, 2016). Darnhofer et al. (2016) assert that successful farm families use a relational approach to cope with accelerating change and adversities. Using a socio-ecological resilience framework, Darnhofer et al. (2016) explore the adaptive cycles of farm businesses, proposing that change and adaptation are ongoing

processes facilitated by relationships. They contend that farm unit resilience is "thus dependent on material and value relations on- and off-farm that are provisional, enacted, contingent and always under construction" (Darnhofer et al., 2016, p. 119).

A study of South Australian farm families found that their resilience was not a set of individual traits, but instead was "a systemic process embedded in the wider social contexts that enables individuals to make judgements and decisions for themselves, their families and their communities" (Greenhill et al., 2009, p. 318). Greenhill et al. (2009) aimed to understand how farm families manage their adversities, which at that point, included a decade long drought, a global financial crisis, and government rural policy change from drought being considered a natural disaster to being viewed as a business risk, with the concomitant withdrawal of business support for drought-stricken farm businesses (p. 324). Despite these factors, they found that farmers had a positive view of farming, indeed, were planning for the next generation (p. 324). The main themes which emerged were the way that "work was constructed, the negotiation of gender relations and their community involvement" (Greenhill et al., 2009, p. 320-321). Many of the farm families interviewed in Greenhill et al.'s (2009) study utilised a range of strategies to cut costs during the drought and drew on resources such as their off-farm investments, farm management deposits, and their abilities to secure off-farm work. The flexibility of women as extra labour and off-farm workers was important. Families tried to maintain social lives and connect with others in the same situation.

Gerrard et al. (2004) identified barriers to resilience for farm families which included lack of control over external factors impacting on their lives and farms, such as government bureaucracy and withdrawal of services (p. 63). Factors that enhanced resilience included communication, control, support and resources (Gerrard et al., 2004, p. 62). Another factor, identified by Hegney et al. (2007) and Harvey (2007) was attachment to the land.

Reflecting the interplay between these barriers and contributors to resilience for farmers and farm families, the literature is mixed regarding whether farmers and farm families are more (or less) resilient in the sense of experiencing higher (or lower) numbers of mental health concerns that their urban counterparts (Fraser et al., 2005; Harvey, 2009). Scholars speculate whether "the characteristics of farming families may also provide a buffer against these stressors and assist them to develop resilience" (Fraser et al., 2005, p. 346).

On the other hand, suicide is more prevalent in farm men than urban men, and more frequent in Australia and the UK than in other western countries (Fraser et al., 2005). Congues (2014) reports that during the prolonged drought in the 1990s, one male farmer committed suicide every four days (p. 229). Reasons offered include farmers' easier access to firearms, a more prevalent sentiment among farmers that life was not worth living (Fraser et al., 2005, p. 344) and increased social isolation (Greenhill et al., 2009, p. 323) due to drought causing increased workloads feeding and watering stock. The high stress levels of women are attributed to more on and off-farm work, causing stress and fatigue, and role conflicts (Fraser et al. 2005, p. 344).

Congues (2014) documents a mental health intervention in rural Victoria during the latter part of the 'Millennium Drought'. From 2006 to 2010, Congues (2014) contends that "farmers were under extreme pressure, not only from the drought but also from many changes in political discourse and shifts of power" (p. 230). Further, farmers were criticised internationally as contributing to climate change due to clearing trees and husbanding methane-producing animals. One male farmer in Victoria committed suicide every three weeks during this drought (Congues, 2014, p. 229). The purpose of the drought package delivered by the Victorian government was to support community resilience rather than provide disaster relief (Congues, 2014). In particular, the program acted on the assumption that it was important to help farm men to stay socially connected, and to access information and assistance. As Congues

(2014) explained it: "They were fully aware of the potential danger farmers faced if they bunkered down and did not keep socially connected with their families, friends and neighbours" (p. 236). One of the programs offered was called "Strong Women, Strong Families". Under the assumption that "women were the key to accessing men", a major purpose of this group was that women could be the conduits for drought information and support to their men as a suicide prevention strategy (Congues, 2014, p. 237). Implicit in this may have been the suggestion that rural women were somehow more resilient (Congues, 2014).

Women on the land indicated in many studies that adversities were part of rural life, that they were expected to cope (Harvey, 2007, p. 7), and that they were proud of their ability to cope (p.10). On the other hand, in the same meta-synthesis of the literature, Harvey found women in two of the six studies expressed resistance to the "dominant discourse of self-reliance and coping" (p. 7) and to "conceptualisations of themselves as the saviours of rural Australia" (p.10). Women during drought take on more farm labour as well as off-farm work and increase their emotional support to buffer the additional stresses experienced by their husbands and children (Greenhill et al., 2009). The aforementioned Strong Women, Strong Families program in Victoria provided special support events for women in recognition of their roles in supporting the mental health and resilience of their husbands and families (Congues, 2014, p. 237). Congues (2014) notes that this program was problematic in its expectations that women would take responsibility for providing information, support and interventions to their husbands, contributing to the ability of men to avoid responsibility for their own resilience and wellbeing processes. However, the women embraced the program, as it acknowledged their realities (Congues, 2014). This program consulted with the communities, and increased resilience during this difficult period (Congues, 2014). On the other hand, this might be an example of what the critics of resilience call a strategy to normalise danger and shift the responsibility to the individuals and communities for dealing with

worsening conditions beyond the individual or community control which benefit the status quo (Smirnova et al., 2021).

There are other adversities experienced by women on farms. Gerrard et al. (2004) found that a specific barrier to resilience for women on farms included sex-role stereotyping. The worst affected were daughters-in-law on intergenerational farms who could feel “excluded or devalued” (Gerrard et al., 2004, p. 63). A literature review conducted by Fraser et al. (2005) among farm families in western countries supports this finding, affirming that daughters-in-law experience “the highest levels of stress within the farming family unit” (p. 342). It is suggested that this is due to their relatively low power and limited involvement in decision-making, amounting to marginalisation (p. 342).

Women’s roles as flexible and available extra farm labour and sources of off-farm income, a crucial factor in the survival of family farms through droughts and rural restructuring (Alston, 2009; Congues, 2014; Pomeroy, 2015) come at a cost. Women themselves suffer work overload at the expense of their own health (Harvey, 2007) and their communities struggle without their volunteer work (Harvey, 2009; Pomeroy, 2016). The community provides many resources considered essential for farm family resilience, so, although women’s extra on-farm and off-farm work may be assisting the resilience of farm family businesses in many ways, it may also be undermining community resilience which, in turn, depletes resources necessary for farm family resilience (Alston, 2009; Anderson, 2009). Women increasing their workloads does not necessarily mean that they have more influence or decision-making power withing their farm family unit (Alston, 2018).

Interestingly, Hegney et al. (2007) found that connection to the land “enhances resilience” (p. 9). Harvey (2007) noted that women on farms reported a spiritual connection with the land, “a personal connection and sense of intimacy with the land” (p. 6). This was particularly evident in women in mid to older age groups, and enhanced their feelings of belonging, and abilities to cope (p. 6). Women in farming

families, with their on-farm and off-farm work, their emotional support for extended family and their community roles, buffer some of the effects of the adversities in the agricultural sector such as drought and restructuring (Alston, 2009; Anderson, 2009; Congues, 2014; Pomeroy, 2015). Concomitantly, women "voiced resistance to expectations that they can cope with whatever comes along without adequate support" (Harvey, 2007, p. 10).

3.5 Empowerment

Empowerment processes decrease current and future risks, adversities and inequities that impact adversely on wellbeing values and aspirations, by addressing issues and situations and implementing ameliorative actions (Brodsky & Cattaneo, 2013). Empowerment processes which aim to change the status quo are also referred to as social learning (Cutter et al., 2008) and as transformational resilience (Badahur & Tanner, 2014) or transformational adaptation (Gosnell et al., 2019; Rickards & Howden, 2012).

3.5.1 Theories of empowerment

Like the concepts of wellbeing and resilience, there are many theories of empowerment. Empowerment theory in psychology and social work was originally proposed to counter prevailing views of therapists as experts, instead promoting the decision-making capabilities of clients (Joseph, 2020). In other disciplines, the term began to be used in the 1970s in political contexts to promote social justice and to protest against social policies (Joseph, 2020). Since then, the concept of empowerment has developed to mean "a process through which people reduce their powerlessness and alienation and gain greater control over all aspects of their lives and social environment" (Mulally, 2007, p. 299 cited in Harvey, 2009, p. 359). For women in farm situations, an increase in decision-making authority leading to bargaining power is often used as an indicator of empowerment, referring to the women's ability to exert influence (Acosta et al., 2016, p. 1213). Empowerment occurs when individuals and

groups assess that the power dynamics in a situation are asymmetrical, and they build their capacity to effectively cope, respond, and change the power structures for the betterment of all (Paloma et al., 2009; Brodsky & Cattaneo, 2013).

The literature views the empowerment theory which is grounded in post-structuralist and postmodern theories as being "ontologically relativist and epistemologically subjectivist" (Joseph, 2020, p. 143). This view aligns with the social-ecological perspectives on wellbeing and resilience which suggest that problems of individuals are due to scarcity in their social ecologies, or their inability to access the available resources (Ungar, 2018). In this view, a key individual capacity, as adults, is the ability to navigate and negotiate social ecologies, to access and receive resources, and to improve those environments (Ungar, 2018, p.7). A corollary to this view of empowerment includes addressing individual and structural issues by reducing self-blame and encouraging people to gain insight into the root cause of their social circumstances with a view to changing them (Harvey, 2009). To do that, individuals need to develop "the dual processes of power analysis … and critical self-reflection, which yields awareness of how they themselves influence, respond to, and can transform those dynamics" (Chronister & McWhirter, 2003, p. 423). Empowerment includes the "intention to set, strive, and maintain goals aimed at making a difference" (Brodksy & Cattaneo, 2013, p. 335).

In summary, empowerment theory "represents an expansive view of individual and collective behaviour that includes the active participation of individuals and groups in altering and shaping the socio-environmental context" (Speer et al., 2001, p. 716). Following Anderson et al. (2021), this research considers "women's empowerment as the ability to make or express strategic and meaningful choices and decisions related to one's own life" (p. 193).

3.5.2 Empowerment in the rural context

Although there has not been much systematic investigation in the literature of empowerment processes for people who are dealing with change, shocks and stressors (Berkes & Ross, 2012), the concept of empowerment in rural literature is described in the areas of community development (Cavaye & Ross, 2019), women in domestic violence situations (Wendt & Hornosty, 2011), women in farm succession processes (Luhrs, 2016; Pini, 2007) and women in agricultural leadership roles (Galbreath, 2015; Pini, 2005a).

Rural community development, with its "strong political and social justice dimensions", aims for "an improved community, in which collective capacity and action lead to improved social, economic, and environmental outcomes for the community" (Cavaye & Ross, 2019, p. 189). Community development processes specifically work to "ensure community ownership and empowerment" (Cavaye & Ross, 2019, p. 192), namely, to make community led decisions and significant adaptive changes. Thus, rural community development is cognisant of power differentials in rural communities and the need to take them into consideration when planning processes which might disrupt the current status quo and support the disempowered. Ensuring community ownership means including the ideas, aspirations and values of the people in that specific rural location. This includes taking into consideration the risks they might face in taking community or individual empowerment actions.

Another area in rural locations where risks must be considered in seeking empowerment is in marriages where women experience domestic violence. Wendt and Hornosty (2010) explain how rurality, that is, the values of rural people, impacts on the decisions women in the country make about coping with or leaving domestic violence situations. The contexts that "impact specifically on rural women include the issues of family inheritance, the need for closeness and a sense of belonging in a particular community, and values of family unity and gender roles"

(Wendt & Hornosty, 2010, p. 60). Therefore, women weigh up the risks associated with potential strategies against their rural values and choose resilience or empowerment strategies depending on these risks (Brodsky & Cattaneo, 2013).

Again, as in the concepts of wellbeing and resilience, the rural social and cultural contexts are key to understanding the concept of empowerment in these circumstances. Brodsky and Cattaneo (2013) point out that "whether one is able to gain power depends substantially on how others respond" (p. 337). Responses in rural areas can be victim-blaming and more supportive of the abusive men than of the abused women (Wendt & Hornosty, 2010). Women in rural areas in Australia and Canada experiencing family violence are afraid of being shunned should they leave (Wendt & Hornosty, 2010). In a cultural context where family unity and patriarchal gender roles are seen as having higher value, even by women themselves, than safety for women, such choices can be difficult (Wendt & Hornosty, 2010). Empowerment is "enacted socially – aimed at external change to relationships, situations, power dynamics, or contexts – and involves a change in power, along with an internal, psychological shift" (Brodsky & Cattaneo, 2013, p. 338). Brodsky and Cattaneo (2013) contend that empowerment processes in family violence situations require a risk assessment: if the risk of harm is too great, resilience processes of adaptation are appropriate, but if risk is manageable, then actions to change the power dynamics and hence the situation can be enacted. Empowerment is an iterative process: awareness of an unsatisfactory situation, action to change that state, monitoring of reactions, retreat or advancement depending on reactions (Brodsky & Cattaneo, 2013; Chronister & McWhirter, 2003).

Another area where empowerment for women is canvassed in the literature is in reference to farm families, that is, in the areas of work on the farm and succession planning. Hay and Pearce (2014) found that women graziers in Northern Australia were taking on digital homestead tasks, such the Precision Livestock Farming (PLF) technologies, three

times more often than men, and that they viewed the learning and management of these tools as "empowering, self-fulfilling, and personally valuable" (Hay & Pearce, 2014, p. 326). In contrast, daughters in farm families spoke of having no power (Luhrs, 2016), and daughters-in-law of being considered in their own disempowered positions as "outlaws" (Pini, 2007).

Pini (2002), working with women who had indicated an interest in taking leaderships in the cane growing industry, viewed empowerment as a process whereby an individual comes to understand their own power and acts, "with others, to develop this power" (Pini, 2002, p. 341). Pini (2002) conducted a research project with cane growing women in which she constructed her research activities, that is, designed her focus groups to contain elements of empowerment. She used the focus group because of the potential "within the group interactions for power relations to be more greatly diffused, for knowledge to be collectively constructed, and for empowerment, as participants challenge, question, critique and learn from each other" (Pini, 2002, p. 341-42).

Pini found that the focus groups she conducted enhanced empowerment processes by providing an opportunity for the women to interact, share stories, and create information among themselves in four ways: "making the invisible visible", such as the contributions they made to their farms; "making the individual experience collective", "learning through difference" and "opportunities for discussion and reflection" (Pini, 2002, p. 343-348). Pini's conceptualisation of empowerment is congruent with the notion of transformational resilience (Badahur & Tanner, 2014; Rickards & Howden, 2014) and empowerment in the model offered by Brodsky & Cattaneo (2013).

In conclusion, empowerment as a concept has a more political intent than either wellbeing or resilience, given that its purpose is to address imbalances in power which often translate to social justice issues and inequities. As such, the literature identifies situations in which empowerment for individuals and communities might be useful. In the

agricultural context, studies specifically on empowerment initiatives are rare, although research on transformational adaptation in farming systems is in the ascendance. The concept of empowerment is often included in community development principles and resilience endeavours; however, its more active application is rarely discussed explicitly. In social work literature, including work around battered women in both urban and rural contexts, the concept is more present. The concept is alluded to in discussions of daughters, wives and daughters-in-law in farm families, but again, not often openly employed.

Within the emancipatory framework of post-structuralism, there are separate although interconnected roles for resilience and empowerment, depending on the power dynamics (Brodsky & Cattaneo, 2013). If an adverse event that requires resilience is not systemic nor of high risk, then ordinary responses of 'bouncebackability' may suffice. If, however, the event is part of a systemic situation of risk, then the processes of transformational resilience or empowerment may be necessary to address the underlying issues and work towards change. The next section explores these interrelationships.

3.6 Interrelationships between wellbeing, resilience and empowerment

This subsection overviews selected relevant literature which addresses possible interrelationships between the three concepts within extra-individual cultural contexts. The following subsubsection begins with the two concepts which cause the most confusion and often are used interchangeably, namely, resilience and empowerment (Brodsky & Cattaneo, 2013). Subsequently, the relationship of wellbeing to resilience and empowerment will be considered. Section 3.7 describes the conceptual framework of this relationship, situated within the principles of post-structuralism, which have been developed and adopted for this thesis.

3.6.1 Resilience and empowerment

The connections between resilience and empowerment have been considered in a range of contexts. Brodsky and Cattaneo (2013) have researched both resilience with Afghan women under the Taliban, and empowerment with western women in situations of domestic violence. McHenry (2011) and Cavaye and Ross (2019) investigate resilience and empowerment within Australian rural community development contexts, and Prowell (2019) questions the current use of these concepts in social work with disadvantaged groups. The four papers resonate: the concerns raised by Prowell (2019) about the use of resilience measures rather than empowerment actions are addressed by Brodsky and Cattaneo (2013) and incorporated into their transconceptual model described below. These considerations could in turn be applied to McHenry's work with arts in vulnerable rural communities outlined below as well the issues Cavaye and Ross (2019) raise in their article seeking points of interaction between community development and community resilience concepts.

Issues raised by these scholars include the roles of risk and adversity in the concepts of resilience and empowerment. McHenry (2011) states that "resilience refers to protective factors against adverse outcomes, despite the presence of known risk factors" (p. 245). Prowell (2019) asks, following Davis (2014), if social workers are enabling victimisers by focusing on helping oppressed individuals to build their personal resilience and take the full "responsibility of averting distress and suffering stemming from their oppressive experiences and disadvantage" thereby relieving oppressors of that responsibility (p. 124). Although she agrees that empowerment is necessary, she rejects the modernist social work notion that individuals develop power through education or in collaboration with their social worker (p. 126). Instead, she proposes that social workers might use critical post-structural thinking to find more culturally responsive methods when dealing with clients in situations of risk (p. 127), and to "avoid treating social problems

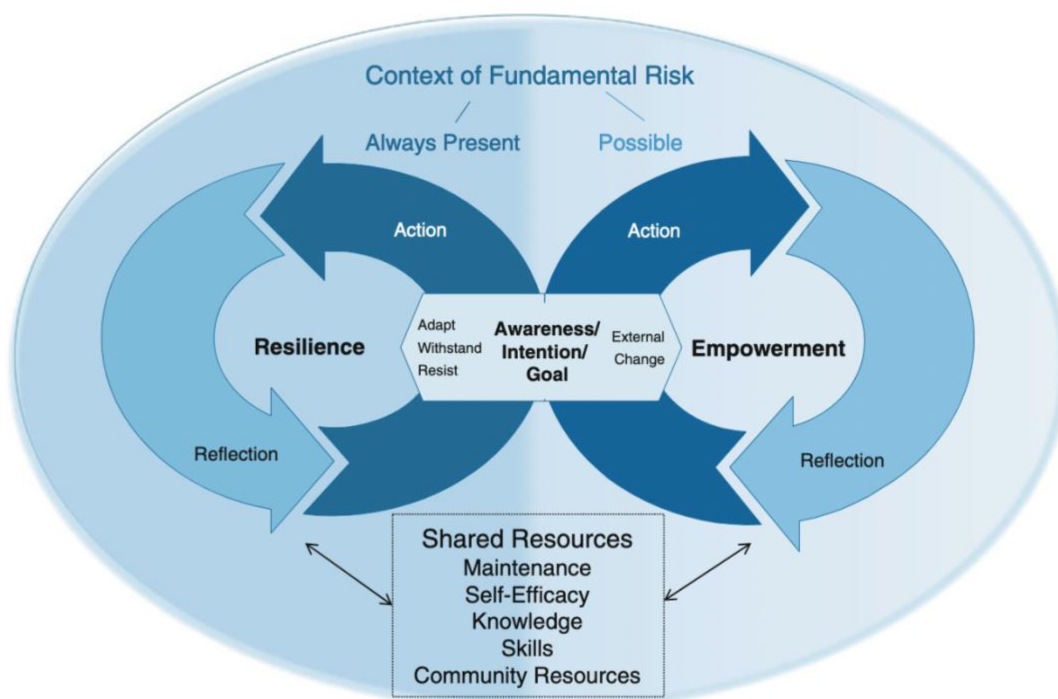
as exclusively psychological phenomena" (p. 128), to be mindful of social determinants, and to be careful not to reinforce oppressive structures. However, she does not specify how those approaches might be developed. Brodsky and Cattaneo (2013) not only describe the differences between the concepts of resilience and empowerment, but clearly explain, based on the level of risks that given marginalised groups face, at which stages in their journeys either resilience or empowerment processes are most effective.

Brodsky and Cattaneo (2013) assert that the terms resilience and empowerment both describe processes "whereby individual and collective adaptation and advancement can occur in adverse contexts" (p. 333). Like Prowell (2019), they emphasise the crucial role of cultural contexts and values in these processes, a view which aligns with the tenets of post-structuralism. Their perspective is informed by their field of community psychology, which has a "focus on strengths-based research and action that recognises, respects, and promotes local capacity and positive outcomes, particularly in marginalised and underserved communities" (p. 333). Brodsky and Cattaneo (2013) aim to differentiate between resilience and empowerment as concepts, and to demonstrate how practitioners working with vulnerable individuals and communities can broaden their conceptual scope to utilise a more comprehensive and ultimately a more useful model. Like McHenry (2011) and Prowell (2019), they perceive the necessity to use resilience processes in situations of adversity and risk. However, they do not view resilience as interchangeable with empowerment. They define empowerment as a positive shift in influence between a person and another person, or a person in a situation of social relations or in interactions with a system (Brodsky & Cattaneo, 2013, p. 336). The decision regarding whether to use resilience tools or empowerment actions depends on the level of risk. They caution against the use of empowerment without careful assessment of the situation. Their crucial contribution to the discussion is their insight, gained through their respective research studies with women in highly

dangerous situations, that empowerment actions in some situations can result in severe consequences, including death (Brodsky & Cattaneo, 2013). Under those circumstances, they suggest that resilience measures of adapting, withstanding and resisting be utilised when the dangers are high, and when risks have abated, empowerment processes of changing external factors be engaged (See Figure 3.3 below).

Figure 3.3

Transconceptual model of empowerment and resilience (TMER) (Brodsky & Cattaneo, 2013)



In Brodsky and Cattaneo's (2013) model, the processes of resilience are iteratively worked through until the situation is assessed to be stabilised enough to provide openings for empowerment processes. This is called the transconceptual model.

The two key dimensions used to determine whether to use resilience or empowerment measures are the levels of risk and the magnitude of change (Brodsky & Cattaneo, 2013, p. 339). Essential

components of their model are the central (both literally and figuratively) imperative of awareness, intention, action, reflection and maintenance towards their goals. They emphasise that awareness means both cognisance of the risks for people in a situation as well as an understanding that these dangers or adversities are not right, in other words, there is resistance to the dominant narrative. Awareness and intention to “set, strive, and maintain goals aimed at making a difference” (Brodksy & Cattaneo, 2013, p. 335) lead to thoughtful, well-reasoned actions.

It is necessary for women in situations of risk to remain alert and aware of shifting levels of risk, both for self-protection and for opportunities to move towards empowerment if possible (Brodsky & Cattaneo, 2013). They assert that simple empowerment actions such as speaking up may endanger the speaker if enacted during times of great risk. Conversely, they contend that if opportunities such as speaking up are not taken during times of lesser risk, the transformational changes necessary to improve the situation will not be undertaken. In a different context, this is also reinforced by researchers in adaptive transformation in agricultural systems who assert that actors must act when possible or they may miss rare opportunities to make the changes that will lead to a difference (Gosnell et al., 2019; Rickards & Howden, 2012). However, all actions must be informed by both awareness of risk levels and ongoing reflection. Reflection here refers to “recognition and appreciation of even the smallest resources, strengths and successes” (Brodksy & Cattaneo, 2013, p. 335-336) as well as focusing on gratitude and using adversities for motivation towards empowerment actions at a suitable time.

Maintenance in the Brodsky and Cattaneo model includes “protecting, psychological sense of community (PSOC), flexibility and adaptation to change over time, constant effort, and an appreciation for incremental growth” (p. 336). Resilience is perceived, in this model, as a crucial stage in the iterative resilience/empowerment collaboration, and

decisions about whether and when to employ empowerment actions must be carefully considered.

The actions of empowerment are intended to transform the "status quo by shifting power dynamics and imbalances between the target individual or community and the larger system" (Brodsky & Cattaneo, 2013, p. 341) and improve conditions, thus lessening the need for resilience. However, if the situation reverts, the individuals retreat to the resilience processes of adaptation.

As Brodsky and Cattaneo (2013) assert, this model can help theorists, practitioners, individuals and communities to avoid the frustration that occurs if only resilience processes are possible (Prowell 2019), and instead perceive these as an iterative stage in an overall process that includes empowerment. At the same time, they caution against complacency, noting, as does Prowell (2019), that the resilience measures are not enough; empowerment is needed to attain substantive goals.

Cavaye and Ross (2019), in outlining how the conceptual approaches of community development and community resilience have synergies that could strengthen both perspectives, also make a distinction between actions that are part of the process of resilience (community resilience) and those that are empowering (community development). The concept of varying levels of risk proposed by Brodsky and Cattaneo (2013) is helpful in clarifying criteria in regional community work regarding when to use community resilience approaches versus deploying tools from the community development toolkit. McHenry (2011) describes community social situations where there is conflict between groups, such as Indigenous and non-Indigenous, or inter-group feuding or inter-class distrust and anxiety, and the careful manoeuvring practitioners undertake to avoid social harm to individuals and groups in these situations. In other words, resilience processes are better employed where there is risk of physical, social or psychological harm, and community development empowerment processes are best used when the risks are lower, and

actions to reduce the inequities or other risk factors that cause harm can safely be undertaken.

3.6.2 Wellbeing relationships with resilience and empowerment

The question remains as to how wellbeing processes relate to resilience and empowerment processes. One answer is the crucial role of contextual values, which inform wellbeing aspirations (White et al., 2014). Cavaye and Ross (2019) provide a connection through community values, the bedrock of both community resilience and community development. White et al. (2014) are emphatic that individual and community values are key to the wellbeing processes of each situation. They argue that people and communities define what wellbeing means to them based on what they value, and then seek to attain those values and goals (White et al., 2014). Greenhill et al. (2009) quote Ungar (2004, p. 341) who asserts that both resilience and wellbeing are socially constructed and therefore, resilience can be seen as the outcome "of negotiations between individuals and their environments to maintain a self-definition as healthy" (p. 319). In other words, individuals decide what their own wellbeing looks like, and following Brodsky and Cattaneo (2013), McHenry (2011) and White et al. (2014), they will employ resilience techniques to maintain and protect that idea or set of values that define their wellbeing, or alternatively proceed to the empowerment processes of making the necessary changes to achieve the wellbeing that accords with their values. McHenry (2011) connects the enactment of all three concepts, specifically in rural areas, through the arts. She asserts that the arts foster communication and encourage participation which increases social connection and thus the wellbeing of individuals and communities. Participation and social connectivity build resilience, that is, "protective factors against adverse outcomes" (p. 245) and can be an avenue for increased civic participation (McHenry, 2011, p. 246). This in turn leads to addressing inequities, that is, empowerment (McHenry, 2011, p. 250). Hence, McHenry (2011) argues that communication of

community goals and values, as well as issues of concern, through group activities such as the arts, leads to resilience and may lead to empowerment, all of which improves individual and community wellbeing.

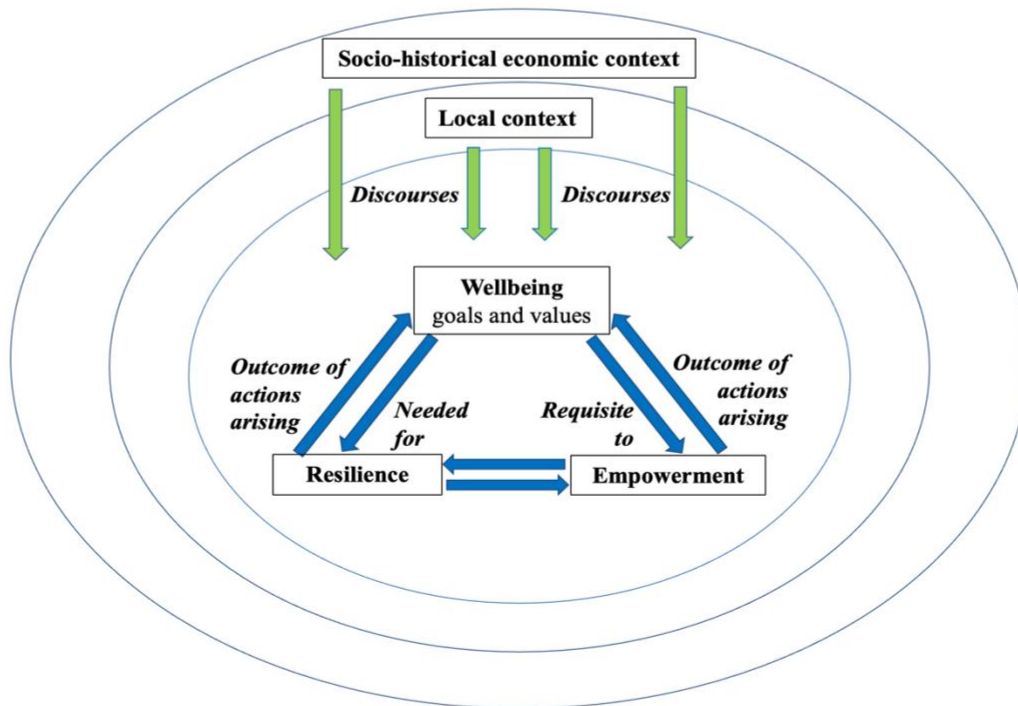
3.7 Conceptual framework

The previous sections of this chapter have canvassed selected literature about relationships between the processes of wellbeing, resilience and empowerment. In essence, the relevant literature contends that personal and community values arising from the cultural context constitute wellbeing aspirations. These motivate both empowerment actions, that is actions to decrease risk and adversities and if needed, resilience processes as mechanisms used to safeguard wellbeing in situations of risk and adversity. In this section, the study's conceptual framework concerning wellbeing, resilience and empowerment and their relationships is covered.

For this study, Brodsky and Cattaneo's (2013) transconceptual model (Figure 3.3) has been extended and enveloped within Johnsen's (2003) model (in Section 2.3.1), itself within the post-structuralist approach, to produce the conceptual framework for this thesis (Figure 3.4). Johnsen's model displayed the farm family unit within its local context. In Section 2.3.1, that model was extended to include the socio-historical economic context, or in other words, the dominant paradigms and discourses that impact on local context, and on-farm families and women in these families. In this conceptual framework (Figure 3.4), another level of the inner circle of property, enterprise, household and actors is shown: the wellbeing, resilience and empowerment dynamics for women within those farm families as they deal with forces emanating from the socio-historical, local and family contexts.

Figure 3.4

Conceptual framework: Wellbeing, resilience and empowerment (WRE) model within post-structural approach



The conceptual framework for this thesis draws on Brodsky and Cattaneo’s (2013) model of women in domestic violence situations or in danger in a Taliban controlled area. In rural areas, local goals and values are both the wellspring and the aspirations of individuals and groups (Cavaye & Ross, 2019; Fullager & O’Brien, 2018). These values inform wellbeing aspirations (White et al., 2014). In line with these assertions, wellbeing has been foregrounded in this model. Fullager and O’Brien (2018) assert that the wellbeing of women in rural areas is dependent on gender-place relations and the dynamics of rurality which “are shaped by a range of emotional geographies, personal and cultural histories that both enable and impede wellbeing” (p. 13). Thus, adding wellbeing to this conceptual framework is particularly appropriate for this study which focuses on women in rural Australia.

This model illustrates that wellbeing goals and values inform and motivate the need for resilience as well as being required for empowerment and are the aspirational outcomes of resilience and empowerment actions. This model provides the framework for the structure of this thesis, as well as descriptions of the major theories underlying this research. For instance, the model indicates that the discourses will be identified and then used to describe and discuss each of the domains of wellbeing, resilience and empowerment in terms of how those concepts interrelate and also how each of those states of being and action are informed by each of the discourses.

McHenry's (2011) work on art projects in rural areas adds the concept of social risk to the other risks of physical or economic harm in this model. Other terms for empowerment are utilised: social learning (Cutter et al., 2008), transformational resilience (Bahaher & Tanner 2014). The model (Figure 3.4) is situated within the local cultural context as its most important focus, but also within the larger societal discourses.

The framework illustrates decision points for women within the wellbeing, resilience and empowerment dynamic, as indicated in the literature. The data analysis in this thesis explores the specific situations and decision points of women in farm families. According to the literature, when their wellbeing, their physical, economic, social or psychological safety is at risk, women undertake resilience measures (Brodsky & Cattaneo, 2013; Prowell, 2019). If they assess that it is safe to do so, they employ empowerment actions (Brodsky & Cattaneo, 2013). Resilience and empowerment measures can work together in a staged and complementary iterative process (Brodsky & Cattaneo, 2013; Cavaye & Ross, 2019; Prowell, 2019). such as learning as much as they can about the situation, reflecting, adapting, planning and enhancing their wellbeing. If they assess that it is safe to do so, they employ empowerment actions such as speaking out (Brodsky & Cattaneo, 2013). The specific actions and thought processes employed by women in this study are explored in the data chapters, Chapters 5, 6

and 7, and summarisd in Chapter 8. Definitions of resilience and empowerment are found in Table 1.1.

Either or both measures may increase wellbeing. At the same time, it is necessary at some point to address the underlying factors producing the crises or adversities, through empowerment processes (Joseph, 2020), social learning (Cutter et al. 2008) and/ or transformational resilience/ adaptation (Badaher & Tanner, 2014; Gosnell et al., 2019; Rickards & Howden, 2012). Incremental resilience processes alone "may act as a blockage for necessary change by increasing investment in the existing system … and narrowing down alternatives for change" (Rickards & Howden, 2012, p. 242). On the other hand, Brodsky and Catteneo (2013) posit that if wellbeing domains such as safety decrease, women may have no choice but to retreat to resilience, until their risk assessment indicates it is safe to embark on empowerment actions. This may be a lengthy iterative process (Brodsky & Cattaneo, 2013), and if unsuccessful, may lead to permanent dysfunction (Norris et al., 2008). These dynamics will be explored in Chapter 8, with any insights and/or modifications added to this model (Figure 3.4) in Chapter 8.

3.8 Conclusion

This chapter provided an overview of the main concepts used in this thesis, that is, wellbeing, resilience and empowerment. A conceptual framework was developed which included the relationships between those concepts within the farm unit contextual model used in Chapter 2 and underpinned by the philosophical approach described in Chapter 1.

The next chapter, Chapter 4 explains how the research was conceived, designed and implemented, the ethics of the research processes, how the participants were sourced, and how the data was analysed. The position of the researcher, an insider, is also explained.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH DESIGN

This qualitative research study is based in a critical constructivist and post-structuralist ontology, with an ethnographic methodology informed by post-structuralist epistemology. The research questions led to these research design choices. At the same time, these perspectives refined the formulation of the research questions that this study addresses. As discussed in Section 8.7, the perspectives align with the researcher's worldviews, her experiences over 25 years as a regional development practitioner and as a woman within a farm family business in South West Queensland, her long-standing social justice and critical perspectives plus her activist approaches to life and work.

This chapter discusses the research approach used in this study, along with how it influenced the design of the research, particularly the methods, data collection and analysis. The key processes of the thematic and discourse analyses are reviewed. The major outcome of those processes with respect to identifying the dominant discourses is outlined. This underpins the structure of the next three data chapters. This chapter concludes with the ethical considerations involved in the research design, as well as the strengths and challenges of the researcher's position as both an insider and outsider researcher.

4.1 Qualitative research

A qualitative research paradigm was used in this research because it seeks to understand "the complex world of lived experience from the point of view of those who live it" (Schwandt, 1994, p. 118). Such a focus aligns with the general goal of this research as explained in Chapter 1, that is, to develop a rich picture of the issues, lived experiences and challenges of women in farm families. To this end, research strategies were employed that allowed the capture of rich data that embraces the complexities and depth of the situations of women in farm families. Presentation of this type of data is also known as "thick description" (Geertz, 1973, p. 26 cited in Richards & Richards, 1994, p. 446). In

qualitative research the important factors include the ability to capture nuances and complexities of lived realities, to achieve comprehensive understanding (Fontana & Frey, 1994). It can be used in positivist and naturalist approaches to human experience but on the other hand, as in this study, "it is drawn to a broad, interpretive, postmodern, feminist and critical sensibility" (Lincoln & Denzin 1994, p, 576).

Qualitative research works both up from the data, and down from the theory, that is, it comprises both inductive and deductive research. In this study, working up involved coming to new understandings of the situation of women in farming families through the thick descriptions in the data and "discovering patterns and constructing and exploring impressions" (Richards & Richards, 1994, p. 446). Working down from theory comprised building on "prior theoretical input" (Richards & Richards, 1994, p. 446). Cresswell (2014, p. 66) states that although some qualitative work does not use theory explicitly, most qualitative studies begin with a prior theoretical orientation. A theoretical perspective, he suggests, provides "an overall orienting lens … that shapes the types of questions asked, informs how data are collected and analysed" and how the researcher is positioned (Creswell, 2014, p. 24). For this research, that orienting lens was post-structuralism. The ontology and epistemology of this research have been carefully considered within the post-structuralist paradigm. As will be shown, these considerations have extensively influenced the nature of the research design.

4.2 Ontology

This research is based on a critical constructivist ontology informed by post-structuralism. This has implications for the research design. Ontology is the philosophic study of the nature of being and how reality is understood and categorised (Kurki & Wight, 2010). It is the "theory of being: what is the world made of? What objects do we study?" (Kurki & Wight, 2010, p. 15). One of the decisions for any researcher in the social sciences is "to clarify whether they accept or reject the notion that there

is a single, objective, real world" which is known as a positivist orientation (Campbell & Wasco, 2000, p. 779). Reality can be understood as objectively true or as relative and subjective (Campbell & Wasco, 2000). Fierke (2010) asserts the question is not whether the world exists independently of our minds, but "whether we can recognise it in a pure and direct fashion or whether what we recognise is always already organized and formed by certain categorical and theoretical elements" (p. 185).

This research is based on the concept that reality is relative and subjective, and is formed by "norms, social agents, and structures, and the mutual constitution of reality" (Fierke, 2010, p. 184). Because within that constructivist ontology, people occupy "multiple, contradictory, and complex subject positions" (Giroux, 2005, p. 13), it was decided that approaching the participants with an enquiring mind and open-ended questions would yield richer understandings of the lives of the participants (Fontana & Frey, 1994). Hence the ethnographic methods of participant observation by the researcher and in-depth interviewing were chosen as the most appropriate tools for this critical constructivist research.

The constructivist ontology was complemented by critical post-structuralist elements (see Section 1.2). A post-structural approach adds the question of how realities are constructed and for what purposes, and, rejecting foundationalism, seeks alternative possibilities and interventions (Campbell, 2010). Realities in post-structural thinking are therefore not universal or permanent, but instead, are products of historical forces, and are "the effect of the operations of power" (Campbell, 2010, p. 224). Realities are constantly being constructed and deconstructed. Thus, in a post-structuralist approach, realities are understood to be relative and subjective, social, impermanent, and evolving, informed by the dominant discourses of the day and constructed within power relations (Campbell, 2010). Furthermore, the post-structuralist approach takes a wide view of appropriate objects of study and includes connections or relationships.

This critical constructivist post-structuralist ontology helped to determine the objects of study, informed the research questions, and influenced the research methods. The objects of this research study include the discourses of women in farming families. The ontology results in the research questions seeking to illuminate the dominant discourses influencing women in farm families and investigate the relationships between these discourses and the women's wellbeing, resilience and empowerment, all viewed through a critical lens of power relations. Furthermore, to elicit a range of insights into the lived experiences of women in farm family units, it was decided that using the ethnographic method of interviews, with the ethics of reciprocity, respect and sensitivity (Hewitt, 2007), was an appropriate research method.

4.3 Epistemology

Epistemology is the philosophy of what constitutes knowledge and "how we gain knowledge about the world" (Dunne et al., 2010, p. 344). The epistemology that is adopted, intentionally or not, for research, influences that research design. For this research, my assumption was that all knowledge and insights are co-creations of the researcher and the participants. This is known as an interpretivist epistemology. The interpretivist paradigm "looks at the situation as a whole to derive meaning and understanding through multiple views of the phenomena" (MacIntosh & O'Gorman, 2015, p. 60). Post-structuralism, described in the next subsection, added questions about the why and how of the creation of knowledge. The adoption of this critical interpretivist post-structural epistemology influenced me to design research questions that brought out multiple views, from many angles. This led to intensive, long interviews and discussions, which provided novel insights, and produced nuanced interpretations of the decisions and processes undertaken by women in farm family units.

4.4 Influence of post-structuralism

The theoretical perspective of post-structuralism influenced how insights were sought and developed in this research. The emphasis on context and discourses led to an interrogation of the socio-historical influences in the lives of women in farm family units, the discourses that they ascribed to, and how the women understood their own lived experiences considering these discourses. It is more than the acceptance of multiple perspectives to form knowledge. Post-structuralism asks of knowledge: "how do we know what we know? Questions are about interrogating the production of contextual meaning" (Barrett, 2005, p. 80), such as through investigating the social context and historicity of the multiple cultural narratives or discourses of women in farm families and asking who benefits (Coombes & Danaher, 2001). The idea of historicity of knowledge encompasses "the historical production of knowledge in socio-cultural structures and, hence, the refutation of the idea of universal/timeless knowledge" (Campbell, 2010, p. 224). Post-structuralism asks what socio-historical interests are being served in the production of various knowledges and how those interests construct current realities. In other words, what discourses and mechanisms of power have "begun to be economically advantageous and politically useful?" (Foucault, 1980, p. 101). This research study encompassed a thorough exploration of the socio-historical forces pertinent to women on the land as documented in Chapters 1 and 2. To meet the imperatives of post-structuralism, the research design has these forces expressed through the dominant discourses initially included among potential discourses of interest identified in that exploration, and then identified and focused on in the data analysis.

4.4.1 Interrogating the production of discourses within power relations

As discussed in Section 1.2, post-structuralism approaches culture and cultural narratives, that is, discourses, in a way that positions them

as social constructions within relations of power that can be usefully studied. Cultural narratives are being continually produced and altered yet are remarkably stable (Butler, 1993). Post-structuralism consequently views the multiple cultural narratives of women in farm families as being both arbitrary and non-arbitrary in their historicity. Although arbitrarily socially constructed historically, and renewed and reshaped daily through performative iterations, the cultural narratives or discourses in rural areas, as in other contexts, have achieved the "effect of boundary, fixity, and surface" (Butler, 1993, p. 9) and have real effects on the daily lives of women. This research design facilitates the investigation of those discourses through the context, described in Chapter 1, and the literature review reported in Chapter 2. This investigation is then consolidated in the data analysis process. This perspective of post-structuralism is used as a lens to explore the participants' lived experiences of wellbeing, resilience and empowerment in Chapters 5, 6 and 7.

Post-structural theory perceives power as being pervasive and simultaneously, transitionary and permeable. This permeability of power leaves room for navigation through power points. At the same time, all forms of power create their own resistance (Papadimitropoulos, 2018).

Figure 4.1

Web of power points and swarm of points of resistance (Foucault, 1976)

Foucault described a useful image:

> "Just as the network of power relations ends by forming a dense web that passes through apparatuses and institutions, without being exactly localised in them, so too the swarm of points of resistance traverses social stratifications and individual unities" (Foucault, 1976, p. 96).

Foucault suggests that power is enacted at "the extremities … in its more regional and local forms and institutions" and can be usefully studied at that level (Foucault, 1980, p. 96). This research explored the

web of power relations in a regional setting in the very local situations of farm families.

Another aspect of power relations is illustrated by Foucault's panopticon metaphor. In this metaphor, Foucault described a type of prison architecture where the prison cells surround a central tower. Each cell has a window facing outwards and a window facing the tower, arranged in such a way that a guard in the tower could see each prisoner. However, the prisoners could not see whether there was anyone in the tower. As a result, the "surveillance was permanent in its effects" (Caluya, 2010, p. 622, quoting Foucault, 1977, p. 201). This was Foucault's metaphor for "mechanisms of social control" (Caluya, 2010, p. 622), specifically the self-disciplining of those who believe themselves to be under surveillance. This idea is explored in this thesis regarding the self-restraining behaviour of women in farm families.

4.4.2 Discourses

As discussed in Section 1.2 drawing on Foucault (1980), discourse is used generally to mean values, norms and beliefs embodied in individuals and groups. As such, discourses, constructed historically, regulate people's relationships, direct what can and cannot be said or done, and define how people are connected in networks or webs of power (Coldwell, 2010, p. 180). Discourses are a "set of time and place specific, culturally and socially produced meanings, statements, practices or beliefs" (Pini, 2006, p. 397) which describe a "place-world … the immediate environment of my lived body – an arena of action that is at once physical and historical, social and cultural" (Casey 2001, p. 683).

As discussed earlier (in Section 1.2), this research is concerned with what has been described as "big D" discourses which are variously referred to as cultural narratives, storylines, values, norms and beliefs, and ideologies. Discourses evolve socially and historically. Discourses are produced and reproduced through performative activities and words, and discourses, "as truth and knowledge claims, play a significant role in

constructing what is ‘real’ for each of us” (McLaren, 2016, p. 146). This research design allows for the interrogation of the current discourses of women in farm families, the conventions and sets of practice on which they are based, and their historical specificity at the time of their interviews. The provision for multiple detailed interviews provided opportunities to capture some of the evolution or changes in the current iterations of the discourses. Tracking changes over time was also possible because the women shared versions of their life histories.

4.4.3 Subjectivity

Post-structuralists speak of subjectivity rather than identity; “As subjects we are ‘positioned’ within and constituted by discourses” (Pini, 2007, p. 41). This approach is consistent with the constructivist ontology which considers people to be socially constructed, rather than having a core self (Barrett, 2005, p. 83). In post-structuralism, “people are ‘subjects of’ cultural narratives, or storylines” (Barrett, 2005, p. 83), sometimes referred to as ideologies. Barrett insists that subjects do not create their own ideologies, but instead, “it is ideologies that construct one’s subjectivity, understanding of oneself and of what is both possible and permissible” (Barrett, 2005, p. 83).

In this research, there were two areas of inquiry when seeking knowledge about this group of women in their specific locality: first, what are the dominant discourses in this region for these women, and second, the challenge that Foucault set for researchers, to “try to discover how it is that subjects are gradually, progressively, really and materially constituted through a multiplicity of organisms, forces, energies, materials, desires, thoughts etc.” (Foucault, 1980, p. 97). In post-structural theory, the discursive identities of people are produced or ‘inscribed’ by the discourses of their social ecologies (Barrett, 2005). Feminist post-structuralism perceives the subject as ‘fragmentary, plural, and contradictory’ (Pini, 2006, p. 397). In other words, this research seeks to understand the dominant discourses that construct the

subjectivities, or discursive identities of women on the land, and then consider how those multiple discourses impact on the development by participants of their own processes of wellbeing, resilience and empowerment. This data is gathered through the literature review and in-depth fieldwork, specifically interviews.

Another mechanism for developing discursive identities or subjectivities is through the process of abjection, that is, whereby individuals are excluded from groups. Butler (1993) talks about constituting the subject by what they are not, which she calls "the force of exclusion and abjection" (p. 3). Barrett takes up this idea, and drawing on Kelly (1997) and Davies (2000a), she maintains that subjects "perform 'category maintenance work', asserting through peer and institutional pressures and self-disciplining acts, what acceptable membership (i.e. behaviour, dress, etc.) in the category looks like" (Barrett, 2005, p. 83). In writing of cultural norms, Nealon says the "norms of cultural intelligibility … are just as *necessary* as they are inherently *exclusionary*. For there to be a context in which any meaning can happen, an exclusion has to take place" (Nealon, 2003, p. 57) (italics in original). Foucault (1980) asserts the exclusion is one of the "micro-mechanisms of power" (p. 101). Consequently, the interview questions and the data analysis were structured in part to draw out elements of abjection along with those of exclusion, marginalisation, and category maintenance in the experiences of the participants in the study. This contributes to the research by assisting in the ascertainment of acceptable norms, beliefs and values of women in farming families, and revealing how the women navigated and negotiated these for their wellbeing, resilience and empowerment.

4.4.4 Agency

The research questions were also designed to draw out accounts of agentic action, whether purposive or tacit, as these are key to empowerment and resilience. In this, the research is informed by the

post-structuralist notion that subjects can shift their positions within discourses and take up different discourses. Subjects can turn a critical eye on the discourses that they inhabit and that they "articulate" (Foucault, 1980, p. 98), and make them visible, exposing their processes of construction. By making the norms, values, beliefs and influence of discourses visible, research can make the "normativities discussable and contestable" (Sherwood et al., 2016, p. 15), and contribute to opportunities for agency. Specifically, in this study, the women in farm family units are perceived as agents, or purposive actors, who navigate and negotiate within their socio-historically constituted realities to achieve wellbeing and strengthen their resilience and empowerment processes. Successful empowerment leads to the attainment of certain levels of decision-making and other agentic power.

4.5 Feminist contribution

The feminist theoretical contribution to this research was located within the feminist element of post-structuralism, which, according to its advocates, "invites researchers to privilege the social category of *gender* in terms of the way in which power relations are constructed" (Baxter, 2003, p. 1). However, unlike critical theory which "would examine who holds the power, who is oppressor and who is oppressed, a feminist post-structural stance asks how subjectivity is constituted through desire and what desires are enacted to hold the frameworks of privilege in place" (Barrett, 2005, p. 86). This gives rise to questions such as: What are the benefits of being a subject of a particular discourse? Who benefits? How? Individuals circulate through the web of power (see Figure 4.1), but "they are always in the position of simultaneously undergoing and exercising this power. They are not only its inert or consenting target; they are always also the elements of its articulation" (Foucault, 1980, p. 98). These considerations influenced the design of the research questions for this study. The notion that there might be advantages, not just disadvantages, in a situation of unequal power relations (Barrett, 2005)

added another layer of deliberations. Simultaneously, the real risks for women in situations of unequal power (Brodsky & Cattaneo, 2013) (see Section 3.6.1). were also factored into the research design These ideas informed the approach that sought to explore the intricate negotiations of power relations, and what strategies women employed towards empowerment. Another aspect, particularly in feminist post-structural discourse analysis, is the purposeful exposure of the researcher influence in the gathering of and interpretation of the data "as a means to preserve the voice of the 'othered'" (McLaren, 2009, p. 6). My position as a reflexive insider researcher is explored in Section 4.8.1. This research, through reflexive practice and transparency with participants, endeavours to thoroughly consider the researcher experiences, worldview and approaches.

4.6 Ethnographic methods

This research employed an ethnographic approach to gathering data, including participant observation and in-depth interviews. Ethnographic methods are particularly well suited to qualitative constructivist studies influenced by post-structuralism. Some scholars have embraced post-structuralism precisely because they "are dissatisfied with approaches that privilege the individual as the primary unit of analysis" (Cerwonka, 2007, p. 14). Cerwonka goes on to say that ethnography, with its practical focus on local worlds, is well placed to "understand human agency in the context of social and institutional discourse and that can attend to the influence of history" (Cerwonka, 2007, p.14). For these reasons, this study employs ethnographic methods to gather data and analyse the results.

4.7 Data collection and analysis

This research employs a qualitative methodology, using ethnographic methods such as participant observation and semi-structured open-ended questions in interviews to gather data (Pelto, 2013). Transcripts of the interviews were sent to each participant for their

verification and feedback. The interview data underwent a series of coding iterations to develop thematic areas, which were then analysed for insights.

Qualitative research does not seek to develop replicable results, or make predictions, but instead, to "produce a coherent and illuminating description of and perspective on a situation" (Schofield, 2002, p. 174). The methods of data collection and analysis in this study were chosen to achieve this illuminating description and rich picture of the situation of women in farming families to construct ideas about their challenges and opportunities, as well as to ascertain the dominant discourses that influence and impact their wellbeing, resilience and empowerment.

4.7.1 Participant observation

Ethnographers entering unknown situations often begin with social mapping. Social mapping is intended to familiarise the researcher with the "socio-cultural geography of the research area" (Pelto, 2013, p. 45), and involves physically visiting the area to be investigated, talking with locals, and having conversations with possible key or gatekeeper participants. As an insider researcher (as discussed in Section 4.8.1) who, having lived and worked in the research area for several decades, I was already reasonably familiar with the physical environments, social systems, behavioural patterns, idea systems and shared history that researchers seek to understand through social mapping activities (Whitehead, 2005). Returning to the research area as an academic researcher using a post-structural qualitative ethnographic lens brought previously unnoticed aspects of known elements of the culture into relief.

Ethnographic observations often comprise the categories of descriptive, focused and select observations (Whitehead, 2005). These are conducted when an ethnographer first enters the field setting. I conducted these elements of traditional participant observation informally during my residence and involvement in the area and culture under study for many years before this research began. First impressions and contact

involve a state of heightened awareness as the researcher tries to ascertain what is going on in the culture (Whitehead, 2005). The researcher also uses natural inquiries, again something Whitehead (2005) asserts that anyone new to a situation would use. These are the who, how, where, when and why questions. I experienced this heightened sensitivity and open-ended curiosity and questioning in my first encounters with this new culture when I married into an agricultural family in South West Queensland, and again later, when I recently approached the same, but evolving, culture through my researcher lens. This participant observation from both experiences enhanced my ability to develop the research questions, and to frame the interviews for optimal gathering of new information. It also contributed to the derivation of insights from the analysis. Observations complemented all stages of the research, were noted in fieldnotes and emails, and discussed with supervisors, contributing to the design of the research, the data collection and analysis of the research data.

4.7.2 Site selection and participant selection

Site and participant selection flowed from my position as an insider researcher. The central areas of the Darling Downs and South West Queensland were chosen for several reasons. As described in Section 1.3.2, the region is agricultural and dominated by family agricultural enterprises, thus providing the appropriate context and potential participants for a study of women in farm family units. I had also lived and worked in this region for many years and had many contacts which facilitated the practical aspects of this research.

The study's focus was on a small number of people with multiple interviews for many of them, to "permit in-depth constructed representations of experiences and impressions to emerge" (Luhrs, 2018, p. 80). The first four participants were known to me. The remaining sixteen were recruited through the snowball technique, that is, participants themselves identified other potentially interested participants

in response to requests from the researcher for referrals. From these referrals, I selected participants to cover a range of age groups, spanning each decade of life from their late 20s to 70s, with one participant in her 80s. Also covered were different areas of agricultural production, chiefly grain growing, cattle and sheep grazing, and cotton production. The backgrounds of the selected participants also varied although reflecting a common trend most had tertiary qualifications. New participants were referred by others as the research developed. Once the desired representation of age groups, areas of production and personal circumstances was achieved, and saturation occurred, I no longer sought new respondents. The table below (Table 4.1) outlines the participants.

Table 4.1

Participants, representing a range of ages, backgrounds and current industries

Pseudonym	Age decade	Agricultural operation	Background – including birth family upbringing – urban, small town or farm
Abbie	40s	Grain, sheep	Urban, mother from land, father rural business
Beth	50s	Cattle	Currently urban, grew up on a farm
Cassie	50s	Cattle	Grew up on a grazing property
Diane	60s	Sheep	Grew up on a sheep property
Emily	30s	Grain, cattle	Urban, but parents had hobby farm
Felicity	30s	Grain, sheep	Grew up on dairy farm
Grace	60s	Grain, sheep, cotton	Grew up on a grazing station
Helen	50s	Sheep	Urban
Isabelle	80s	Sheep	Grew up on sheep station
Jess	30s	Grain	Grew up on grain/ cattle property
Kate	20s	Grain	Currently urban, dating farm son, grew up on grain and cattle property
Lena	40s	Grain, cattle	Grew up on grain/ cattle property
Maddison	40s	Grain, sheep	Grew up in small rural town, hobby farm nearby
Nora	70s	Cattle	Grew up on small dairy farm
Olivia	70s	Grain, Cattle	Urban
Penny	50s	Grain, cattle	Small rural town
Quentin	30s	Grain, cattle	Urban
Raili	30s	Grain, cotton	Urban
Sarah	30s	Grain	Currently urban but was in long-term relationship with a farm son, grew up on grain and cattle property
Tess	50s	Cattle	Small rural town, acreage, business degree and vet nurse

Table 4.1 shows that six of the twenty participants had grown up in towns or cities. Of those, one of them had parents who owned a small hobby farm out of town. Three of the women grew up in small rural towns. Eleven of the women had grown up on farms of varying sizes which produced a range of goods. Two of the participants who had grown up on agricultural properties were or had been dating young men on farms but were not currently living on farms. Three of the women were divorced and no longer living on farms. Most of the participants were married to their farm husbands, but one was a widow, two younger participants were girlfriends of sons of owners, and three were divorced women. Not presented on the table, due to concerns for anonymity, were the qualifications of the women. Only three did not have tertiary qualifications. Among the participants, there were two who studied nursing, one who studied law, six with agricultural diplomas or degrees, three teachers, two practicing veterinarians, two with degrees in business and one with training in veterinary nursing. In summary, the participants included women from each decade of life, from each major agricultural industry in the Darling Downs and South West, those who grew up on the land and those who did not, women with a range of tertiary qualifications as well as women with different marital statuses.

4.7.3 Semi-structured interviews

This study used the qualitative ethnographic research method of semi-structured interview techniques to encourage the emergence of unanticipated information and insights from the interviewees. Whitehead (2005) notes that although ethnographic interviews are usually informal, researchers have a research paradigm in their consciousness, and are alert to information emerging that relates to those areas of interest. To further ensure that issues of interest are addressed in some manner, semi-structured interviews are based on a list of guiding questions (Whitehead, 2005). I used a guiding format and list of questions (Appendix B) to remind myself to cover certain topics. Two pilot

interviews were conducted with initial participants to test the interview structure and modify, taking into consideration suggestions from the interviewees. Moreover, although I was careful to avoid leading questions, I did use conversational techniques and probing to enhance opportunities for participants to clarify and expand on their thoughts, and to increase their mutual understanding, especially in areas of particular interest (Pelto, 2013). Additionally, due to the level of rapport afforded by my insider status, occasionally I used a blatant probing question or leading statement of sympathy or support, which, as Pelto (2013) suggested, can open up "considerable expression of emotions and new information" (p. 166). These expressions of support and more direct questions usually arose naturally but it was helpful to know that these methods were considered appropriate. The interviews were one on one, except for two occasions. For the second interview of one of the participants, she invited her sister-in-law and her mother-in-law to be involved. They became participants as well, and they were all interviewed together, before and after morning tea. Another two young women, who were scheduled for separate interviews, elected to have one together, and then the researcher was able to conduct another individual interview later with one of the women.

A question that I initially devised as a technique to break the ice became a standard and extraordinarily fruitful question. It was "let's start with a summary of your life story; can you tell me about yourself, where you were brought up, your schooling and how you met your husband?" The answers to that question led naturally to the next set of questions about how, for instance, the women, when first married, came to understand the new culture and protocols, how they coped, how they navigated and negotiated their way through impediments, challenges and opportunities, and how they developed their processes of wellbeing, resilience and empowerment.

Most of the interviews were of a duration of 45 minutes to an hour and a half. Several of the interviews consisted of two or three sessions in

one day separated by short breaks. Five interviewees kindly allowed me to return for further interviews over a period of a year. Two participants generously gave five interviews each. In this way, many new angles and deep insights were generated about women in farm families, their discursive cultures, and their wellbeing, resilience and empowerment. Several of the women sent long and informative emails to me, expanding on their initial interviews or responding to questions. The extent of the information and insights divulged during the interview process indicated that the choice of semi-structured interviews in a safe, familiar atmosphere was the right choice of method for this study.

4.7.4 Transcriptions and participant verification

The interviews were transcribed by a university-approved professional transcription service. Next, I thoroughly de-identified each transcribed interview. Names were changed, and any geographical locations or business details which might identify a participant were redacted. Each de-identified transcript was then sent to its participant with a timeline for feedback. This provided each participant with, among other benefits, the recognition that they were "the experts in the field of their own experience and views" (Hewitt, 2007, p. 1157). Some of the participants felt that they were still identifiable, and therefore I made further changes. Some were uncomfortable at the direct translation of their informal conversational speech patterns which were not as polished as they perceived that they normally spoke. For those people, I phoned or had in-person conversations to reassure them that everyday speech is usually informal and that only small excerpts would be used. A few participants sent clarifying notes as well as additional insights which were very useful. These responses were consistent with what other researchers have found when they employed participant verification (Hewitt, 2007). No participant disagreed with or withdrew anything that they had divulged. Every participant verified the authenticity of their interviews. The processes of transcription, de-identification and participant

verification contributed to the study's ethical aims and to claims of authenticity of research results.

4.7.5 Coding, and thematic and discourse analysis

The coding employed inductive processes, allowing significant themes to emerge organically from the interviews. There were three main steps. First, I analysed each interview paragraph by paragraph for codes, or small detailed topics. Each paragraph or block of text could have several types of information, each suggesting a code (Pelto, 2013). Areas of interest as articulated in the research questions and the underpinning philosophical approach were also used in the coding process. In particular, codes were used that related to discourses and to wellbeing, resilience and empowerment. Table 4.2 presents some examples of this first level of analysis from the initial coding of the transcript of an interview with Diane, 60s, grazier.

Table 4.2

Excerpt from interview transcript with initial coding

Interview text (Diane, 60s, grazier)	**Codes**
[when on original family place owned by husband and previously by his family] … so although I belonged I didn't feel totally like I belonged …	Feelings Belonging
You know [husband]'s sister would come out when we were at [the home place] and, but it was like it was her place. Used to drive me a bit nuts.	Husband's siblings Belonging
Then we bought out here, and that's why, probably why I love out here so much, is that it's our place, we bought it ourselves and you know no one else ever owned it - I mean someone's owned it previously, but it wasn't our family.	Buy new place – empowerment
… once we were on our own, I mean it was, we were running things as a partnership, but it was still pretty male dominated.	Male dominance
… we moved out here and yeah I've just been kind of working beside [Tim] ever since out here, and he kind of, initially he had - initially I suppose when we first got here it took me a little while to kind of get equal power in a way…	Work on farm – empowerment
… we pretty much make the decisions together now and work stuff out together.	Partnership

In the extract used in Table 4.2, Diane describes part of her process of gradual empowerment within her farm family unit. The codes in Table 4.2 include the words "male dominance", which became a familiar and frequent code in the interviews, and therefore evolved into a category. "We bought it ourselves" and "make the decisions together" were grouped under strategies for empowerment.

In the second level of analysis, the codes were grouped into collections of similar codes, or categories, as in the example above for "male dominance". In another example, one set of codes evolved into the category of pride, which had two elements: firstly, the pride that the participants felt in the work they and their families do, including their independence and self-sufficiency, and secondly, the flip side of that category, namely, the reluctance to ask for help or admit to any struggles.

In the third level of analysis, the categories were grouped into themes. From the themes emerged a picture of the dominant discourses or systems of thought that informed the daily lives, decisions, and activities of the participants. Table 4.3 illustrates how from several interview transcripts the categories were grouped into themes, and how the themes were analysed to reveal the dominant discourses.

Table 4.3

Categories, themes and the first two discourses

Categories	Theme	Dominant discourses
Male dominance on farms and in farm support businesses	Patriarchal	Traditional conservative masculine hegemony or male dominance
Men owning the properties/ farms		
Women move to location of husband's farm	Patrilocal	
Women especially daughters-in-law – outsiders		
Siblings of husband still involved in the farm enterprise, especially brothers		
Farms passed down from father to son	Patrilineal	
Daughters seldom inherit farms		
Succession issues		
Do things as have been done traditionally	Traditional	
Responsibility to previous generations		
Conservative culture – women's behaviour circumscribed	Conservative	
Resistance to change		
Privacy/ secrecy – no need for help (subset of Pride)		
Love of the land	Love of the land	Agrarianism
Grief if leaving or have left land, longing for land		
Love of the outdoors: work, recreational space and living areas		
Try to pass the land on to children as the best possible lifestyle and opportunity		
Land ownership a priority, succession issues		
Value hard work, proud of ability to do hard work	Pride	

Categories	Theme	Dominant discourses
Proud of their self-sufficiency, resourcefulness and competence		
Value practical abilities, including outdoor as well as business management and financial skills		
Enjoyment and pride in work well done		
Commitment to working/living on the land in agriculture		
Pride in family lineage		
Pride in developing successful agricultural business		
Agricultural producer life the best opportunity	Superiority of life on the land	
Criticism of urban people, lifestyles		
Superiority of producer/farmer life/situation		

The qualitative ethnographic data collection and analysis methods allowed three dominant discourses to be identified. The thematic analysis also pinpointed the challenges and opportunities women faced navigating and negotiating within these three discourses to achieve wellbeing, resilience and empowerment for themselves and their families.

The dominant discourses were the older discourses of agrarianism and of traditional patriarchal masculine hegemony, as shown in Table 4.3, and the more recent discourse of farming-as-a-business. These groupings addressed RQ1, "From the perspective of the participants, which are the dominant discourses of women in farming families?"

These three dominant discourses, agrarianism, masculine hegemony and farming-as-a-business have been used to order the data chapters. Within the chapter for each of these discourses in turn, RQ2, that is "How the discourses worked to constrain and enable the wellbeing, resilience and empowerment of the women", is addressed. Also explored under each dominant discourse is RQ3, "How do women in farm families

navigate and negotiate through and within their discourses to increase or decrease their wellbeing, resilience and empowerment?". Further to this, how these discourses impact on each other, and how women are finding ways to accommodate, circumvent and alter the discourses to enable better wellbeing, resilience and empowerment for themselves, their families and the agricultural sector is discussed in Chapter 8.

4.8 Ethics

This research design included ethical considerations, both general ethics processes as required by the University of Southern Queensland, and specific ethical deliberations in relation to the position of the researcher as an insider and outsider researcher.

The initial research proposal was submitted to the university ethics committee, and provisions for confidentiality were enacted and communicated to participants in the information and consent forms, and in other subsequent communications (see Appendix B). Confidential data storage was arranged, and the de-identification of interview data implemented. As well as these standard ethics procedures, ethical issues pertinent to an insider researcher process were investigated and decisions undertaken to ensure a further layer of ethical conduct and approach. I sought, in all aspects of this research, to bring proximity ethics to bear, that is "respect, caring, humanity and obligation to the other" (Hinze et al., 2015, p.9). As well, in the end, I followed Dwyer and Buckle (2009) into accepting identities as both insider and outsider researcher, and navigating the space-between, "an ability to be open, authentic, honest, deeply interested in the experience of one's research participants" (p. 59).

4.8.1 Reflections on insider and outsider research

In this study, I was what Dwyer and Buckle (2009) calls an insider/outsider researcher, that is, an insider due to my status as a long-time resident of the region married into an agricultural producer family, and, as an outsider initially as a Canadian immigrant, subsequently as an

outsider daughter-in-law and latterly as a researcher viewing the situation through a researcher lens. There are both strengths and challenges in the insider and outsider researcher positions, as well as ethical dilemmas to consider carefully.

The strengths of insider research include prior knowledge and understanding of the environment and people in the study, and the ability to recruit participants and quickly establish rapport (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009). Choosing friends as the initial participants assisted me to draw on common interests and similar experiences to develop a "more comprehensive understanding of the context and complexities of the situation" (McInnerney 2020, p. 256) which increased the rapport with subsequent participants.

An advantage of the initial outsider perspective was the stimulation of my curiousity about Australian women in farm families from the point of view of a person from another culture, similar but different in many important respects. Being an outsider daughter-in-law when first married contributed to the rapport I was able to develop with the participants, most of whom had experienced this uncomfortable state. The latter researcher lens leant a different perspective again, contributing to useful questions and thickening analysis.

The challenges of insider research include the possibility of bias, assumption of knowledge, and ethical considerations stemming from ongoing relationships (Taylor, 2011). How I dealt with these is detailed in the next subsection. Overall, the advantages for me far outweighed the challenges. My insider status, similarity of lived experience and empathetic approach contributed to mutual "trust and openness" (McInnerney, 2020, p. 258). The participants' interviews were comprehensive, detailed and frank. They "felt comfortable disclosing their frustrations about a range of issues" (McInnerney, 2020, p. 258), and the difficult decisions they had to make, for instance, in sending children away to boarding schools at an early age. "It would be difficult for women to discuss these decisions with a researcher who might judge their

choices harshly. As an insider researcher, I was able to confirm that I had been faced with similar decisions in my life in remote Queensland, and I had lived experience of the difficulties these mothers faced" (McInnerney, 2020, p. 261). In this way, I was able to tacitly reassure participants that the research would not "harm or place at risk [their] wellbeing [through] shaming, ridicule … and misrepresentation" (Danaher et al., 2013, p. 144). The women not only revealed many of their difficult and challenging times, but they also shared their joy and pride in their lives. As a result, I was able to capture rich, nuanced, multi-layered data about their many discourses.

4.8.2 Ethical considerations of insider research

The ethics of insider research required careful thought, reflection and intuitive assessments as the research developed. Dwyer and Buckle (2009) identify three disadvantages of insider research, namely, the participant might not explain certain aspects of their experience fully, knowing that the researcher is already aware of those details; the researcher may conflate their own experiences with those of the participants and view the narratives of the interviewees through a specific personal researcher-centred lens; and, the analysis may be skewed in favour of results that align with the researcher's own experience (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009, p 58). These challenges manifested in many interviews in this research. To address them, I used different strategies depending on the circumstances. For example, although the participants might assume that I already knew what a standard day on the farm might look like, or what the concerns for a range of issues in the remote region might be, I asked them to ignore those ideas and keep in mind that readers of the study findings may have no knowledge of these matters and would find them very interesting. Most importantly, I reminded them, readers would wish to read about a range of experiences. Another explanation I gave was that each of the participants, as well as any researcher, experience these issues differently and the research was attempting to capture those

similarities and differences. I "prefaced many questions with phrases such as: 'Although I know a little bit about this, I would like to know how the experience was for you, in your own words'" (McInnerney, 2020, p. 262). I used reflexivity consistently throughout to mitigate the risk of colouring the entire study or components of it, such as analysis, with my own preconceived assumptions and perspectives, and also to acknowledge how my experiences influenced the study.

Another risk of insider research is how the research may affect previously established friendships, and conversely, how the intimacy of close friends involved in the research may impact on the results. Even with research design acknowledging co-construction of insights (Hewitt, 2007), there may be the risk of "knowledge distortion" (Taylor, 2011, p. 6). Taylor emphasises the importance of having a range of participants, not just friends, as a checks and balances strategy, and using emotional intelligence, courtesy, respect and discretion with friend/participants (Taylor, 2011, p 18). Although I began with four participants who were friends, the snowballing technique delivered many participants whom I knew only by their names as well as five participants who were previously completely unknown to me. These unknown participants were important for providing the necessary checks and balances. Other strategies employed to mitigate against this risk, following Taylor (2011), were taking time away from the milieu, reflections and discussions with colleagues and supervisors about insights during the process, and participant validation.

The ethics department of the university as part of their risk assessment queried my intention to drive up to eight hours to interview women in their remote homesteads, and suggested internet meetings as an alternative. Due to my inside knowledge, I understood that internet meetings would be difficult due to the unreliability of service. Equally, asking women to drive any distance for meetings would be compounding their disadvantage, as their lives already involve onerous long-distance driving obligations. Thus, following situation ethics which considers how

the situation is "tied to issues of power and (dis) empowerment" (Danaher et al., 2013, p. 144), and not wishing to contribute to further disempowerment due to distance, I met the women at their homesteads or local towns as much as possible. My insider experience, including the ability to drive a utility vehicle with a 2-way radio, and familiarity with the region convinced the university to accept these arrangements. As mentioned previously in Section 4.8.1, conducting the in-depth interviews in a familiar context proved beneficial in the openness and engagement of the participants.

4.8.3 Other ethical considerations

Other ethical considerations included incorporating reciprocity into the design of the research. Reciprocity is important in research (Hewitt, 2007) and is one of my personal values. Essentially the notion of reciprocity means that the participants should benefit from the research individually and collectively in some way. On the most basic level, I met the interviewees at a place of their convenience, usually their own homes, and brought a gift of chocolates or fancy teas. I sought to conduct the interviews in a comfortable conversational style to maximise the ease of the interaction. Several of the participants expressed that the interview itself was enjoyable, a chance to "talk about serious things", and a chance for them to stop and reflect on their lives. On another level of reciprocity, I sent the women their transcribed interviews, partly for participant verification, but also so they would have copies of what was for some their own life history. In these ways and others, I sought to ensure that the participants benefited from the research process.

Besides notions of reciprocity, the question of who benefits from the research is a concern for researchers and academia (Coombes & Danaher, 2001). There is no question that research should be worth doing, with some theorists emphasising that the primary beneficiaries should be the participants (Hewitt, 2007, p. 1155) rather than the researchers themselves. Coombes and Danaher (2001) explain that it is important

that benefits accrue to both the participants and the researchers, as well as the field of research. Kenny (2001) adds another group, the readers. This research was designed to bring benefits to all four groups, with the focus on the participants and their communities. One of my aims was to disseminate the findings directly back to the participants and their communities, through workshops, blogs and networking opportunities, and to the wider world through publications and conference or webinar presentations. This objective has already begun to be fulfilled (see p. iv).

4.9 Conclusion

This chapter has described the research design, its underpinning philosophies, and how it aligned with my values and experiences. Building on the qualitative constructivist and interpretivist research paradigms, the ethnographic methods of participant observation and in-depth interviewing yielded nuanced and rich data. The influence of post-structural thought was evident in the critical emphasis on power relations, choice of questions, and the structure of the data chapters, which highlighted the role of discourses in the lived experiences, challenges, and opportunities of the women in farm family businesses. The thematic and discourse analysis section of this chapter demonstrated how the data was coded, grouped in categories, and analysed thematically, yielding, among other insights, the three dominant discourses, that is, agrarianism, masculine hegemony, and farming-as-a-business, which emerged inductively from the data analysis.

Importantly, this chapter also reviewed my insider researcher position, its strengths and challenges, and how the research design enabled it to enhance this study. It was noted that I was also an outsider researcher in some respects. My ethics as an insider/outsider researcher and general ethical considerations were elucidated.

The next three chapters, under the chapter headings of agrarianism, masculine hegemony, and farming-as-a-business, disclose what the interviews and their analysis indicated of the women's

perceptions of their discourses, the challenges and opportunities afforded by each discourse, and how they navigated and negotiated successfully, and in some cases, unsuccessfully, through these discourses to attain wellbeing, resilience and empowerment.

CHAPTER 5: DATA ANALYSIS - AGRARIANISM

5.1 Introduction to data analysis chapters

The data analysis chapters investigate how the information collected through the interviews provides insights that address the study's overall research question, that is: *From the perspectives of the participants, how do the discourses framing women in farm families enable and constrain their wellbeing, resilience and empowerment?*

The starting point for these considerations is the first research sub-question, namely, *From the perspectives of the participants, what are the dominant discourses of women in farm families?* As shown in Tables 4.2 and 4.3 in Section 4.7.5, the data analysis found that many of the themes, plus other related ideas and values that emerged from the data, coalesced around three dominant discourses: agrarianism, masculine hegemony, and farming-as-a-business. Each of these discourses emerged as influencing the wellbeing, resilience and empowerment of the participants. Although some elements of each of these broad discourses overlap, other elements contradict or are in tension.

Following on from this identification of dominant discourses, the data analysis chapters are centred around the remaining three research sub-questions. That is: *How do these discourses work to constrain and enable their wellbeing, resilience and empowerment?* And *how do women in farm families navigate and negotiate through and within their discourses to increase or decrease their wellbeing, resilience and empowerment*? Given the answers to the preceding questions, *what do the participants say about how rural women's organisations, industry bodies and governments could better support women in farm families to increase their wellbeing, resilience and empowerment?*

For purposes of clarity, the data analysis pertinent to each of these dominant discourses is presented in a separate chapter starting with agrarianism. For each chapter's discourse, insights gained from the data analysis are first presented. This is followed by what the data analysis

revealed about the impact of that discourse on the wellbeing, resilience and empowerment of the women. For purposes of illumination and illustration, direct quotations from the interviews are used throughout. The relevant details of the interviewee are provided using the format of personal-name pseudonyms, role category and age in decades. The term 'grazier' is used for those who raise cattle, sheep or goats, 'grower' for those who grow grain or cotton, and 'producer' for those who do both.

Because wellbeing, resilience and empowerment processes are employed across a range of stressors, each data analysis chapter focuses on a different set of challenges. Each set was chosen as being particularly relevant to the discourse with which they are presented, specifically:

- Chapter 5 focuses on natural disasters driven by extreme climate events such as drought and floods, as well as mental and physical health, particularly the physical risk-taking associated with rural work.
- Chapter 6 focuses on masculine hegemony and the challenges of coping with this hegemony and the associated traditional conservative expectations are addressed.
- Chapter 7 explores the strategies employed by the participants to thrive in the neo-liberal discourse of farming-as-a-business.

5.2 The discourse of agrarianism

The data analysis discussion begins with agrarianism because it was within this discourse that many of the wellbeing goals of the women were formed. As outlined in Section 3.6.2, wellbeing aspirations are what motivates both resilience and empowerment actions. Wellbeing goals are themselves formed from deeply held values (in Section 3.2). In this research, it is contended that the values of women in farm families were and continue to be constructed by the contextual factors of living within a family enterprise within a rural agricultural lifeworld; those values influence wellbeing, resilience and empowerment, and contribute to the

development, maintenance and in some cases, evolution of their rural worldview and structure.

Agrarianism is a term used in the literature (see Section 1.3.1) to denote the placing of a high value on rural life and farming. Although this term was not directly used by the participants, it is the overarching term selected in this study to describe an accumulation of perspectives of the women evident in the data which indicated a strong attachment to the land, high value associated with living in a landowning farming family, appreciation of the lifestyle and satisfaction of agricultural pursuits.

In this chapter, the discourse of agrarianism is explored through the interviewees' perspectives. This leads into consideration in the subsequent two sections of how those ideas informed their values, how those values became wellbeing aspirations, and how the wellbeing aspirations influenced resilience and empowerment within the agrarian space. Resilience measures employed to cope with disruptions to wellbeing, specifically mental and physical health, are then explored. Finally, the chapter presents the empowerment actions taken by some of the participants.

5.3 Discourse analysis

Analysis of the data found that agrarianism as a discourse was very strong among the participants, and that agrarian ideas were the most important aspects of their values. Around 80% of interviewees expressed some or several agrarian ideals and feelings. Their perspectives on agrarianism included love of the land, the desirability of families staying on the land for many generations, feelings and actions towards land stewardship, living and working within a farm family as a privileged and superior lifestyle, pride and satisfaction in the work, the symbolic capital of farm ownership, sacrifices on the part of women to build and maintain the family farm, and the advantages of bringing children up on a family farm. These aspects are further discussed in the following subsections.

5.3.1 Love of land

Somewhat counter to commentary in the literature about the decline of agrarianism (Sections 1.3.1 and 3.4.2), and with scant scholarly attention to the connection of women to the land, love of the land was revealed to be a major element of the prominent ideals of agrarianism of the participants and underpinned their strong attachment to their properties and lifestyle.

This connection to the land, as described by the participants, included the desire to be involved in agriculture, the pleasure of the outdoors and the rural environment, enjoyment of the possibilities and actualities of food production, the satisfaction of working the land, a visceral connection with the earth, a sense of spiritual relationship with the land, and feeling of intense grief and loss if the connection is broken. Beth captured the sentiments of many of the other women:

> I love the expanse of a wide horizon … I love the sound of birds and the breeze in the trees. I find I take deep breaths when I'm experiencing any of those things … I love the smell of rain, fresh green grass, good hay, the perfume of flowering trees and shrubs, the smell of cattle, horses and even the smell of their manure. (Beth, 50s, grazier)

Many of the women expressed their intense love of the "special trees" (Grace, 60s, producer) and the "open fields and sunsets" (Emily, 30s, producer). Love of the land underpinned other similar values such as care for farm animals. Many of the women expressed their "pleasure out of [caring for] the animals" (Grace, 60s, producer), feeding the sheep, taking care of potty lambs, and mustering and breeding lines of cattle.

Several of the women had a "connection to the land, [a] sense of self as part of the landscape", (Grace, 60s, producer). Some expressed that it was important to have purpose, and in this farm context, a purpose could be "feeding the world" (Raili, 30s, producer) as well as improving

the land, and passing it on to the next generation. Some mentioned the spiritual connection:

> ... there’s a real emotional pull to a land … that spiritual pull … You put your heart and soul into it … You try to make it better each generation … the way you look after the land … (Penny, 50s, producer)

From these attachments to the land and satisfaction from animal husbandry came several other values, such as a sense of responsibility for land stewardship and the notion that land ownership and an agricultural lifestyle are highly valued opportunities to pass on to their children and then, their grandchildren. As Grace (60s, producer) observed “… we’re trying to grow them [their children] to take over” and “we have six grandchildren now – how can we not offer them the opportunity?”.

5.3.2 Pride and satisfaction

Most of the women in this study attributed high significance to the values of independence, self-sufficiency, hard work and competence. Consequently, being competent in production-oriented skills was important to them. Tess (50s, grazier) spoke of the necessity to be able to fix cars as a matter of life or death in some remote situations. Felicity (30s, producer) expressed that her sense of “pride and achievement is reason to stay”. Many other participants expressed pride in themselves and their husbands, not only for successfully running a large agricultural enterprise themselves, but also being able to fix machinery, cars and household issues:

> I love that he can just fix it up …. having the ability to fix something when it’s busted or broken, not having to call the … builder, the plumber, the electrician [who don’t] turn up … so you do have to achieve a certain amount of things on your own … (Emily, 30s, producer)

The necessity to be mechanically and physically capable was a requirement of their social ecology, and the skills necessary were facilitated by the farm environment. The husbands had usually acquired those skills in childhood and many of the women had some of those skills or indicated the desire to acquire similar skills.

The participants also talked about their pride and satisfaction in their agricultural production:

> I enjoy working with stock and having a line of cattle to be proud of … I like … working with good cattle in good yards, erecting a new fence, getting weeds under control or eradicated. (Beth, 50s, grazier)

> What you get your fulfilment out of: watching the grain flow out of the auger into the truck and think – we've really pulled that crop off, we've made some good decisions and that's a good crop. (Felicity, 30s, producer)

> It's not a paid job in the sense of the hours they do. It's a paid job in the sense of the achievement for the day. (Emily, 30s, producer).

> You have this mentality that you don't need to be financially rewarded for everything you do, but everything you do counts. (Emily, 30s, producer).

The women also valued business management and financial skills. Almost all of the participants were computer literate. Most of them were involved in the farm management side, including book-keeping, forward planning and financial management. This business-related skill set and its implications for the empowerment of women is explored more thoroughly in Chapter 7 in regard to the farming-as-a-business discourse. This is an example of the overlap of discourses.

5.3.3 High value of rural life vs urban life

Some of the women talked about their experiences living in cities and how they did not develop the same sense of connection with neighbours or the community that they enjoy in the country. Many of the participants indicated that country life was preferrable to urban life because of the stronger sense of community in rural areas, access to the outdoors and "wide open spaces", and a better place to bring up children than in towns or cities.

Many of the participants commented on this community spirit "in the bush" being always available in times of crisis. This community support contributed to a sense of protection and wellbeing in a physical, sometimes risky, environment. This sense of strong community was highlighted in times of adversity such as flooding:

> That community is – and when you see it in a bad situation, it is really a fantastic thing to live in, because people just rally ... we've seen it up there and the people that have come with helicopters and mates helping mates and one of our neighbours pulled out – they had ten people arrive and they pulled 1000 sheep out. … I'm not sure what it gives, but it gives you something that you go, wow, you would not get that in town. You don't quite get the same thing. (Lena, 40s, grazier)

Many of the participants appreciated the contrast with the urban environment:

> I love living in the bush because it is a calming environment. It's peaceful, it's natural, it's in touch with nature and I do love that. It's great to look out and see wide open spaces rather than houses right there as well. (Cassie, 50s, grazier)

Kate (20s, farm daughter) concurred. Like some of the other women raised on rural properties, she missed living in the country and she also liked that idea of wide-open spaces. She reflected that "The

particular part of the lifestyle that appeals to me is isolation … I like having my own space". Lena (40s, producer) also liked having her "own space" and that sense of "freedom when you walk out the door and you're not answering to the neighbours … The freedom is something that really attracts people".

As well as their appreciation of the beauty of their environment, several women reflected that they had the kind of access to natural spaces for which people from the cities had to pay. Participants spoke of their opportunities for walks, motor bike riding, swimming in the dams and other outdoor activities for themselves and their children, that are not readily available in urban areas:

> I think the open fields and sunsets, you know, those good little moments that people spend weeks planning for their weekend away where they can trek and get that same experience. I live that experience. (Emily, 30s, producer)

It was suggested that the desirability of bringing children up in rural areas was an incentive for young families to stay in the country:

> Because especially nowadays I think with social problems in town, kids are probably more protected out there. They can do a lot of outdoor stuff … Then your children having that freedom of being away from the contaminants I suppose of living in a big city as a child. Because there's a lot of things that are very hard for children to deal with in town. (Norah, 70s, retired producer)

Kate (20s, farm daughter) talked about her experience of growing up on a farm, and how she wanted to replicate that experience for her children, providing a place for:

> … play, building stuff and going off on adventures and riding horses and unstructured play where they have to use their own brains to do something.

Many of the participants expressed the sentiment that an incentive to work hard is "the hope that your child gets to grow up in this wonderful place" (Emily, 30s, producer). Given that when interviewed Emily with her husband was openly in the process of selling their property and buying a different one, her words "this wonderful place" may be a metaphor for the lifeworld. In their interviews, Emily and many other women described their remote agricultural enterprises with big skies and vast outdoor spaces, encompassing the values of family independence, hard work and contact with animals such as cattle and sheep.

Overall, the collective opinion of the participants was that life on the land was highly valuable, superior to life in urban areas, worth significant effort and sacrifice, and worth passing down to their children. Indeed, the desire to be on the land and to raise their children on the land motivated them to work hard and make sacrifices to attain and maintain access to the land, usually attained through a combination of family ownership of the agricultural land they live on, and family work to sustain the land and the farming business.

5.4 Impact on wellbeing, resilience and empowerment

The analysis found that the discourse of agrarianism had significant influence on the formation of the wellbeing goals of the participants. Furthermore, these wellbeing goals of love of the land and the opportunity to live and work on the land then formed the intention, or goals, that they employed resilience and empowerment measures to attain, protect and maintain.

5.4.1 Wellbeing

Wellbeing is contextual (as set out in Section 3.3) and constructed by individuals from what is meaningful to them, their values and aspirations. The findings show that the bundle of ideas, values and beliefs that constitute agrarianism make it the main motivator discourse for the wellbeing goals of the women. In other words, their wellbeing is dependent on them being able to enact and live an agrarian life.

The threats to wellbeing within the agrarian discourse encompassed fears of the deterioration or death of the land and stock, the mental toll taken by environmental degradation, the perils of risky normative rural behaviour and agricultural work practices, and the distress of having to leave the land for a range of reasons. From another perspective, the agrarian values of love of the land, pride in their agricultural production, hard work, self-sufficiency and competence, and a sense of the advantages or superiority of life on the land underpinned the wellbeing aspirations of most of the participants and became the motivating discourse for resilience and empowerment actions, not only for the agrarian discourse, but for the other two discourses, masculine hegemony, and farming-as-a-business, as well.

If the land itself deteriorated (through drought for example), and, crops and animals suffered, the participants experienced decreased wellbeing. The participants also described both mental health concerns and the prevalence of physical health challenges, due to the risky nature of agricultural work and other factors. These adversities impacted on them significantly. Additionally, if their access to the land was no longer available, their wellbeing decreased. They experienced grief and loss.

5.4.1.1 Drought

Drought had a considerable effect on the wellbeing of the participants and their families. The interviews took place in 2018-19 at the end of a very serious and multi-year long drought. Many women spoke not only of the devastating financial consequences but the visual and emotional impacts of the drought. Many of them were upset about the state of their stock. Cassie (50s, grazier) talked about a friend who was shaken by the state of their starving cows, some of whom they had to shoot because they were so weak. Cassie was emotional recounting that story. She had to destock her property, selling most of the cattle. The last straw came when her husband suggested that she could no longer water her garden. Her garden was her refuge, the only bit of green

in sight. Like Cassie and many of the other women, Maddison (30s, producer) found the drought's impact on the land disheartening and distressing; she described her family's 30,000 acre sheep property as so denuded of foliage of any sort that "the place looks like a beach".

The long periods of drought leading up to 2018 meant that some of the women's children had hardly ever experienced rain:

> We've been in drought this time for seven years. We sort of call our kids the drought kids because our kids really don't know anything different. … So ever since the kids were born, really, we had seven years of drought and then we had the couple of good seasons and then another seven [of drought]. (Helen, 50s, grazier)

Asked how long her family could sustain this situation, Helen replied, with sadness, that she and her husband were discussing that question. They acknowledged that the situation was unsustainable.

Almost all the participants worried about the drought, the effect it was having on their own, their husbands' and their children's mental health and wellbeing. The drought was a major adversity, impacting on the land and the stock, causing stress and anguish regarding keeping the land and the stock alive, and for some of them, contributing immensely to anxiety regarding whether they might have to leave their farms. All these impacts were clearly amplified by the pervading agrarianism, that is, love of the land and the (normal) lifestyle.

5.4.1.2 Mental health and physical risks

Both physical health and mental health were concerns in terms of wellbeing. A few women spoke of their mental health struggles. Several participants spoke of concerns that they had for other women and neighbours. This issue is explored in more depth later in Section 5.4.2.2.

Several of the participants spoke of the dangers of accidents on farms, of risk-taking behaviours by children and young adults, and how these events impacted on individual and community mental health. The unusually high death rate was commented on:

> … we've lost a lot of people round here … I've only lived here for eight years, and I've lost more people that I know than in my entirety of my life. … The population is so small. I don't understand why there's so many people that have been lost. I think it's just that everyone gets in and has a go and unfortunately a lot of them are non-preventable. I mean they are to some extent - … Yeah it's partly the danger of the work ... I think you're just aware of things on a much closer level because you're entwined in the community. There's probably more risk taking because of the extensiveness of life that – if you did a population dynamic of 500 people in the city you're not going to lose ten of them, whereas out here you do. It's crazy, the funerals that you attend. … Stuff you don't hear about in the city. (Emily, 30s, producer)

Emily further described how the community came together repeatedly and en masse at the many funerals, in small groups and individually to help those most affected by injury and loss.

5.4.1.3 Grief and loss

Grief and loss occurred for the participants on several levels: the deterioration of the land and their stock, losses from accidents, and potential loss of access to the land, that is, loss of the farm. To demonstrate how important access to the land and to this life is to many women, the following excerpts from the data depict the grief that women felt when they had to leave the land for any of a range of reasons.

Kate (20s), a producer's daughter, when asked, in her joint interview with a friend, what her childhood was like on their farm, burst into tears. Her friend asked: "Do you feel like it's a bit of a loss of a dream?" Kate said, through her tears "Yeah. We've just sold the family property. It is objectively a good thing but it's still hard".

Penny (50s, producer) asserted that the only way she would ever leave the country was "in a pine box". After her divorce, Beth (grazier, 50s) tried to establish herself in what she called "a 'small farm' culture,

rather than a western/grazing industry culture". However, she found that people there "didn't relate or understand the northern or western culture that I missed so much". The further away an area was from regional towns, the more genuinely rural the culture became, she said. Beth's identity was inextricably connected to the more remote land and to the rural industry itself, to the point where she felt she was "nobody" if she couldn't be involved in rural culture:

> I avoided reading the latest in the industry as I found it too difficult to deal with because I didn't feel a part of it. Being only a "hobby farmer" it hurt too much to see what was happening in the real industry with me not being very active in it. (Beth, 50s, grazier)

Several of the women voiced anxiety about the possibility of losing their properties due to the severe drought at the time of the interviews, and what that would mean for their wellbeing as families. A significant number of women talked about the desire to be able to continue living on the farm, or at least visiting often, when they and their husbands retired. This access to the land was seen as another reason to ensure that their family properties stayed in the family.

5.4.2 Resilience

As discussed in Section 3.4.1, resilience measures are employed when a stressor or adversity occurs which destabilises pre-event functioning, which is defined as personal and community wellbeing interconnected with natural systems. The findings of this study indicate that for women in farm families, wellbeing, or "high and non-disparate levels of mental and behavioural health, functioning and quality of life" (Norris et al., 2008, p. 127) (see Section 3.4.1), is situated in access to the land, love of the land and being able to work and live as landowners in a family agricultural operation, maintain the land and pass it on to their children.

The findings are that resilience measures, such as adaptation (deploying adaptive capacities in Section 3.4.1), withstanding and

resisting (in Section 3.6.1) are employed by women if the source of their wellbeing, that is, the land itself and access to the land, is impacted by adverse events, such as extreme climate events, for example, drought, or if they are faced with imminent loss of the land. Other resilience measures such as awareness, intent, action, reflection and maintenance (see Section 3.6.1) were employed by most of the participants in specific situations.

The findings indicated that women used context-specific resilience activities such as drawing on the beauty of their environment for solace; banding together with other women to socialise, lift spirits, and talk about the emotions experienced due to drought; organising community events and smaller social events to keep spirits up; monitoring their husbands to ensure that they were coping and similarly for their neighbours. Additionally, many of the women took on off-farm work to financially support the family and the farm business.

5.4.2.1 Awareness and intention

As explained in Section 3.6.1, awareness constitutes knowledge of current adversities and potential future challenges and changes, and the risks they pose to the wellbeing and quality of life goals. Awareness also includes an understanding that these adversities often should not be the case. Intention is the formulation of these goals. All of the participants in this study were aware of the adversities of drought, floods and other extreme climate events, as well as of the dangers endemic to agricultural life and farm work. For instance, although they appreciated the opportunity on their farms to spend time with their children on the job, they also recognised the danger:

> … well, you want to take them everywhere with you but it’s a massive risk … because they’re easily – kids around here have been squashed, crushed, driven over. Things go wrong. (Emily, 30s, producer).

Awareness of these dangers contributed to ongoing monitoring of the health and safety of all family members, with one participant completing a degree in Workplace Health and Safety. Many of the women were anxious about the mental health of themselves and their families when dealing with some of these adversities.

Some of the participants expressed fears about losing their farms and their homes due to drought. Raili (30s, grower) said:

> … when you do all the what-ifs it sort of does get a bit scary … if I start to go down that track of – that moment of maybe where you have to advertise that you're selling or the real actions associated with that, or telling your kids and maybe saying – oh you might not be able to go to the school any more or imagining – oh well where would we move or what we would do …

Several conjectured that this potential loss would be harder on their husbands than themselves. Maddison (40s, producer) commented that men would not take the time out that they needed for self-care. Helen (50s, grazier) worried about her husband staying alone on the property with no breaks. Raili (30s, grower) summed up the comments of several women who worried about their husbands (pseudonym used):

> I do feel … that it would be particularly of concern to Alex. Not that it's not for me but oh, just from the fact that it's his family's business and there's just a lot more at stake for him …

The women were aware of the consequences of adversities such as the physical dangers of farming, and the risks to mental health and family security posed by droughts and floods. Most of them perceived these adversities as inevitable, to be managed. Grace (60s, producer) captured the essence of their sanguine perspectives:

> At the end of the day, it’s not about you or your expectations. It’s about the journey and the integrity of the lives lived. You can only do your best, give it a good shot, and the drought will sort itself out, then it will probably flood, or there will be a commodity [price]

crash. Life's a challenge, be ready to grab the opportunity when it arrives.

Grace, along with several of the other women, accepted the ongoing climate variation as part of the farming life:

> How will we deal with climate variability? We already have variability, we already have unpredictability? All things being equal – with good commodity prices, low interest rates, good feedstock on hand, low debt and a fair hand shake plus good attitude and workability on the farm – farmers in this community can deal with climatic and extreme events. (Grace, 60s, producer)

The women worked hard to mitigate the worst effects of their adversities, and many worked off-farm to bring in income to help support the farm business and the family. Their awareness of the precariousness of the farm situation, although not leading to an understanding that some of these adversities were "not right", did stimulate intention that led them to setting goals, budgets and plans to cope with challenges and changes.

5.4.2.2 Action, reflection, and maintenance

In Section 3.5.1, the concepts of reflection and maintenance measures are described. Action in resilience measures refers to well-reasoned efforts to build skills and opportunities to successfully adapt to the situation and prepare for the possibility of empowerment at some point. Reflection denotes appreciation of resources and strengths, which in this subsection refers to the solace of the landscapes and support of friends and the community. Maintenance includes protecting a sense of community. The women found socialising, mutual support and community events helpful, and they were protective of each other and of their husbands.

Drought was difficult for everyone, and at the time of the interviews, most of the participants had been in drought for at least six years. They were not able to be as productive as they were before

drought, which impacted on their confidence. Some were able to reflect on what they were able to achieve in the past and that they could so again:

> … that's one thing I have thought about before is droughts are hard because you're not actually being able to achieve what you want to achieve. What you get your fulfilment out of. That keeps you going - that really sustains you, and you don't have that during drought (Felicity, 30s, producer).

Several women suggested the need for compassion, and that it was important, as Raili (30s, grower) articulated, to "reach out" to people who might be struggling:

> I think people are very conscious of things being tough and just even asking how things are going gives people strength (Raili, 30s, producer).

Maddison (40s, producer) related an experience of compassionate reaching out:

> I have a next-door neighbour who caught me at the bus stop – not a next-door neighbour, she is 40 kilometres away – but she was at the bus stop crying because things aren't great in her life at the moment for whatever reason. We just sat down, it was like – oh, honey, you are not Robinson Crusoe here and we will sit at the bus stop and cry and talk about it and it's okay.

Although Cassie (50s, grazier) suggested that woman seeking solace from each other in their social groups was rare, she did feel that if it was needed, the group would be kind: "no-one would shut them down". She described the story of one woman at a lunch during the last drought:

> So then they were calving back then, and some of them they had to shoot because the cows would get down and they'd be too weak. I felt it was good to hear that from her because it wasn't – obviously I have empathy, and getting a bit upset now even talking about it.

So obviously I have empathy for her, but I knew it was helping her to talk about it. So, we do – very, very rarely, but we do talk about it. If people need to talk about the drought, whoever you're talking to is only too happy to listen because I know it's good psychology just to be able to get it out and say it instead of keeping it bottled up. Everyone has a sympathetic ear. That's because we're a community and we're all going through it. So, if anyone wanted to talk about the drought, no one would shut them down, and that is helpful as well.

There were a few dissenting voices who suggested that there was not as much support in the community or among women as expected. Grace (60s, producer) said:

As a whole, I don't see the community as nurturers per se, however they would certainly rally to the aid of the genuinely distressed. They allow others to live their own lives, and enjoy catching up as community events. Being family connected might have something to do with this.

What Grace was alluding to was the perceived necessity to refrain from sharing personal or business stresses with others in the community, as many of them are relations of the husbands and the news of problem sharing might be relayed to him. This secrecy boundaries are explored in Sections 6.4.2.1 and 6.4.4.1 in conjunction with privacy norms and values.

Many of the participants organised Race Days, local festive horse-racing events, and other community events specifically to bring people together to raise their spirits. Diane (60s, grazier) liked:

… running the races [event and] helping people … if times are tough … like our ladies' day, running that and getting all those women to come along and have a nice day out.

Most of the women participated in Playgroup. Playgroup is a national not-for-profit organisation which assists local women to organise small local groups of mothers to bring their babies and toddlers along to a meeting place for play activities. It supports child development and peer support for the mothers who have a cup of tea and a chat. Several of the women mentioned that Playgroup was often the group where friendships were forged. At some point, as Grace (60s, producer) said, women graduated from there to involvement in school committees or Isolated Children's and Parents' Association (ICPA) and a range of community organisations. Some joined women's organisations such as Women in Agriculture, Queensland Rural, Regional and Remote Women's Network Inc. (QRRRWN) or Queensland Country Women's (CWA) organisation. Several of the participants joined art and craft groups. Many organised informal social gatherings:

> Sometimes we travel up to 200 kilometres to all get together, so we don't do it very often, but that creates a little group. And netball, we played netball for a couple of years. Yeah, it was a long way for us to travel in … all get in the car and go and play netball. So, things like that. Yeah. They do make a difference and you get to know them and – yeah, so we've got … a few groups like that. I mean, Facebook's … it's good … in that it's much easier to organise something, so we have an Easter – our thing is Good Friday. Everyone comes to the river and we have … fishing and stuff with our neighbours and in days gone by, you'd have to do a ring around. Now, I just get on Facebook and I invite all these extra people. So, we have this great crowd that turns up. (Lena, 40s, producer)

The women tried to support and buffer their husbands, who they felt suffered more in the drought than they did. They were watchful, monitoring the mental health of their husbands, caring and empathetic,

and tried to organise distractions and activities for their husbands to help them relax.

Maddison (40s, producer) and her friends worried about their husbands not taking time for themselves to do anything enjoyable because they felt they ought to stay on the farm and work harder because of the drought. Maddison said: "Sometimes I have to make those decision for him". She has said to him on many occasions:

> … you know you need to find the time … You're going to do this. I've booked that. You are coming with us …

Sometimes this worked:

> I always say to my husband, you should come up – there's a football game in town. Let's go up there. So last weekend we did. We went to see [the game in our nearest regional town] and stayed the night and had a big night out. (Maddison, 40s, producer)

But often her words were ignored. She and her friends decided that if their husbands refused to go places, they would have to go themselves. They asked their husbands to go on a group hike:

> The husbands all went it sounds like it could be fun – no, we can't leave the farm. So, we all went without them. I've reached the point in my life now where I've gone, I'd love for him to do stuff but if he can't leave the farm, I'm going to do it without him.
>
> Like I have to look after me. I can't look after my family if I don't look after me. So, for me to be able to get my energy back again and this whole drought going on –

Many of the women commented on how the landscape was a source of inspiration and comfort to them, not surprising, as love of the land and the vistas was deeply embedded in them (see Section 5.3.1). They drew comfort and strength from their natural environments and their gardens. Tess (50s, grazier), when out mustering, dealt with difficult issues by noting the beauty of the countryside:

> I still feel that through all of that, that I had a strength, and I had a resilience. It wasn't a good relationship in terms of my marriage and so there would be many times that I would crawl into my swag and have a good cry, but then I would see the sun coming up early in the morning and I'd be up out of my swag and lighting the fire and making a new batch of bread and getting on with things …. looking back over those years there was a long-term resilience that kept me going through all of that time, but it also allowed me to see the beauty. I just remember – that piccaninny [very first part of] dawn, just absolutely magical, and being able to have a look at my environment.

For many women, gardening contributed to wellbeing and resilience. When everything around them was parched and dry, "for some it's keep the lawn green and maintain a garden, something nice to come home to" (Grace, 60s, producer). However, during a prolonged drought, gardening might have to be sacrificed. Cassie (50s, grazier), who described herself as very strong and quite resilient, faltered when it became apparent that there would be no water for her garden. She had been coping with the drought, and gradually destocking, which was difficult for her as she managed the cattle and had bred the herd up herself. Her garden was her place of relaxation and a form of meditation. At the time of the interview, it was a half-acre of lush native plants and a beautiful green lawn. Her husband, a genuinely "loving husband" had told her that she would have to slow down on watering the garden:

> I actually snapped at him. I really did, which is terrible. But it was just an immediate reaction that it was the one thing I didn't want to have to let the drought take over.

The potential end of the garden delineated for Cassie the limits of her coping abilities. She considered the garden, and gardening, as part of her resilience repertoire. In a situation where she and her family had no

control over the weather, the drought, and many other elements of life on the land, the garden was her “sanctuary”:

> You're just in your own little world and just daydream and potter … I haven't really psychologically really thought about this, but there is definitely some connection there – of: I can control this, this is my little environment, and it does – it's a positive, and positives build up your resilience or keep your resilience up. I do love my garden, but there is that element that I can come home and we have this beautiful oasis that does give us a break from the drought, the dry.

5.4.2.3 Upskilling

Most of the participants expressed considerable pride in self-sufficiency, competence, independence and hard work. Conversely, some discussed their dilemma if their areas of competence did not align with rural value sets. Lena (40s, producer), a competent and assured farm management partner, noted the detrimental effects of a lack of farm skills on women on farms:

> Certainly, the role of the women in some of the farming families is pretty insignificant … Then they get depression, because they’re not valued.

As Olivia (70s, producer) mentioned that “feelings about yourself [are] tied up in what you can do …”. If “what you can do” is not related to work that is valued in a farm setting, it may be difficult. Olivia who had a successful career prior to relocating with her husband to a remote property in her forties, was not able to continue that career. “That was the end of my life”, she said. She reflected that if a woman did not have the requisite practical competencies, she would not be viewed favourably in this context: “I’ve been told you’re just not practical … means … you are defective.”

However, many of the participants were able to find a niche within the farm enterprise. Being competent in production-oriented skills or financial management skills or both was important to them. An adaptation strategy employed by many of the women was organising seminars and attending workshops to learn as much as they could about managing and operating a successful farm. Learning new skills and acquiring knowledge about new areas of information is an important resilience strategy (see Section 3.5.1). Many of the participants upskilled to be able to be usefully involved while withstanding drought or other adversities. Having the skills is also good preparation for using empowerment actions should the risk levels be low enough to allow such actions.

Felicity (30s, producer) summarised the views of many when she said that she wanted to bring something substantial to the conversation with her husband, and work with him as a valued team member:

> I need to get to all of that stuff because I have to talk to my husband about it. It's no point my husband coming home and saying I've heard this and I don’t know anything about it because he wants my opinion, he wants a sounding board, he needs somebody to talk to about it. There's no point if I just sit there and go – oh that sounds good. I need to bring something to that conversation … Also, the fact that we work as a team, I think that makes us a lot stronger.

Taking on off-farm work could be a resilience strategy of adapting to or withstanding adversity, or it could be an empowerment action, if it led to more decision-making influence. Helen (50s, grazier) moved to the nearest major regional town with the children so that she could gain employment and support the family financially:

> We chose for me to come down to [regional city] and work ... Just to sort of help with the drought situation … Initially, it was that I was going to go home after [my son] finished schooling, but, of

> course, it hasn't rained so our option probably really is for me to stay here.

It was clear that the property had not been able to carry its own expenses or the family's financial needs for some time. Helen mentioned that this was a strategy used by many families in her district. Although Helen was beginning to question this strategy and was unhappy to be living apart from her husband, she implicitly concurred with her husband that keeping the farm was the priority by continuing to support the family and by developing succession plans for their teenage children. Up until the time of the interview, Helen's working off-farm was the family's resilience strategy to cope with the drought and maintain the family's agrarian aspirations. However, just before the interview Helen was empowered enough to have a conversation with her husband in which she put the onus back onto him. She asked him:

> Do you really want to do this for the rest of your life? And the answer was yes. He doesn't want to do anything else. So, I said to him, well you've got to find a way to make it work. If this is the way you want to stay out here and live out here knowing that this is going to be most of the time the normal, you're going to have find a way to make a living because you can't – the way things are at the moment, you can't make a living off this property.

Helen's conversation with her husband constituted a move away from resilience to empowerment, which is recognising the need to change systems and circumstances which constitute the adversities which make resilience necessary (see Section 3.5.1). The next subsection explores empowerment and some of the other empowerment actions taken by the participants.

5.4.3 Empowerment

Empowerment actions are different in each situation, dependent on the contextual adversities and challenges. As outlined in Section 3.5.1,

two key dimensions of decisions about whether to use resilient measures or empowerment actions are the levels of risk and magnitude of change. If the risk is of aspirations being unobtainable, thwarted or even dangerous, resilience measures must be employed. Empowerment, following Brodsky and Cattaneo (2013), can only be employed in situations of low or no risk. Empowerment is defined as action to change the situation to decrease current and future risk.

The agrarian wellbeing goal of developing and maintaining healthy and sustainable agricultural landscapes is partially within the remit of the landowning families, and partially determined by circumstances beyond their immediate control such as climate change. Empowerment to change systems might, in these situations, include drought-proofing and climate actions measures such as infrastructure to increase viability in the face of extreme climate events, changes of land use, and changes to stocking. It might also include a reconfiguration of the financing options, off-farm work and workplace health and safety for on-farm risks. Previously in this chapter, the adversities of long droughts were specifically considered as well as the dangers of farm work.

5.4.3.1 Awareness, intention, and action

Some of the participants were empowered enough to influence decision-making to mitigate these difficulties. In Cassie's (50s, grazier) situation, discussed above in Section 5.4.2, she was empowered enough to speak up and establish her boundaries. Her garden was saved when she and her husband decided to sink a new bore. This bore not only supported Cassie's resilience, or ability to withstand the drought, but it also provided a safety net for the entire property and their livestock against current and future droughts.

Lena (40s, producer) saw drought as an opportunity: We actually can use drought as an opportunity, really – you need to know your business. You need to reduce your livestock early. There are a lot of things in drought that you can do if you do them in the right order and at

the right time and, yes, it's extremely tough and financially you have to cut a lot of corners.

Lena was empowered as a full partner in the high-level decisions in her family farm operation. Furthermore, many of the neighbours sought Lena's advice regarding decisions when amid drought or floods.

Another area of decision-making was regarding the type of production to pursue. In several situations, the women were fully involved in production decisions as well as the financial management of the operations and workplace safety. One of the women achieved an undergraduate degree in Workplace Health and Safety, studying online. These participants were enacting a moderate level of empowerment with respect to their agrarian ideals, in working to contribute to sustainable practices and drought-proofing. However, the participants in this study were not initiating conversations or actions to deal with the larger context of drought and flooding such as extreme climate events and climate change.

5.5 Conclusion

Most of the women embraced agrarianism as an overarching ideology for their lives and lifestyles. They worked hard to maintain their farms and build their own morale and that of their families during droughts and other extreme climate events. The women who appeared to be more empowered were those who were deeply involved in at least some aspects of the farm work, either outside or in the office "doing the books". Although the women over 40 had harrowing tales of their first few years on the farm with their husbands, from the big dry to floods to difficulties coping with the heat, the dust, and their husbands' families, most of them seemed settled and content, involved and part of the decision-making. The younger women appeared more anxious about their futures on the land, especially those who were part of families who had not achieved adequate succession planning.

This chapter explored insights into the discourse of agrarianism, specifically the components of the agrarianism that the participants espoused. It emerged from the analysis that agrarianism underpins their wellbeing aspirations and, indeed, is the most important of the suite of dominant discourses in their lives. How the discourse of agrarianism stimulated their wellbeing, their need for resilience and empowerment, and their wellbeing, resilience and empowerment strategies were then outlined.

CHAPTER 6: DATA ANALYSIS – MASCULINE HEGEMONY

6.1 Overview

As explained in the Introduction to Chapter 5, each of the three data analysis chapters highlights one of the three dominant discourses identified in the data. The discourse analysed in this chapter is masculine hegemony. What the data analysis revealed about the impact of the discourse of masculine hegemony on the wellbeing, resilience and empowerment of the women is presented.

In this chapter, a key factor in the findings about masculine hegemony continues to be the discourse of agrarianism, identified in Chapter 5, as the dominant discourse informing the aspirations and wellbeing goals of the participants. It was clear from most of the participants that their central wellbeing goals were enmeshed in the lifeworld of remote agricultural production: the outdoors, the involvement in stock or grain production and the pride of self-sufficiency, hard work and family independence. These goals underpinned the actions of resilience and empowerment within all three of the dominant discourses.

In Chapter 5 the stressors relevant to the discourse under discussion were natural disasters because they threatened the loved land and the preferred lifestyle. In this chapter, the challenges of dealing with the constraints and expectations imposed by masculine hegemony are addressed as the women attempted to achieve their wellbeing goals.

As in Chapter 5, for the purposes of illumination and illustration, direct quotations from the interviews are used throughout. The relevant details of the interviewee are provided using the format of pseudonym, age in terms of decades and role category. With respect to role category, the term 'grazier' is used for those who raised cattle, sheep or goats; 'grower' for those who grew grain or cotton, and 'producer' for those who did both.

6.2 Masculine hegemony discourse

"It's still a man's world out here", declared Jessie (30s, producer), raised on a broadacre farm, and newly married into another producer family. This was the general view expressed directly or indirectly by the participants, with reactions ranging from irritation and outrage to bemused acceptance.

6.2.1 Patriarchal

The participants overwhelmingly acknowledged the existence of male dominance in most spheres of agricultural life, including farms, agricultural organisations, and businesses. The women suggested that there continues to be a marked separation of women's and men's roles on farms and in rural communities, and much of women's work on farms is not paid or recognised. Within this patriarchal context, most of the women as daughters-in-law, especially during the early years of their marriages, endured uncertainty, exclusion, anxiety and marginalisation. More details of these aspects of masculine hegemony are outlined in Section 6.4 below, in particular how masculine hegemony impacted wellbeing, resilience and empowerment.

As well as the fathers-in-law and husbands, several of the participants had to contend with their husband's brothers. For example, Beth (50s, grazier) and her husband were in partnership with her husband's brothers when they were younger. Beth attended, and sometimes initiated, farm business meetings. At one of the meetings, Beth made a suggestion, and the eldest brother said: "Wives do not get a say". When Beth protested, she and her husband were asked to leave the partnership.

Although most of the women over 40 in the study indicated satisfaction with their lives and a level of parity with their husbands, a few in that age group experienced the disadvantages of male financial power. Olivia (70s, producer), an educated career woman who worked before and after she had children, was unable to work once they sold their original

property in a closely settled area and purchased a more remote property in western Queensland. In order to secure employment, she would have needed to rent a residence in a regional town and live there during the week, which neither she nor her husband wanted her to do. She was not interested in the outside farm work, and her husband would not “let her near” the bookwork. She embarked on volunteer work, and then began long-distance study. However, she remarked, that owing to the disapproval of her husband, “I was actually not allowed to finish that”. He told her to stop studying, and he would not pay for the course. Without a job, Olivia was dependent on her husband. “I do miss that independence of having your own income to do what you will”.

Another significant aspect of the patriarchal and patrilineal norms that the women identified was their exclusion from family decision-making conversations, particularly about the future of the farm. This situation is explored below in Section 6.4 regarding the constraints of masculine hegemony.

Patriarchal attitudes were not limited to the farm. They extended into the community and the rural business sector. Some participants spoke of being belittled by male suppliers and tradesmen when the women were trying to do agriculturally related business. The experiences of Lena (40s, producer) were instructive. Lena explained that the banks still would not lend to women trying to get into farming:

> Certainly, the role of women is extremely slow to change to the point where I know that women will not get the same level of finance from the banks if they go out and run a farm and are without a male partner, certainly not a large farm.

Lena described the usual thought processes of parents and bankers alike as “It’s still very much, well, we need the son, because it’s a physical job …” She countered with:

> ... it’s not a physical job any more. Not like it was. There’s lots of things that I can’t do physically, but we work around it. We get a

tractor or there's lots of aids and there's a lot of things that you do. You're not pioneering out there anymore.

The participants in this study were frank about male dominance in their sector. Many were impacted and, like Lena, criticised the tenets of masculinist ideas in farming. Most of them found strategies to deal with the worst aspects of this discourse but some experienced defeat. None of the participants defended masculine hegemony but many appeared on the surface to comply with its spoken and unspoken rules. However, the interviews revealed that most of the participants were quietly circumventing the constraints of this discourse, using resilience measures when the risk was high, and empowering themselves when it was possible.

6.2.2 Patrilineal

A critical manifestation of male dominance in the agricultural sector is inheritance by male offspring of the crucial resource that is the farm. Such patrilineal succession patterns dominate with marked ramifications for the women's love of the land and desire for a life on the land.

The most common succession situation was that the property had been acquired through the father-in-law's family through the male line. The literature indicates that only 10% of farms are passed down to daughters (see also Section 2.4.2). In two families in this study, the property or some portion of it came through the mother-in-law's family. However, the land succession in those cases reverted back to the male line. Only one of the participants had been given the opportunity to work on her own parents' property with a view to ownership at some point. She did not take up the offer. Several other farming daughters among the participants who did wish to work on the land were denied the possibility of inheritance.

Jessie (30s, producer) gave an example of a neighbouring family's succession plan, where "the three boys each got a farm, and the girls

each got $200”. As a daughter in a producer family at that time, Jessie thought this was unfair:

> ... [it] is very much daughters get nothing. The moment they are married they are wiped clear of the family. If you [as a female] want to be a farmer, you’ve got to marry [a farmer]. And everything is passed to the son. There are all these traditions and things that are passed down to the eldest but nothing to the others.

The story of Lena (40s, producer) exemplifies this situation of the women who wanted to farm. Raised on a cattle property, after finishing school, she went home and worked on her family farm for several years:

> Fortunately, or unfortunately, I also had a brother and so I was essentially married off. … Basically, if I wanted to continue to farm, I would never farm in my own right as a woman in my own family … I mean, they helped a lot, but it was mostly given to the son. So, I married up the road and married a guy who was into agriculture as well.

The patrilineal inheritance practices privileged males and sidelined daughters and daughters-in law to the extent that, for some participants, producing male heirs became, consciously or not, a way to secure their future. Once these participants bore sons, they felt more secure in their place within the family, in long-term stability, and sometimes, in future ownership prospects through an indirect or a direct transactional exchange. An indication of how highly valued males are in this cohort was the observation by several of the daughters-in-law that having a male baby increased their status. Emily (30s, producer) joked about her new baby boy, little brother to another little boy and a sister, as “an heir, and a spare”. Jessie (30s, producer), the young woman who had recently married a grain producer, described the patrilineal norm as a common dream. “It’s almost the romanticising of farming that it’s passed on from father to son”. In Jessie’s marriage, the patrilineal attitudes were very clear. Her husband had been negotiating succession with his parents, and

they said to him: "… if you're not going to have a son, then we're not giving [the land] to you". Jessie, who was pregnant at the time of the interview, explained:

> This baby is different because it's the eldest son's boy. Even though [the father-in-law] has already got two grandchildren. But they don't really count … because their last name isn't [the same as the father-in-law's last name]. (Jessie, 30s, producer)

Maddison (40s, producer) who has had a difficult relationship with her on-property in-laws, found a change in their attitude when she had a son. Up until then, she was not confident that she and her husband had a future on the grain and grazing property owned by his parents.

> … when I had my son, I found my relationship with my in-laws changed. I had two daughters and then I had a son and everything changes. I really feel it was like, well, here is the son and heir for the next generation … so now I don't think about, am I going to be on the farm forever? I think it must be because they are talking about [my son working] on the farm, so surely they're not going to boot us out … Do you know what I mean? It took that pressure off even though it's never been said out loud … he'll go out with his grandfather and, you know, this is how things work and this is where that is. There's that time and energy that's going into the next generation. It was never put into my daughters.

Most of the participants, as they became more empowered within the family business, resisted the patrilineal inheritance tradition, and were working hard to include their daughters in the succession plans. One woman was not able to achieve that outcome and expressed regret. Although Olivia (70s, producer) considered it "very old-fashioned, that the boys get the properties, but the girls have to wait" to inherit the parents' "retirement house and savings", she and her husband followed those norms. They assisted their two sons into property ownership, but not their daughters. She said that "in a perfect world, [one of their daughters]

would have been given a place, because that is what she was interested in."

6.2.3 Patrilocal

The most obvious commonality among the women who participated in this research was that, other than the two youngest unmarried participants, the participants married into their husband's family and his family's rural enterprise. Accordingly, they were all daughters-in-law, and most of them had moved, as Abbie (50s, producer) said, "thousands of kilometres away from your own family" to live with, or very near, their husbands' family. Grace (60s, producer) explained that the "immediate community is comprised of an extended family network" of cousins or other relatives of her husband.

Several participants reported discomfort with their husbands' siblings or parents continuing to make proprietorial visits and comments, enacting a higher level of ownership and connection with their home and the farm than themselves. Consequently, many of the participants, particularly in the early years of their lives in their farm families, felt isolated and marginalised. Diane (60s, grazier) was not happy that her father-in-law continued to live with them even after selling the farm to her husband. Further, her husband's sister visited often, and made comments indicating her stronger connection to the farm than Diane's. Diane felt marginalised: "Although I belonged, I didn't feel like I belonged".

6.2.4 Traditional, class-based and conservative

As noted in the literature, rural areas tend to be traditional and class-based. Even the sense of belonging of individuals is within the boundaries of a specific social class (see Section 2.4.5).

Many of the participants noted the influence of the values and norms of respect for tradition. The women outlined a tendency to do things as they have been done traditionally, with strong resistance from husbands and the husbands' birth families to any changes to

infrastructure on the properties. They explained this as part of their husbands' feelings of responsibility to previous generations and to upcoming generations. This intergenerational responsibility impacted on decisions regarding the infrastructure, but also about selling the property, with several participants noting the difficulty of such a decision.

> …so now I can't get my husband to sell because it's so many generations on that land, that feeling of – I don't know – accountability to give the opportunity to another generation is quite strong, yeah. (Grace, 50s, producer)

> There are some families who will, like ourselves, who will stay there because the family has had the place for generations. (Norah, 70s, producer)

Most of the participants accepted the traditional imperative of the importance of the family farm, its priority in the hierarchy of values and, as a result, the necessity of all members of the family to be working towards the development and maintenance of the farm.

Particularly for those sons who continued to reside and work at the multi-generational place where they were born, it was difficult to countenance any change, which was a frustration for the wives. "You can't really change anything", said Emily (30s, producer). Emily was not permitted to change the cupboards because her husband's grandmother built them, take down trees his mother had planted, or change anything in the house because her husband's grandfather:

> built the house, built everything up from scratch. Built the little sheds, built the little hut over there that's now a chemical shed, and built the dog food shed … built the fences. He built the cattle yards himself.

Emily said "there's things that need changing", including the roads on the property, but her husband was reluctant. She hoped they could

sell the family property and start over at a place where her husband could:

> have opportunities and say yes or no based on a business decision rather than the heartache of not … wanting to change something because his father did it that way.

However, Emily's husband expressed guilt about the idea of selling the property as he felt he might let down the old families in the district, the families that had all settled in the area three or four generations before.

Participants in the study area spoke of the class markers of land ownership such as the family name or identity, social connectedness, boundaries regarding social interactions, behaviour expectations, clothing, vehicles and schooling. Olivia (70s, producer) was surprised that there was "more class involved" and more class "rigidity" in South West Queensland than she had experienced before. She said landowner friends of hers "actually … think that there's something inherently better about you if you own property". Tess (50s, grazier) agreed that there is "an element of snobbery" among landowning families. Diane (60s, grazier) concurred: "Although you would like to think there wasn't a class distinction or whatever it is, there definitely is". Abbie (50s, grower) said that "the bigger the acres and the more established those farms", the higher the status. Being part of one of the "old families" carried some cachet as well. "It is like the English aristocracy that it's old money". Part of this, Abbie said, is "the older, established places have had longer to get more acres and get bigger places".

These distinctions led to stratification. The size of the property was an issue according to Jessie (30s, producer). She hesitated to make social approaches to the women on farms next to hers because their properties were so much larger. She felt she would not be on the same social level. Thus, even within the landowning families, there were differentiations. Another participant, Grace (60s, producer), narrated the downward

mobility of her husband's family, extravagantly wealthy during the wool booms of the 1950s and 1960s, but more realistic since the 1970s. The "old money" and frames of reference from those days of wealth contributed to the sliver of "snobbery" still experienced by some of the participants.

Another class marker was private schooling. Almost all the participants attended and sent their children to private boarding schools as a necessity where there were no local secondary schools, but also as a tradition with class connotations:

> … my sons went to school with some of the boys … because they went to boarding school, so they were part of that same culture … In fact, virtually not long after they were born … we booked them into boarding school … that was the norm across all the area that I worked … One of the good things I liked about the schools was that they had country boys – or girls, my daughter went … too – one of the big benefits to me was that network of friends across a region (Beth, 50s, grazier)

> I can't see some girl from [suburb in city of Brisbane] driving out and meeting a farmer from [these small country towns]. It's usually that sort of upper social element that comes out. Because if the boys come to Brisbane or [regional cities] they usually meet with the crew that they've gone to boarding school with and that sort of that level (Abbie, 50s, producer).

The conservative aspects of the culture were manifested in behaviour expectations. Limits were placed on political beliefs, social connections, and economic decisions. These constraints were sometimes clearly articulated and sometimes transmitted obliquely. The narratives of the participants relayed how they were told, or they intuited, that it was necessary to behave in certain ways.

The regions under study were safe seats for the National Party, a political party associated with representation of traditional rural and

regional voters, (see Section 1.3.3), indicating the conservative nature of the voters. Other political persuasions were not encouraged:

> It's just so conservative. It's like there seems to be something inherently evil about the [major centre-left political party] … people still express there must be something inherently wrong with you if you think it's all right to be slightly left of centre. Or if you are an outspoken feminist. (Olivia, 70s, producer)

Some of the other participants spoke of women being "allowed" to be involved in certain activities, such as community groups and women's only groups:

> Often there are groups. It is considered acceptable for the women to join – such as ICPA [Isolated Children's & Parents' Association] for education of children. Most rural women, no matter how controlling their husband or in-laws are, will be allowed to follow and be involved in ICPA activity, attending state conferences. (Grace, 60s, producer)

An interesting aspect of Grace's observation was how it is taken for granted that many husbands and in-laws would be controlling and not wish the women in their families to be involved in mixed groups (ICPA is comprised predominantly of mothers). Some of the participants illustrated Foucault's panopticon metaphor (see Section 4.4.1) with stories of their self-restricting actions which were undertaken to maintain the social order of conservative male dominance. Cassie (50s, grazier), for instance, would not accept invitations for herself and her children to barbeques or community events when her husband was away, for fear of being "ousted":

> There's certain things you do within the community and if you do some things the community would frown upon it. … chances are they probably weren't thinking that, but my perspective was that I would be frowned upon if I'm out socialising without a husband. I just – honestly, I never did it.

Tess (50s, grazier) experienced clear social directives from her husband's family. She was told by her father-in-law that "…one didn't mix with the managers but mixed with the owners". Her mother-in-law was even more specific: "I don't think you should be mixing with so-and-so." This is an example of the acculturation processes, such as cultural learning, that is, the development of new behaviours for a better fit in the new situation (Berry 2005) (see Section 3.2). Another acculturation process is abjection or constituting the subject by what they are not (Butler 1993). In this instance, by identifying the people who are to be excluded, Tess' parents-in-law built a picture of what "acceptable membership … in the category looks like" (Barrett 2005, p. 87) (see Section 4.4.4). The power differentials between the different classes were mirrored in the power inequities between the receiving family and the lone young woman entering a new culture. On the part of her in-laws, Tess experienced interventions designed, in this instance, to preserve class differentials including the above-mentioned cultural mentoring and instructions regarding boundaries of social engagement. Several of the other participants reported similar experiences, direct or tacit. In these situations, the choices available to the women, according to acculturation theory were assimilation, separatism, marginalisation, or integration (see Section 3.2). Most of the participants chose integrative acculturation, which comprised judiciously incorporating some aspects of the new culture, while maintaining connection with their previous culture. For example, Tess complied with the social restrictions in general but developed and maintained at least one friendship with a woman in the forbidden category (manager's wife). This interaction illustrates the decisions that the women needed to make about whether to employ resilience or empowerment strategies.

Most of the participants chose the adaptation and withstanding resilience strategies early in their marriages rather than empowerment actions, such as in the case of Tess making her own choices regarding social contacts. Flouting the social rules held too many risks. The women

did not want to risk being “ousted” on any level, socially or emotionally, within the community or their husband’s family. Rejection by the husband’s family could result in economic insecurity for herself, her children and even her husband, as well as loss of their highly valued agrarian lifestyles.

Thus, the conservative discourse impacted on the women’s lives, especially constricting their social interactions and behaviours. On the other hand, several of the women asserted that the conservatism of the rural communities was appealing as a culture that valued marriage as an institution:

> So, we share that you get married once and you make it work like you’ve got to put that effort into it and I think, for all of our problems, we come back to that all the time. We chose each other, so we have to make this work and I think marrying into a country family, that’s something I do like; that there is that value – with family value. (Maddison, 30s, producer)

The participants also valued the country life for its conservative values in raising children. As opposed to their urban counterparts, farm children were perceived to be polite, well-mannered, well-spoken and authentic, and the communities were seen as healthy, safe places to raise children:

> Then your children having that freedom of being away from the contaminants … of living in a big city as a child. Because there's a lot of things that are very hard for children to deal with in town. (Norah, 70s, producer)

Furthermore, the participants perceived a life on the land for children as ideal for raising them to have the values of their parents, such as the agrarian values of love of the land and importance of hard work:

> They [children] also learn a really good ethos because of your work ethos. (Emily, 30s, producer)

As a consequence, the conservative, traditional discourse looped back and combined with the agrarian discourse to support the agrarian values of life on the land.

6.3 Lived experiences

Many of the interviewees who were over 40 years old described their experience of the male hegemony discourse through a story of initial adjustment problems when first married, difficulties with their husband's family and/or the situation, a process of acculturation and adaptation, an often-protracted struggle to gain a measure of stability and security, usually involving succession, and then contentment and satisfaction with their situation, the work and the family. Most of the women who were able to do so tried to help their daughters and their daughters-in-law more than they themselves were assisted. Underlying that, however, were the agrarian and traditional discourses of the penultimate value of the farm itself that the participants developed or reinforced in their lives. Key aspects of this experience of the masculine hegemony discourse as presented by the women are analysed in the rest of this section.

6.3.1 Acculturation of sons

Contributing to the traditional and conservative nature of the culture was the lengthy training period for the sons of landowners before they could take over the business. In the conversations, several participants expressed disbelief and disappointment when their husbands appeared to acquiesce to the worldview of their parents to the detriment of their own family unit.

They reflected that this acquiescence may have been the result of the upbringing of the sons, the lack of communication skills in the families and the financial dependence of the sons on their parents for decades into adulthood. This situation often put the wives in difficult positions:

> The sons are told … this can all be yours, and this lifestyle and the fresh air … They bring these boys up, particularly, in, oh this is about the family, and this is about the land and you're part of the

land … What I see is the parents aren't emotionally equipped and they don't have good communication skills, and they don't have good engagement. Because, hello, they're out in the middle of nowhere, talking to no one. So how do they get those skills? They don't see a lot of people, and they're always dealing with the same people. So they don't have to push themselves. These boys at 12 get sent off to boarding school, and then they all come home.

> So essentially what you see is these boys, who are not emotionally equipped. Well, who do you get in your older years to do that [emotional] work for you? It's a wife, who is emotionally equipped, but then goes into this situation where she's up against all these people who can't talk to each other. (Abbie, 50s, producer)

Several of the participants explained that their husbands worked for their parents for a long time for very little recompense but in exchange for lodging and other benefits. The parents often owned the farm and all the infrastructure, determined the wages or drawings and had the power to determine the income and future prospects for their adult sons and their families. Kate (20s, farm daughter), who was dating a man in his early thirties involved in a family farm, described the control by the parents:

> So, challenges are that my boyfriend works essentially at the whims of his dad, so the other day he did a dayshift, then a nightshift and then another dayshift. He doesn't get a regular pay. He does have a company card that he can use, but obviously that's monitored by his mum. He lives in a cottage on their property.

The standard pattern described by the participants for succession was that the parents would either pass the property on, or sell it, to one or more sons when the sons were between thirty and forty. Or, as Emily (30s, producer), a rural consultant who visited many properties as part of

her work, said, that is what "they should do". Emily witnessed several families where there were:

> Fifty year old men not being allowed to do anything because their parents are still controlling where the money goes, how they even choose their [stock] genetics, what they sell and what they keep. [Parents] that are so out-dated but refuse to be forward thinking. I don't know how those [adult] children still work. I guess they work in the family farm hoping that one day they'll inherit it.

Cautionary tales such as this contributed to the anxiety of young women, and their husbands, if the succession plans were not clear.

6.3.2 The experience of daughters-in-law

Most of the women in this study were initially daughters-in-law of the owners of the farm. Many of the participants, when first marrying into families on the land, experienced disorientation as they struggled to understand the culture of the family and the sector. Before they married, most of the participants were not aware of the impending predominance of the husband's family in many aspects of their lives. As Grace (60s, producer) said: "you are not marrying the bloke, you are marrying the family". Whether the women were from farm families or came from urban areas, most of them experienced a period of confusion as they tried to understand their new family situation. Initially, like many newlyweds, what was to become the reality of their situation was obscured by their lack of detailed knowledge and their romantic ideas about their new situations.

At some point, usually once they started a family, the women began to try to make sense of their new lives:

> There is a big change for women once they begin the child raising stage on the farm … They often have to give up their careers, if they haven't already due to geographic positioning … Once they have children, they start thinking about little Johnny and the young family unit starts thinking about down the track. I guess the biggest

hurdle they think about is boarding school fees and how they're going to fund those and they need more money than just the farming allowance. So they really start thinking about strategic stuff then, if not before. (Grace, 60s, producer)

Most of them eventually realised that they and even their children did not command primacy. "Farm first", as Maddison (40s, producer) explained, was the highest value, and their husbands' parents decided how each player would contribute to that priority. As Grace (60s, producer) said, "It's all about the farm". Abbie (50s, producer) expanded:

> The family farm. It is … like an empire. It is overwhelmingly what everyone is working towards and if you're not working towards that you might as well leave the game.

Most of the participants accepted this idea as part of the agrarian ideals that they had gradually incorporated into their discursive identities; one emphatically rejected the culture as "a cult". The idea that the farm was of ultimate importance reinforced the agrarian ideal. The land, the lifestyle and the family farm enterprise interlocked into a powerful ideal, which everyone was expected to aspire towards and contribute to building and maintaining. Interpellation (see Section 1.2) statements such as "Farm First" enhanced the acculturation process, as most of the participants became more enmeshed in the family farm culture, and, correspondingly, their wellbeing goals enlarged to include access to the land, the agricultural lifestyle and involvement in the family farm for themselves and their children.

Acculturation processes were sometimes assisted by financial and emotional rewards, promises and withdrawals. In many of the families of participants, the parents exerted significant control over the young couples. Many of the participants, when first married, lived in the "worker's cottage" on the same property where the husband's parents, and sometimes his siblings, resided. Sometimes the house was more than a cottage and became their family home. Some of the daughters-in-law

struggled with the lack of boundaries between the husbands' parents and themselves as a family, which manifested over workloads, wages and housing. Quite a few of the other participants accepted a lower income from the farm work in exchange for free housing and assistance with major purchases. Nonetheless, this arrangement contained significant disadvantages. Like many of the other participants, Maddison (40s, producer) and her husband and children lived in the second house on the property. Even though Maddison had a part-time off-farm job, they had to ask for everything they needed, as they were primarily financially dependent on her husband's parents:

> My in-laws own everything, having total control of all farm income and my husband is actually really effectively just contracted to work for them, so they [pay] him for the hours of work that he does.
>
> However, there are benefits; we don't pay for our house, we don't pay for electricity, but we do pay for things like phone, our own fuel, groceries, but the farm takes care of our major [expenses] – it's like an incentive for working on the farm.
>
> But major purchases like cars or renovations on the house or a new oven or bigger purchases all have to be run past the farm because sometimes, and certainly not always, they will help out. So, if the farm is having better seasons, then we can say okay, we'd like to buy a new car and even though my husband and I have to pay for the car, sometimes the farm can pitch in and put a deposit down.

Maddison reported that she found this difficult as she was accustomed to being independent. Although the house was provided, this meant that Maddison's mother-in-law had a sense of ownership to the point that she reorganised Maddison's cupboards when she was away and interfered in renovations. Maddison acknowledged that she has had to learn how to assert herself and set boundaries:

> There were times that she would come over and we would disagree … I've learned to assert myself and say this is my house. … So, this is going to be done my way. But I would say it took me 10 years to be able to feel more comfortable to say - this is my house. It's definitely not my farm, but it's my house. (Maddison, 40s, producer)

A few of the participants said that particularly galling was the requirement to check everything with the parents-in-law:

> So that's the downside; it's like being a kid again. It's being a kid with not even my own parents. (Maddison, 40s, producer)

> Asking people's parents every time you want to go to get extra groceries or something for extra money is not all right. It's embarrassing. (Jessie, 30s, producer)

One of the confusing aspects for the daughters-in-law, especially if they were not familiar with family farm economic structures, was the lack of a consistent financial situation. Many of the women had professions and were accustomed to a regular pay-cheque with superannuation, tax deducted, holiday pay and so on. The family agricultural enterprise finances seemed erratic to them, operating on low or no wages, yet able to finance large purchases from time to time. Several of the participants "lived poor" but enacted a comfortable or wealthy lifestyle, including substantial vehicles, private health care and private schooling. The daughters-in-law were under pressure to maintain standards and to socialise with appropriate peers, even if there was limited income. One participant explained this appearance of wealth as "smoke and mirrors". Several explained the control that the parents-in-law exerted through provision of goods:

> That's not your car, that car belongs to the farm and I'm like okay, can we just sell the car and we'll just pay properly and buy our own. No, no, no we need it as a tax break … it's a way of controlling and

> pulling the strings, and it gets a bit frustrating at times … and you feel like you can't say anything because of all the things they've given you. Like – get out of my house. You don't feel like it's your house or anything. (Jessie, 30s, producer)

The expenditures by the parents-in-law were sometimes explained by a 'good season' and sometimes contingent upon emotional motivations.

Abbie (40s, producer), divorced from a grain producer, explained the typical family business structure:

> Okay, so rural families don't work like other businesses. The sons, I have found … There's an idea that they work for nothing and everything gets provided for them, food, fuel, all living expenses, but their actual cash component is quite small.
>
> They get told this nearly a fairy tale that all of this is going to be yours, and unfortunately for us, that never came. I really, really struggled with the idea of us … pretty much working for nothing without any official or signed document - at X amount of time this will be handed on and you will receive the debt and then the parents are to either live on the property or go off.

Many of the situations were fraught with ambiguity as the young families grew. The participants spoke of their families outgrowing the cottage, while the parents-in-law continued to live in the "big house". The daughters-in-law were reluctant to question the arrangement, or, in fact, to ask any questions. Questions were very risky (see Section 6.4.2.4).

One of the cultural norms that the young women grappled with is the ways in which their husbands' family was not only connected in a familial relational sense but also economically and operationally. Many of the older participants reflected on their feelings around realising that the parents held the power. There were limited options for recourse for the young men to be recompensed for the ten or fifteen years that they

worked for their parents for low or no wages. The options were to leave the farm or take their parents to court. These were, in their view, unpalatable choices.

Jessie (30s, producer), recently married into a grain producing family, who was having a difficult pregnancy, expressed annoyance about her father-in-law and brother-in-law treating her home as theirs. It was the only house on the property. Theoretically, the father-in-law and the brother-in-law lived in town, but they were accustomed to staying in the house on the property when there was a lot of work to do. They expected her to cook and clean for them. She was ill and frustrated and wanted independence for herself and her husband. However, the ownership structure was weighted against them.

> The ownership is – it's set into two parts – one is the business and one is the farm. [My husband] has a third in the business, which is nothing but a tax break, although it was presented differently. But we own none of the farm [land] and that's where the challenges are coming. It's not working out. It's really not working out, the situation, but if we leave, we don't so much as own a tyre on one of the vehicles. So we are kind of held to ransom because we don't own anything. Although he is owed a lot. The only way to get that is to take legal matters, and that's just not the way we ever want to go.

The years of working for precarious or nil pay positioned the young men in subordinate uncertainty. Their new wives joined them in a situation where tact and often obeisance were required. Kate (20s, farm daughter), dating a grain-grower (in his 30s), indicated that how the daughter-in-law was viewed by the parents-in-law was crucial to the future economic wellbeing of the son and his new wife. She was asked why the parents might withhold money:

> Kate: Probably because the parents think of it as their money.
>
> Facilitator: Is it their money?

Kate: Well, it would be, yes, but basically because they don’t pay the boys’ wages.

Facilitator: So, what they think actually impacts on your future, your financial future?

Kate: Yes. So, their impression of you, I suppose, impacts [on] what they might want to do for you in the future because even though technically you might be owed a bunch of stuff, and by you, I mean you and the husband as a unit might be owed a bunch of money, or he might be owed a bunch of money … I suppose it doesn't matter if technically you're owed it, if they feel like you don't deserve it then they will find a way to not give it to you.

Kate: Like if you were getting paid normal wages if you were in a normal job, you could save up your money and make your own plans and budget for your own stuff, but you can't do that.

Like Kate, many of the young women interviewed were professional women and were accustomed to budgeting and managing their own affairs. Their new husbands, although habituated to the family culture, were not always happy with the communal family structure. In the best-case scenarios, the new young couple worked as a team to clarify expectations and develop workable solutions (see Section 6.4.4.2). Less fortunate outcomes reported by the participants about themselves and people whom they knew included the couple leaving the farm, the wife leaving, the marriage breaking up or the couple or husband staying into their fifties or sixties as a poorly paid workers with no ownership or decision-making power.

6.3.3 The experience of mothers-in-law

Several of the mothers-in-law whom the participants described were conservative socially and attempted to prescribe behaviour and associations. They were generally women who married in the 1940s and 1950s. These women were not interviewed. Many of the mothers-in-law in this study, married in the 1970s and 1980s, worked hard to ensure that their own daughters-in-law felt welcome. Grace (60s, producer) undertook babysitting duties to facilitate her daughter-in-law attending significant farm meetings such as those with the bank. Grace also instituted family meetings which included the spouses of her adult children so that they could be fully informed about the farm finances and other issues. As they became more knowledgeable, the younger women developed the confidence to participate in decision-making. For example, Penny (50s, producer) was attempting to help her son's girlfriend, who lived on the property with him, to feel comfortable and find a niche for herself within the operation. Diane (60s, grazier) was planning to transition their current property to her daughter and her daughter's husband at an appropriate time. Several women with young children were working their daughters into the succession plan. One woman had tried to interest her daughters in taking over but they were both happy with their urban careers. Most of the families did want to pass the farm to their children, partly, as one participant said, so that they could avoid making the decision about whether to sell or not. Another incentive for intergenerational transfer was that, if one of their children took over, the parents would still have access to the farm.

It appears that by the time the women were mothers-in-law, most were acculturated to the values of the family operation. Thus, although welcoming, according to many of the participants, there was an underlying assumption accepted and enacted by most of the mature women that the farm enterprise was paramount and was an opportunity for the next generation. This was the case whether the women were

themselves raised on a farm or not. For instance, Beth (50s, grazier) who was critical of how her husband's family had treated her when she was a young wife, was surprised and dismissive of the suggestion from her son's partner that he leave the property and live in town with her and their children. Even the idea of having regular working hours on the place was rejected by Beth:

> I suppose I expect them [sons' partners]to understand what my son's role in the family business is and understand that there are certain work requirements. That you don't work a nine to five job, that you've got to be flexible with what's going on, with the work that's involved and most farmers do work long hours.

However, unlike the previous generation where young men came home to the farms after secondary school, many in the new generation of parents expected their children, female and male, to obtain a tertiary qualification before returning to the farm:

> We told our kids, I guess like myself, to get an education, go out and get training, get a career, live your life and if at the end of 10 years you wanted to – or at any stage you do want to come back, you have the opportunity. (Grace, 60s, producer).

The data from this study indicates that there has been a shift in this generation, with expectations that male and female offspring alike need to acquire education and thus options, and that female children are now more likely to be offered the opportunity to farm than they were 30 years ago. The point of similarity is that the farm is still considered a high priority, and a valuable opportunity.

6.4 Impact on wellbeing, resilience and empowerment

As discussed above, the masculine hegemony discourse and the resultant conservative patriarchal, patrilineal and patrilocal environment had significant impact on the participants who married into agricultural families in the central areas of the Darling Downs and South West

Queensland. In the previous chapter, the data analysis concluded that the participants possessed or developed, through acculturation, agrarian wellbeing goals, which informed their aspirations to live on the land in a family farm situation.

In order to have access to this lifeworld, the analysis of the data presented in this chapter revealed it was usually necessary to live and work with the husband's parents and sometimes his siblings, until a young family could navigate their way into ownership, or legal assurance of future ownership. In this section, how the interviewees reported their responses to this situation and the prevailing masculine hegemony discourse is discussed with respect to wellbeing, resilience and empowerment.

6.4.1 Wellbeing

As discussed in Chapter 3, wellbeing is contextual (see Section 3.3.1). It is constructed by individuals from what is meaningful to them, their values and aspirations. In Chapter 5, the analysis established that love of the land, living and working in family agricultural production on the land and access to the land were high values for the participants. These values informed their wellbeing and wellbeing aspirations. Related wellbeing aspirations were having a home on the farm that they could call their own, having their own garden and being part of decision-making concerning their own and their children's future. Consequently, the question for this section can be phrased as: *How did the discourse of masculine hegemony enable and constrain the participants' wellbeing goals of love of the land, living on the land and working within a family farm?*

6.4.1.1 Reinforced wellbeing goals

The traditional conservative masculine hegemony discourse enabled the wellbeing of the women by reinforcing and adding to their wellbeing goals of the value of living on the land and the importance of the family farm. The patrilineal tradition provided the possibility that their husband,

the son of the owners, and his family might inherit the farm, further increasing their wellbeing goals of being close to nature and owning their own agricultural property. Some of the participants mentioned that they liked the assurance of the longevity of marriages in a conservative, rural culture, and being able to bring their children up in a safe place with conservative values. The conservative, traditional patriarchal discourse also provided them with an identity, and job security for the husbands and sons. Penny (50s, producer) spoke for many: "I like being a countrywoman".

6.4.1.2 Created obstacles to wellbeing (destabilised, challenged, threatened)

Of the three discourses, the participants identified that, although there were some enabling aspects of the masculine hegemony discourse, the combined elements of masculine hegemony had the most significant negative impact on the wellbeing and quality of their lives. There were a range of experiences and examples.

Some of the farm daughters expressed their disappointment and distress at not being considered for succession. The wives of ostensibly inheriting sons articulated their anxiety about whether and when the sons might inherit, and when they might be informed. As several of the participants said, they just needed to know so that they could make plans for their future. Daughters-in-law felt excluded and marginalised. They were not given information, and sometimes not allowed to ask questions or to express ideas or opinions. Some of the younger participants felt that they were being "held to ransom", provided with a house and car to control them. With respect to their homes and lives, several expressed some indignation at the power of the older generation in decisions concerning these. Others clung to their independence, which was very difficult if they were not able to source a separate income. Several participants commented on the different aspects of the secrecy code, including the requirement for secrecy outside of the family, and the

culture of whispers within the family. Several felt that their socialising options were curtailed by their husbands' family, by gender and class conventions as expressed or implied by their in-laws.

These constraints are explored more fully in the following resilience and empowerment subsections which consider the participants' awareness of these issues, and their coping mechanisms.

6.4.2 Resilience – awareness, intention, action, retreat and self-care

Each action of resilience needed to be weighed up as to how it would impact positively or adversely on the wellbeing values of the women, that is, love of the land, the lifestyle and the family farm. Any threat to these values constituted a trigger point for the participants, and a risk-based decision needed to be made. If it was too risky to use empowerment measures, such as asking questions or initiating negotiations, resilience actions were undertaken.

As discussed in Chapter 3, resilience measures, such as adaptation (deploying adaptive capacities – in Section 3.6.1) and withstanding and resisting (see Section 3.5.1) were employed by women if it was too risky to use empowerment measures. Other aspects of resilience included awareness, reflection, intention, action and maintenance (see Section 3.6.1). Other strategies used by the participants, were strategic retreat and self-care.

6.4.2.1 Awareness

One of the foundations of developing an appropriate resilience strategy is to have an awareness of an unsatisfactory situation (Section 3.5.1). Most of the participants were aware that the conservative, traditional masculine hegemony could have a deleterious effect on their wellbeing, quality of life and ability to be fully functioning partners in the family farm business. They were aware that for the most part they were expected to maintain secrecy and to be helpers rather than farmers in their own right, and that, for their economic futures, they and their

husbands were often very dependent on the husband's parents, especially the father.

Several of the participants spoke of the requirements for secrecy, and most complied with these norms. Raili (30s, grower), worrying about the possible loss of her family property owing to drought, reflected that many people in the district would be in a similar situation, but would refrain from divulging anything serious:

> we wouldn't ever share the severity of the situation so it's very much at the surface, like, "oh, I wish it would rain" … I haven't changed my dialogue with people, it's still just about the rain, not the possibility of it being the end.

One of the reasons for not sharing concerns with neighbours and friends, or even with her birth family in Raili's case, was:

> because it just is in that area of your finance world and I would feel like that was betraying or giving away confidential information, I suppose, which is a bit tricky so then you just sort of go "Oh, I really wish it would rain". (Raili, 30s, grower)

Some of the women, like Raili, justified the secrecy; others suggested that it was time to open up the 'façade' of superficial resilience, and criticised the secrets and whispers within farm families that was designed to exclude daughters-in-law, where "everything is done secretly, there's all these secret meetings, not with the wives, and it's all done like a mafia" (Abbie, 50s, producer).

This conservative, traditional masculinist expectation of secrecy and exclusion of the wives from information and decision-making contributed to isolating the young wives and disempowering them. Those who tried to break through the secrecy codes could face severe consequences of exclusion and ejection (see also Section 6.4.2.4).

Other masculine hegemony aspects of the culture included discrimination against women by agricultural business people. Lena (40s, producer) who had taken on most of the management responsibilities of

her family’s farm business, said that the masculinist attitudes were still endemic. “The farming culture, say, for me in business – there’s a lot of people that I can’t deal with, because … they don’t want to deal with a woman”. She then imitated the men speaking to her: “She’ll be right, love”. A few of the participants declared that, when faced with similar situations, they took their business elsewhere.

The younger participants were aware that there was a possibility that they and their husbands might not inherit despite their substantial work on the property. Several of the participants averred that they respected the decisions of the parents-in-law; they just needed to know sooner rather than later so they could make decisions for the futures of their own families. Many were aware of the possibility of working for the husband’s parents for many years, with the implied or stated arrangement of less pay in return for future ownership, and then not inheriting. Nora (70s, producer) told a familiar story:

> … one of [husband]'s [friends] … they went back to the family property. They thought they were getting it, they put a swimming pool in, renovated their little cottage and brought the children up there. The parents just sold the whole lot. After the [young couple] had spent money on the house, put the pool in, that was going to be their home. They'd started a separate little business which has actually won a couple of awards, business awards around [that town] and I think a bit further on, the little beef company that they've got. Based it all there and then suddenly dad just sold it. Didn't tell them, but you know, and it happens again and again.

Losing the possibility of inheriting was a major risk, and one of the reasons that the young people tried to ascertain as soon as possible what the plans were for succession. Concurrently, they needed to pay attention to the levels of risk. Several participants told stories of how questioning parents-in-law at the wrong time could lead to negative results (see

Section 6.4.2.4). Nonetheless, with awareness came push-back and intentions to change the situation.

6.4.2.2 Intention

After awareness of the obstacles and impediments to their wellbeing goals came the intention to develop and implement plans to attain goals that would make a difference to their wellbeing (see Section 3.5.1). Practical goals included having a house on the farm that was within their control, working towards eventual ownership, developing good relationships with the in-laws and upskilling to be able to contribute to the family farm set-up. Most of the participants demonstrated those intentions and acted on them.

6.4.2.3 Action – thoughtful, well-reasoned

Awareness and intention towards achieving their wellbeing goals provided motivation for the participants. Many of participants carefully chose actions that were "thoughtful, well-reasoned" (see Section 3.6.1). This was part of their processes of negotiating and navigating through the web of masculine hegemonic practices with awareness and sensitivity.

Several participants viewed the communal nature of the distribution of family resources with reservation. Many of the women expressed concerns about their housing situations when cohabiting on properties with their husband's parents:

> I think it's hard, especially if they've done a swap. Sometimes there's been a swap, where … the younger generation has gone into the bigger house and they've gone back. They're still there and they're just looking over the shoulder, seeing what's being done. I think that would be very hard, and I have – I've seen that situation around ... So, I think that would be hard. I'd hate to live in my mother-in-law's shoes. (Penny 50s, producer)

It was difficult to establish boundaries, develop an independent family unit and simultaneously maintain good relationships with the in-

laws. Quentin (30s, producer) combined strategy and serendipity to create a solution. She resisted the idea of her parents-in-law providing a house for her family on the family property:

> I've probably always been pretty independent, and I really hated the idea of having where I was going to live and bring up my children … bought by someone else and … having to run everything by someone else [for approval].

Quentin saw an abandoned old house, was able to purchase it and move it onto the property, where she and her husband enjoyed gradually renovating. This was a well thought-out action which increased her autonomy and strengthened her resilience.

Another action that several of the women and their husbands took in their early married years was building up savings to position themselves to be able to make an offer on the farm if possible. More details on that strategy appear in Section 6.4.3 below, as although it was built up during the resilience phase, it could often underpin subsequent empowerment actions.

Other actions included building relationships with the husband's family and extended family, contributing to the farm and the community, and upskilling to build skills and confidence.

6.4.2.4 Action – not well-reasoned

As outlined in Section 3.6.1, when deciding about a potential empowerment action to improve a situation and attain goals, it is crucial to assess the risk. In the arena of farm family dynamics, an action such as asking what the plans are for succession can be problematic. Much of the distress about the farm financial arrangements was about the uncertainty of the situation. As Maddison (30s, producer) said, if they knew whether they were likely to inherit the farm, they could make plans. If they were not going to inherit, "if it's not going to my husband, which is fine, it would be nice to start making plans for that now".

Many of the participants as daughters-in-law asked the succession question; for two of them, the outcome was negative both financially and emotionally. Those two did not understand the seriousness of the risk, and asked questions that had deleterious consequences:

> I remember once being hormonal and pregnant and asking about it and being shot down completely. I was told 'That's none of your business, it's all inside [father-in-law's head], you'll find out about it when I die and that's the closest you're ever going to get to it.' I was 100% shot down, would never bring it up ever again. (Maddison, 30s, producer)

> I suppose I was going against the grain and asking a lot of questions. In his family it was a matriarchal sort of society and yes, I was probably butting heads with the mother asking far too many questions that I didn't need to know the answers to … Rule of engagement number one, by the daughter-in-law or future daughter-in-law, never ask questions. (Abbie, 50s, producer)

Further, empowerment requires the social world to respond with some measure of acceptance (see Section 3.5.1). That was not the case for these participants. As a result, both women were excluded from all further family discussions on that topic, and, in one family, the husband was also excluded. Relationships deteriorated so much in the other family that the young couple were asked to leave the farm:

> …we actually had to move from the family farm into town. Really, we did get ex-communicated in a lot of ways because yes, I suppose I was going against the grain and asking a lot of questions (Abbie, 50s, producer).

In these cases, both participants potentially could have been more successful had they employed resilience strategies rather than the empowerment strategies of speaking up and asking questions at that time. As stated, empowerment requires a positive response from the

social world (see Section 3.6.1) such as that given by the mother-in-law of Cassie (50s, grazier) who facilitated a successful transfer despite tensions between Cassie and her father-in-law (see Section 6.4.4.2).

6.4.2.5 Reflection

One of the attributes of women enacting resilience measures is their tendency to reflect as much as possible on the positives of their situations (see Section 3.6.1). It is not surprising that the participants in this study, given their wellbeing markers such as love of the land, found much pleasure and solace in the landscape, the outdoors and their beautiful surrounds. A few were very appreciative of the mothers-in-law for babysitting. A few reframed their stressors for contentment to express gratitude:

> The farm is looking after the son and my husband is the eldest son, and dare I say quietly the favourite son, but I'm glad that it's looking after him. I'm glad that it provides all these things and I'm happy for that. (Maddison, 30s, producer)

Other participants presented the strains of off-farm work, both their own and their husband's, as positive in respect to positioning them to be able to purchase and maintain their property. By reflecting on the positive aspects of their lives, the participants were more easily able to adapt to and withstand their adversities until such time as they could make changes. They also used their adversities as motivation towards empowerment, such as taking on off-farm work to build up savings to purchase land.

6.4.2.6 Retreat and self-care

Several of the participants, judging that the time was not right to attempt empowerment measures, employed the resilience strategies of retreat and self-care. Grace (60s, producer) suggested that it was wise for women to retreat strategically: "If at first it doesn't work, back off and find another pathway". Retreat included carefulness about what they said.

As Penny (50s, producer) warned, sometimes it was better "to bite your tongue … pick your times". Several of the women mentioned the importance of self-care and of holidays, excursions, hobbies and craft days, and social outings.

6.4.2.7 Maintenance

Maintenance comprises "protecting, psychological sense of community (PSOC), flexibility and adaptation to change over time, constant effort, and an appreciation for incremental growth" (Brodsky & Cattaneo, 2013, p. 336) (see Section 3.6.1). Many of the participants spent time and energy protecting what they had – their farms, their children, themselves and their husbands. Protection for children included a great deal of time attending to their children's educational needs, through home schooling, driving children thousands of kilometres each year and work on school committees (see Section 7.5.6). Self-protection came in many forms, through retreat, self-care and socialising. Some of the participants spoke of their concerns for their husbands' mental health in the face of the long drought, and their efforts to support the men. Some of the participants had a strong connection to their community and a few had more of a "psychological sense of community" (Brodsky & Cattaneo, 2013, p. 336) in that they felt that there would be community support should it be needed. Most of them worked hard to maintain relationships with the family and extended family members, and to contribute meaningfully to the farm enterprise, with office work, financial management and, for some, outdoor work.

These efforts were in aid of the attainment and maintenance of wellbeing for themselves and their families, that is, an agricultural life on the land. For some of the participants, attaining this goal was an incremental change; in some cases, the incremental changes gradually led to slow, accumulated certainty; in other cases, incremental changes led to quick changes instigated by changes in circumstances.

6.4.3 Resilience – adaptation, withstanding and resistance

In each of the above categories of resilience measures, the participants utilised varying levels of adaptation, withstanding and resistance.

Adaptation is similar to integrative acculturation (as described in Section 3.2). Adaptation involves iterative learning and improvisations (as in Section 3.4.1). Integrative acculturation means that a new person in a situation is able to retain their original culture and sense of themselves, but also take on aspects of the new culture (Section 3.2). Tess (50s, grazier), in conversation about her ability to adapt to the conservative, traditional ethos of her husband's family, asserted:

> My sense of self was very much that [seeing herself as a valuable person] – it was a combination of who my family are, how I was brought up, the young adult that I had grown into. I just felt a great strength there in terms of who I was. I'm Tess, and this is what I would do in that situation. I think it was about not – it wasn't about changing to the environment, it was about adapting to the environment, but not allowing oneself to be a different person within that environment. So not allowing the environment to change me, but for me to actually adapt within that environment. … maintaining who I was and those standards that I know and had been brought up with and maintaining the – a sense of self – a true sense of who I am.

By their late 30s or 40s, two thirds of the women interviewed had achieved successful adaptation, or integrative acculturation, in their new families and new culture. At some point in their journey, most of these women were able to achieve empowerment for themselves and their families.

Many of the women employed withstanding measures of fortitude, discretion, acceptance, and a certain level of passive stoicism within some of the other elements of resilience, such as reflection, retreat and

maintenance. Many felt that the necessary changes, especially succession planning, took "far too long", but that they had to wait until the time was right.

Resistance was employed by several women, resisting efforts to define their appropriate social contacts, control of their homes or maintenance of secrecy. Resistance efforts, depending on the circumstances, can be considered empowerment measures, and some efforts, such as speaking up and setting boundaries are discussed as such in Section 6.4.4 below. A few of the participants retreated and employed resistance to the point that they might be considered no longer engaged in resilience measures; instead, they may be examples of marginalisation. Maddison (40s, producer) stayed in the marriage and on the farm but began to disengage:

> So now, I have just learnt over the years to whatever will be, will be. I have to look after myself. So I go and make plans for my future that are independent of what the farm is doing which is a shame because that's why I'm happy to keep my distance from the farm as well. I support my husband, but I'm not in it for the farm because, in my eyes, the farm is not in it for me.

Nonetheless, if the situation changed, this disengagement could be viewed as a temporary strategic withdrawal or passive resistance and Maddison could possibly reengage.

6.4.4 Empowerment

As with resilience, empowerment involves awareness, intention, action and reflection. The concept of transformational resilience (see Section 3.4.1) is similar to empowerment. The difference between resilience and transformational resilience/empowerment are that in the latter, actions are taken that will change the status quo, and shift power (see Section 3.5.1). In the situation of the women in farm families, this is the power of decision-making, autonomy and ownership or security. Two of the key areas of empowerment for the participants were their homes

and a sense of security about their future on the family farm. Another area was drawing boundaries around the expectations of their work on the farm.

6.4.4.1 Secrecy

Many of the participants, constrained by the cultural requirements for stoic privacy (see Section 6.4.2.1), navigated personal and family distress very carefully. Quentin's carefully considered resilience action of purchasing her own house and bringing it on to the property (see Section 6.4.2.3) could also be considered an empowerment action.

If the crisis was physical in nature, the women were more open about their emotions, and the community was more forthcoming with support. Some of the women were able to break through these constraints. Maddison (40s, producer), for instance, had a "massive meltdown", but was able to seek help:

> I was obviously depressed and had this massive depressive episode which I've never had … I was in Brisbane when I had the peak and it hit me. I was visiting friends and family and had it all come crashing down for a bunch of … reasons … I went and got help while I was in Brisbane. I went and found people to talk to – proper… psychologists. I went and talked about it. Went and found myself help and got out of it. You know like I'm a talker. I don't think I could have gotten out of that if I wasn't a talker.

When Maddison returned to her remote home, she decided not to hide her situation. She garnered support from her friends and family and then went public:

> I owned my story so instead of letting small town's gossip and 'What happened to her and rah, rah, rah'. I just put it all on the table, 'this is what happened to me'. Then I said to all my good friends 'This is what happened to me, this is how bad it got. This is what you need to look for as my friends'. I sat down with my husband; my mother-in-law went through it with me and I put it all

> out there so that no one could do it for me. … What I did to keep myself accountable was, when I was on my meds, just to get myself back into a clear headspace, I did a massive public post … I had so much support online for all of that with complete strangers going 'Well this is what works for me and this is where I am. You can talk to me and I went through something similar'.

This is an example of the empowerment of speaking out and shifting the norms of the culture. Instead of hiding her situation, Maddison made it public, thus paving the way for other women to break the bonds of secrecy and connect with others for support, as well as changing the culture to become more open.

6.4.4.2 Future on the family farm

Most of the participants gradually became aware that their future on the family farm would not be secure until there was a succession plan in place that at the very least nominated their husband as the successor. Some participants were nominated along with their husbands in the succession plan. For most of them, the intention was to stay on the land, and consequently farm ownership became an important goal. The participants narrated how they and their husbands navigated and negotiated towards this goal. There were many stories of successful navigation.

Some of the women were the primary agents of succession planning and eventual separation from the husband's birth family. The feelings of Grace (60s, producer) about her in-laws were still so raw thirty years later that her way of calming herself was to invoke the laws of 'karma'. Nevertheless, Grace was instrumental in negotiating a way forward for herself and her husband, as well as her husband's siblings:

> I agitated in the end and said that we had to separate, because we had one brother-in-law … there were a few mental health issues in the family … that was driving round with a pistol going past my house at 80 kilometres an hour and I had little kids. It was just

getting really volatile. You just didn't know – and if the wives were talking the husbands weren't talking and there was a con man, one of the girls married a con man. Yeah, just the dynamics were really, really rich.

Grace collaborated with some neighbours to engage a consultant to facilitate succession plans. He began with farm management skills and then moved on to assisting them with the division of properties and assets:

> There were about 20 of us put $5000 each in and employed this young consultant who was a graduate of Gatton. Over a period of probably three years, he worked through different layers of better farm management I guess with everyone. One of the things we got out of it was better decision making and better financial understanding of things.
>
> He helped us [to] go back to another bank and reposition ourselves, value everything and go forward, which was really, really powerful stuff. So a new bank took us on. We divided up. (Grace, 60s, producer)

The parents left the arrangement, and each of the brothers received a property. In this case, the parents had enough off-farm investments to be able to gift the land, although, in the final analysis, there was not quite enough land to give each son a workable property. However, Grace reflected that she and her husband were very relieved once the properties were divided and they could own and operate their own business, and, through good management, increase their holdings.

In the case of Cassie (50s, grazier), although the young people had mentioned that they would like to buy her husband's parents out, it was, in the end, the husband's parents who initiated the move for succession. Cassie's story was unusual in that her conflict with her father-in-law did not cause her in-laws to "shut her down" as happened with a few of the

other women. Partly this may have been due to Cassie's upbringing on a sheep place, and her familiarity, competence and enjoyment of stockwork. Her disagreements with her father-in-law concerned differing opinions on the best approaches to specific stock work issues, rather than issues regarding succession. In the end, her mother-in-law intervened:

> because of Grandad's and my humdingers, [my mother-in-law] said … so beautiful and so practical … she said – I think it's probably best if [husband] and Cassie do buy us out – thinking, you know, we want this relationship to be long term … the generational thing. But, anyway, once they moved away and obviously it removed Grandad from that core working with me sort of thing, we actually built up a beautiful relationship. I have to say, I would have walked through hot coals for him and I know, in the end … he would have done the same for me. (Cassie, 50s, grazier).

Cassie and her husband had some money saved from his off-farm contracting work and were able to buy a portion of the property at "family rates". Another section of the property had been previously gifted to the husband by his grandfather. These are examples of the enabling factors, including the "patriarchal dividend" (see Section 2.4.2), that are prevalent in the farm family social ecology. These family factors, as well as of the ability of the couple to build their own capital, allowed them to take advantage of the offer.

Agricultural properties in broadacre areas command prices in the millions of dollars (Daly, 2019) (see also Section 1.3.3), and thus require considerable financial contributions. Thus, where couples were fortunate enough to be able to work off-farm, it was more effective if it was the kind of off-farm work that is very lucrative, such as resource company contracting, chemical spraying and some contract harvesting. Even then, they usually needed assistance from the husband's family, in the form of 'family rates', or outright gifts of land, stock and machinery.

Another couple who used their off-farm income towards the acquisition of the family property were Felicity (30s, producer) and her husband. Their navigation towards ownership followed a standard pattern. They married and moved into a cottage on the property. Felicity expressed a great deal of empathy for her husband's parents, who, "paralysed with indecision", had to make a choice about which of their three sons would be given the chance to take over the family property:

> Yeah. I guess because I lived here for a while, I got to know them before the succession started. Well … [in] my opinion they were very late in the day with succession. They were quite unsure about what they were going to do.
>
> They've got three sons: how are they going to support three sons because it's really just a [one] family [operation] – it can only support one family. So they were a bit paralysed with uncertainty because they didn't know what to do and how to go about it. They just put it off. It really wasn't until they no longer felt that they wanted to farm anymore, they didn't want to have to make the decisions anymore …That sort of forced their hands that they had to do something.

However, the parents were not in a position to gift the property:

> So there had to be - for his parents to retire there had to be some sort of cash exchange. They had everything tied up in the farm.

The eldest son and the youngest son were not able to make an offer. However, Felicity's husband had a separate independent farm contracting business:

> It's hard work, it's terrible work, and he's [doing it] right now actually. But it's what made us able to afford to actually purchase the place.

Felicity and her husband were able to take out a bank loan to purchase the property based on their savings from their "lucrative"

contract work. Off-farm work per se was not always an effective strategy. Felicity's brother-in-law also wished to purchase the property but was unable to raise the necessary funds as his professional job, although well-paid, had not paid enough for him to amass the amount of money that he would have needed to meet the bank's criteria.

Most young men, as mentioned by their wives and girlfriends in these interviews, were required to work on their family properties full-time for drawings or wages that did not allow for any substantial capital accumulation. In those situations, the young men and their wives found themselves dependent on the goodwill and generosity of the man's parents. Some families were, for a range of reasons, not helpful but some parents enacted enormous goodwill. Penny (50s, producer) and her husband were given a property jointly owned by themselves and her husband's parents. They accepted the ongoing control of her husband's father: "There can only be one boss". However, as a team, they were very successful, and, each time they bought another property, her husband's father put it in the names of Penny and her husband until they owned the majority of the land. As the father aged, he expressed feelings of being redundant. Penny and her husband sought to reassure him and include him despite their operational control. Their family was an example of mutual kindness.

The ideal is a business-like yet empathetic succession planning process where fruitful negotiations take place, similar to the processes used by Grace's family. In a few of the families, the farm was originally gifted to the owner by their own family, and several families attempted to "set up" their sons, and recently, some of their daughters, with places, through a combination of gifting and purchase. Sometimes, an unexpected event precipitated succession. Among the participants, this included changes in tax laws, the deaths of fathers and illness of the main producer. These are examples of where structural changes, either changes in the family situation or broader changes such as changes in

government policies, can provide empowerment opportunities for young farmers.

Nora's (70s, producer) experience on both the receiving and giving sides was instructive. Nora said that it was "an easy transition" of land ownership from her husband's parents to her husband and then to herself. Before she married her husband, the parents had passed half of the land ownership over to him and he did all the management and work on the property:

> …because his father was the nicest, nicest bloke who loved to party but never would make a decision on anything. He was a great party man … [his] mother never worked outside, had no idea what was happening … they never interfered with what [Norah's husband] was doing. (Norah 70s, producer)

The property ownership continued to be split in half between her husband and his parents until the government announced that there would be a change in the rules regarding capital gains tax. In order to avoid these taxes, the parents passed their half of the ownership to Nora. Thus, Nora was the beneficiary of a policy change, and was able to access significant assets through receiving resources gifted from her immediate social setting. This is an example of a positive reception on the part of the receiving family. Although Nora was not required to enact any specific negotiating, her willingness to "do the books" and to help out in general eased the transition. In some of the situations, gracious acceptance of and appreciation for gifts was required.

Although Nora's husband was gifted their original home property, Nora explained that "it's been a more difficult transition from [him] to the boys". Her husband had not wanted to let go until he faced a significant life event:

> Well [husband] got very sick 11 years ago now and wasn't expected to survive twice. It took him at least 12 months …. [one son] was away working, [other son] was home from uni and doing all the

> physical work, making no decisions, and [husband] was suddenly, very suddenly in an induced coma and suddenly [other son] had to run the bull sale by himself, he had to make all the decisions. [husband] eventually came good but wouldn't make decisions on anything. So, [other son] was doing most of the physical work and making the decisions.

As a result, the two sons and their wives got together and presented a proposal to Nora and her husband for an orderly succession of the properties and business from the parents to the young families. Initially reluctant, Nora's husband refused. Nora summed up the process:

> But the more we both thought about it, it had to happen sooner or later, and as it [the proposal] says, with a warm heart instead of a cold heart, basically. They were going to get it eventually, but they also wanted proof that they were going to get it. That's where the problem comes with a lot of families, you get into your 50s and you still have no proof that you're going to get it.

Without legal proof of 'successor identity', young couples are unable to borrow money for improvements. Nora's sons and their wives took the opportunity of a change in circumstances to enact an empowerment measure, asking directly for a succession plan, and presenting one to their parents. Nora understood the dilemma of the sons and their wives and facilitated the transition. The risk assessment made by the offspring indicated that there was more risk from continuing with resilience adaptation measures, perhaps leading to burn-out and family discord, whereas there was less risk to move to empowerment.

6.4.4.3 Boundaries

Several women established boundaries regarding the "old-fashioned" and patriarchal expectations of their own and their husband's family. As discussed above, boundaries were set by some of the participants around the protocols of autonomy over their homes (see

Section 6.4.2.3) and boundaries were broken around secrecy requirements (see Section 6.4.4.1). Another area where participants were setting boundaries was around their work. Helen (40s) noted that her off-farm work was financially maintaining the farm and questioned her husband, stating that the situation was not sustainable, inferring that she could not continue. Jessie (30s, producer), as a farm daughter, refused to take on the patriarchally defined double role of women:

> ... and it was to the point where you were working with the men and then they would come home and have that break and while that break was on, you had to cook them food, you were to clean up, you were to hang out a load of washing and you were to make them teas and coffees and then you would just go back to work with them. It got to a point where I said, no it's one or the other.

6.4.4.4 Inclusiveness

Several of the women, aware of the norms of class considerations, made a conscious effort to subvert these behaviours, by organising community events that were as inclusive as possible. Diane (60s, grazier) explained that many country race days perpetuated the distinctions between landowners and workers. She said:

> …although you would like to think there wasn't a class distinction or whatever it is, there definitely is … years ago, like pre us, they [upper class] used to have drinks and sandwiches up on the hill when everyone else – when everyone else was down at the track the upper class would go and have their picnic … under a tent, you know it was members only in the tent.

When Diane and her husband moved to this district as landowners, they became involved in the Race Committee and spearheaded a significant change to this culture:

> …we've changed that to now be [that] everybody's welcome in the tent … We ditched the whole members thing. Anyone is welcome in

the tent to come and join us for lunch … We definitely didn't want it to be cliquey.

This is one example of how women, once over the hurdles of farm ownership, were able to question the accepted norms and beliefs of the conservative, traditional elements of their culture, and to begin to change the culture and to empower themselves and other community members.

6.5 Conclusion

As discussed in Chapter 5, wellbeing, for the women in this study centred around love of the land and the life of living on the land in a family farm situation incorporating the values of independence, self-sufficiency, love of the land and pride. In this chapter, the conservative traditional masculine hegemonic discourse added to these wellbeing goals, the notions of the sanctity and importance of the family farm, in the sense of the reverence accorded to heritage from older generations and the legacy of passing it on to future generations.

The conservative, traditional, masculine hegemony discourse had a profound impact on the culture of the women in farm families in this study. It both enabled and constrained the ability of the participants to navigate and negotiate towards wellbeing, resilience and empowerment. Enabling factors included the possibility of living on the land for the participants, the perceived stability and wholesomeness of rural life, and the desire of most owners to pass the farm down to offspring, which had the possibility of benefiting the women in this study. Constraints encompassed the privileging of men with regard to opportunities, especially inheritance, to become farmers or graziers, or broadacre producers.

Additionally, respect and status for men in farming with concurrent disregard for women were described. Moreover, women in this study who married into farm families struggled to achieve a voice in decision-making owing to the control by the husband’s family over many aspects of their lives, including housing, workloads, income and future financial prospects.

Daughters-in-law in this study employed a range of resilience measures to cope with their situations until the situation changed enough, either through their efforts, or changes in their husbands' families or, in some cases, changes in policy settings, such as capital gains tax, to employ empowerment actions.

The challenge within this discourse was the desire on the part of the participants to gain some form of parity with their husbands, and, as a couple, to have control and decision-making influence over their own homes, economic futures and life decisions, in order to achieve their wellbeing goals around being able to live on the land.

The conservative patriarchal discourse reinforced the agrarian wellbeing goals of love of the land and aspirations for a life on the land by emphasising the importance of the family farm, its symbolic weight with respect to the generations of male lineage and the importance of passing it down for a range of reasons: legacy, continuing the family dynasty and access to life on the land after retirement through visiting children and grandchildren on the property. However, as described by the participants, transferring the control of the farm business and the land, or entering into a legal agreement with timelines, was problematic and often left young couples in financial limbo, and daughters-in-law in challenging marginalised situations. Descriptions about developing and using resilience and empowerment actions in this chapter focused on the measures that the participants used to overcome these conservative traditional masculine hegemony constraints.

The main decision point for the participants, deliberatively or intuitively, was their assessment of whether a particular situation or potential action contained too much risk. If it was risky, that is, if they were at risk of exclusion from the family or the community, of rupturing family relationships or of impairment of their economic futures, then it was better to employ resilience strategies. Examples were given of the success of some of these strategies, and, conversely, the negative

consequences for a few of the participants when they chose empowerment strategies in situations that still carried too much risk.

Many of the participants adapted to their new culture through processes of integrative acculturation, or iterative adaptation, so were able to withstand challenges and could resist some of the norms of conservative and traditional patriarchal control. When the participants, again deliberatively or intuitively, assessed that the situation was less risky, they used empowerment measures. In both resilience and empowerment measures, the participants employed elements of the domains of awareness, intention, action, reflection and maintenance.

The next chapter, Chapter 7, explores the third main discourse, that of farming-as-a-business, and how that discourse enables and constrains the wellbeing, resilience and empowerment of women on the land.

CHAPTER 7: DATA ANALYSIS – FARMING-AS-A-BUSINESS

7.1 Overview

The focus of the analysis reported in this chapter is the third dominant discourse that emerged from the data which is that of the farm enterprise as a business rather than a lifestyle choice. This business model of farming came about in part because of the increase in scale and profitability of the agricultural sector, and the "real estate lottery" (Jess, 30s, producer) that has increased the value of agricultural land. Simultaneously, this farming-as-a-business discourse was constructed and promoted by successive governments as part of a general neo-liberal policy shift (Section1.3.1). The comments of the participants indicated that the farming-as-a-business discourse was relatively recent. This discourse came with constraints but also provided enabling factors for the participants to become involved and negotiate towards their wellbeing goals.

What the analysis of the interview data yielded on the nature and impact of this discourse is presented in the first part of this chapter. This is followed by consideration of this discourse in relation to the interviewees' wellbeing, resilience and empowerment. As in Chapters 5 and 6, research sub-questions RQ2 and RQ3 are addressed. The final section of this chapter outlines the recommendations of the participants regarding programs and policies that would enhance their abilities to contribute to the viability of their family farm enterprises and to increase their own resilience and empowerment. This section attends to research sub-question RQ4. As a reminder, the following are the research questions for this study:

RQ1. From the perspectives of the participants, what are the dominant discourses of women in farm families?

RQ2. How do these discourses work to enable and to constrain their wellbeing, resilience and empowerment?

RQ3. How do women in farm families navigate and negotiate through and within their discourses to increase or decrease their wellbeing, resilience and empowerment?

RQ4. Given the answers to the preceding questions how could rural women's organisations, industry bodies and governments better support women in farm families to increase their wellbeing, resilience and empowerment for the benefit of themselves, their families, their farming enterprises and the sector?

7.2 Farming-as-a-business discourse

An emerging discourse of the farm enterprise as a business rather than a lifestyle choice was regarded by the interviewees as relatively new, in that they compared this perspective to older farming-as-a-lifestyle discourses. Jess (30s, producer) reflected that many farmers were forced to transition to a business model due to the increase in scale and profitability of the agricultural sector, and the increased the value of agricultural land; "The reality is these days is it's not just a farm anymore, they are multimillion-dollar businesses."

Felicity (30s, producer) made a distinction between her approach to farming and those, such as dairy farmers, who continued despite severe losses:

> Why on earth would you be producing a product every day if it's costing you money? You're eroding your capital base. … I guess we look at things definitely from a financial point of view, and I would consider ourselves business people before I'd consider ourselves farmers.
>
> Like it's a business and we're farming. So all our decisions are based around: is this a good business? Is this a good business

move or not? Is this going to make us money? It's very rarely that we do anything that we aren't going to see an economic return.

Similarly, Lena (40s, producer) differentiated between the approach to farming-as-a-lifestyle and as a business:

I think we don't look at it as a rural lifestyle. It's our business. A lot of people want to look at it as a lifestyle and then they run a business. We like to live out there. There's no problem with living there, but we make decisions about what we're doing in the business and then our lifestyle is separate. Sure, they're intertwined, but - and I think that's where a lot of people want to live out there and they think it's a great rural lifestyle, but they don't think of their business as a business. They think of it as a lifestyle and it's not.

Lena also commented on the changing nature of the perceptions of farm businesses from the point of view of the operators, when she was asked to write her occupation on a form:

they said, “What’s your occupation?”. I said, “agribusiness”. I had to think about that, because I would normally put “farmer” and then I put “grazier” and [then] I thought, well, really, we're [an] agribusiness. That what we would term ourselves now, as an agribusiness. So that's probably more modern - or less what a farmer [would say]. A farmer would say that an agribusiness person is the banker, but we see ourselves as an agribusiness.

The emerging farming-as-a-business discourse was recognised by the participants as significant and incorporated into their previous discourses.

7.3 Impact on wellbeing, resilience and empowerment

The farming-as-a-business discourse had enabling and constraining elements. The constraints arose from changes in government policies towards neo-liberal perspectives such as decreased support for the farm

sector (Section 1.3.1). This latter stressor saw extension services withdrawn, facilities, amenities and their workforces in rural towns reduced, and marketing assistance and other subsidies were cut (Section 2.3.2). This put pressure on family farms. More on- and off-farm work was required of women to maintain the viability of their farms in this new regulatory environment. Women, usually the mainstays of their communities, struggled to find time. Cassie (50's, grazier) noted the decreased availability of women to volunteer for local committees:

> We looked around the other night at our Race Committee meeting and realised it has been the same people for the last 20 or 30 years. The younger women are too busy now – doing more work on their places – quite a few have [off-farm] jobs as well…also busy with driving kids to school and boarding school.

Less resourcing of local schools also impacted on the women, requiring them to dedicate many hours to ensuring education for their children (Sections 3.3.2 and 7.5.6). The comment that farms are "million-dollar businesses now" (Jessie, 30s, producer) was favourable for some farms, but difficult for others, especially smaller places. Entry into farming for young people was more dependent on family largesse.

On the other hand, the farming-as-a-business enabled women to make strategically effective contributions to the farm operation, especially in areas that require computer proficiency. The government and banking requirements for information, with digital replacing paperwork, provided a niche area for the skills that many women possessed.

Working on the financial aspects of the farm enterprise led to many women being able to participate effectively in the high-level management of the enterprises:

> Many women on the land are business women, running farms and making decisions in relation to their businesses. Often, they don't start out this way. The current generation can be tertiary educated,

mature aged on entry, having had a professional career. (Grace, 60s, producer)

Grace in her email list of suggestions for the newly married brides, declared: ‘Acknowledge you are a Business and act Business like’. The advantage to the women that this perspective offered was that more weight was placed on business skills and less on traditional restrictions. Many of the women described their various roles in the increasingly complex social, agronomy and business environments:

> Well, basically, I made the final decisions on money. Drew [husband], we'd work out what we might want to do, or he would work something out and then I'd work out the economics of it because I actually liked accounting, I like money, well, I'm treasurer of my apartment’s [body corporate’] association, treasurer of the croquet club. But yeah, I really think that I had a lot to do with the progress that we were able to make from one property to three and making those decisions economically. We’d both go to the bank manager but I'd tend to, I must admit, take over the conversation.
>
> I think I had a lot to do with the decision making financially. [Norah’s husband] would decide that whether we were planting something or - but the more I got to know the cattle, the more I knew what we should be doing with them and everything else, but he'd decide it was time for adjistment or time for whatever, the way you coped with drought. It became a joint decision influenced by the economics of it all. (Norah, 70s, producer)

Once the participants understood the finances and economics of the situation, they were able to be genuinely involved in decision-making, since decisions were increasingly based on economic criteria. Many women were involved in all aspects of the farm enterprise, with the business aspects underpinning the other roles:

> … Then I thought about the business and it's all about every day is a new plan. I seem to be doing budgets every other day. Would this be an option or would that? It's the same thing. Review, you review your decisions all along looking at budgets, looking for opportunities …
>
> … Yeah. So, decision making, it's time consuming, yet not deciding is fraught with danger and induces high stress. So you've got to know your farmer, who's doing the actual work and how they cope? You've got to know your farm and the conditions and a fair idea of the weather. I guess you've got to be pragmatic about the weather and the financial situation. You've got to assess your feed outlooks, establish stocking rates. You've got to offload, establish timelines for buying in feed or not and your water and fencing, and understanding the limited or diminishing cashflow, equity and options forwards. So that's just the business side of it.
>
> Then, on the person side, you've got to establish individual and family values and goals, and I think that's the crucial thing. If you know your values and goals and your abilities and your willingness to forge ahead or be involved for everyone, and you've got to follow your instinct and gut feelings, respecting decisions, communicating, supporting and having a go, and trying again. So you're always going to fail at something; you've got to keep trying. You've got to be part of the team and not tear each other apart (Grace, 60s, producer).

The decisions that the women were making encompassed much more than the economics but understanding the finances and the budgets provided a solid base for legitimacy. As Grace (60s, producer) averred above, many of the participants applied a wholistic perspective to the farm management, combining financial knowledge, human resource

management, agronomic, market and weather knowledge, and family psychology.

7.3.1 Wellbeing

The discourse of farming-as-a-business initially appeared to compete with the agrarianism discourse which the data analysis revealed to be critical to wellbeing (Chapter 5). However, the responses showed that the wellbeing aspirations of love of the land and the lifestyle, identified in Chapter 5, underpinned the farming-as-a-business discourse as a strategy to achieve, maintain or even expand the family's land holdings, as Norah (70s, producer) asserted "I really think that I had a lot to do with the progress that we were able to make from one property to three and making those decisions economically."

Felicity (30s, producer), who asserted that "I would consider ourselves business people before I'd consider ourselves farmers" (Section 7.2) also maintained that she and her husband were always going to be farmers; that is what they did best:

> I always wanted to be a farmer, I was never not going to be a farmer. We both decided that we should invest in what we're good at, and what we're good at is being farmers.

This is an example of a conflict between discourses, in this case, occurring in the same conversation. Alternatively, it can be perceived as an individual accepting and making sense of disparate discourses. Many of the participants combined the discourse of agrarianism with the discourse of farming-as-a-business into what might be termed a discourse of contemporary agrarianism. This new discourse augmented or reinforced rather than replaced their agrarian wellbeing goals that valued attaining and maintaining a viable farm operation for themselves and their families.

7.3.2 Resilience

Resilience measures are employed when the risks are too great, or the magnitude of change too large to contemplate empowerment actions

(Section 3.6.1). The adversities associated with farming-as-a-business, such as changes in international commodity markets, neo-liberal government policies and retraction of support for the agricultural sector, were large in scope. Resilience actions were appropriate.

Additionally, a considerable number of the women conflated their own, their family's and the farm's resilience. This aligned with their strong personal adherence to the discourse of agrarianism and the importance of the family farm. As a result, resilience measures to support the agricultural operation were a priority, and its health or otherwise impacted strongly on their own feelings of wellbeing:

> it's about adapting to change and implementing best practice so that their business is resilient so that they are financially resilient and that takes the pressure off them, all the mental stress off them. (Beth, 50s, grazier)

The resilience elements of awareness, intention, action, reflection and maintenance (Section 3.6.1)were enacted by the participants. Many of the participants were aware that the banks and the government bodies required more business-oriented paperwork and compliance documentation. Their intention, or goal, remained the attainment and maintenance of a long-term place on the land, and they took actions to secure that objective. The actions taken by over half of the participants included learning as much about the farm finances, management and operations as possible. Reflection on the positives of their situations manifested in appreciation of good decision-making and the satisfaction of good work; "When we put the lambs on the truck and we think they're good lambs, we've done a good job. So that sense of achievement" (Felicity, 30s, producer).

Most of the participants performed resilience maintenance functions (Section 3.6.1) such as adaptation to changes, consistent effort and the monitoring of incremental successes.

Some of the participants learned on the job. Others deliberatively attended upskilling opportunities. Felicity (30s, producer), who had a background in agriculture, made a concerted effort to learn as much as she could about every aspect of the new farm situation. She attended as many workshops and training sessions as she could:

> I need to get to all of that stuff because I have to talk to my husband about it. It's no point my husband coming home and saying I've heard this and I don't know anything about it because he wants my opinion, he wants a sounding board, he needs somebody to talk to about it. There's no point if I just sit there and go "Oh that sounds good". I need to bring something to that conversation.

Some of the women attended and often actively organised training opportunities for themselves, and perceived farm upskilling to be a major need, for both their wellbeing and empowerment:

> I think there's a need for women to up-skill a lot… more into the business side of things, you know management - with all the compliancy that we have to do now with properties … It's really pretty full on with bio-security and that type of thing. (Penny, 50s, producer)

> I attended many "mostly men's events" where I was the only woman e.g., at field days, workshops, etc. (Beth, 50s, grazier)

Most of the women either assisted with some aspects of the book-keeping or were responsible for all aspects of the accounts. The remaining few of the women did not "do the book" because of resistance from their husband or in-laws, someone else already performing that work or other aspects of their lives taking precedence. At least half of the women interviewed were very involved in the management of their family agricultural businesses. This could include book-keeping, preparing cashflows and use of other farm financial software, liaising with the

accountants and banks, purchasing inputs, managing and paying staff/family, and making business decisions.

> I think that decision making is a crucial, defining thing. You've got to live with your decision and you've got to make it. Sometimes that's really hard. Do I plant or don't I? Do I sell cattle or don't I? If you sell on the wrong day, you don't get the right price, you've got to learn not to beat yourself up about it and move on. (Grace, 60s, producer)

Many of the women brought computer skills into their marriages, and many were more computer literate than their husbands or their in-laws. This gave them a niche skill that they could contribute to the family operation. From the early 1990s most of the lending institutions required farm businesses to use computer software cashflows, and accounting packages. Government requirements included bio-security measures such as the National Livestock Identification System (NLIS). Several of the women took up the opportunity to learn or improve their knowledge in these areas and executed work that was valuable to the family agribusiness. Some of those who managed the books and the office found that their work was critical in the family's dealings with bank managers and other outside authorities, such as resource company executives or lawyers negotiating access to their land.

Several of the participants emphasised that agribusiness was about "making really good decisions" (Felicity, 30s, producer) given the volatility of the weather and of commodity markets. Decisions were needed on what to plant and when; whether to take a risk on planting given lack of moisture; whether to feed or sell cattle in drought; whether to consolidate or expand and many other issues. Some were content, like Penny (50s, producer), to leave the major decisions to her father-in-law:

> …the way that we run our company there's one boss. You can't have three or four bosses running a place. So there's always been one boss and that's been [father-in-law].

Others were anxious to gain decision-making autonomy. Grace (60s, producer) described the relief that they all felt when her husband and his brothers split their agricultural assets into separate properties for each of them:

> … so it's really, really good to have that control and to make your own decisions on what you do…and the boys all still helped each other, but it was on their own terms, not otherwise. Yeah, it was really wonderful stuff.

Some of the women undertook relationship building and negotiations with the banks, crucial to their survival:

> Well, see, we build networks, so we have good people that we've collected along the way, so we will go and find that information out and we certainly have a good accountant and we work really closely with our bank. I wouldn't say we get advice from our bank, but we tell our bank if there's something going wrong, they're the first to know. (Lena, 40s, producer)

> One thing that we do is we keep a good relationship with our bank manager, and we talk to him all the time; he comes and visits us. He's the same age as us, so that helps. We've got a good rapport. (Felicity, 30s, producer)

A major resilience skill mentioned by many of the participants was the ability to negotiate. Initially, most of them navigated and negotiated their way into acceptance and belonging within their husbands' farm families and family enterprises. They then honed a range of resilience skills within the farm businesses, especially the goal of achieving the certainty of a succession plan. One of those skills was to source outside facilitators to assist the negotiations with respect to succession. "Having met people that deal with negotiations now, they are amazing at getting people to hear each other's sides and sort things out" (Lena, 40s, producer). As previously mentioned (in Section 6.4.4.2), Grace (60s,

producer) organised her husband and his brothers and wives, as well as a number of other farm families in the district to seek assistance with farm financial management that eventually included succession planning.

Succession planning was one of the major issues for the participants and was a trigger point for decisions on whether to employ resilience tactics or empowerment measures, as the succession planning processes stalled:

> …because my generation, that's what we would always talk about for the last 10 years is succession planning and whingeing about Mum and Dad and how they hadn't heard what they want to say … Haven't heard it. Can't get them to do anything. Don't want to change (Lena, 40s, producer).

The risks of taking empowerment actions, such as directly requesting or attempting to facilitate succession processes, involved possible censure or marginalisation of the woman and sometimes her husband (Section 6.4.2.4). On the other hand, the risks of not moving forward on succession included a long period of instability, resentment, loss of productivity and potential disintegration of the farm family unit:

> So - and then they've wasted - the business has wasted 20 years stagnating. By the time the son gets it, he's 40 to 50 and that's not your - well, you're still - you're productive, but you're heading - you don't want to take on more risk the older you are. (Lena, 40s, producer)

Women in this study who were in an empowered position were ensuring that their grown children were involved in decision-making. Lena (40s, producer) added that it was important to bring the business back from "a mature business…and reinvigorating it, you've got to be able to keep the energy" by ensuring the younger generation is productively involved. She asserted that people are not as innovative when older:

> We don't want to do what we did 20 years ago and we've just hit 40 and we're going, “0h, no, we don't want that amount of risk” … When you're younger, you're more willing to accept it.

Thus, the women used a range of resilience skills to achieve business goals for their families and their family farms. Consciously or intuitively, risks were assessed to decide whether to take resilience or empowerment measures.

7.3.3 Empowerment

Achieving empowerment was often a long and iterative process (Section 3.6.1) It was aided by women’s involvement and assistance in farm operations, especially the financial aspects. As asserted previously, the most significant increase in empowerment for these participants came with successful succession processes. Succession was sometimes hard-fought, but sometimes occurred because of changes in government policy or family situations (Section 6.4.4.2). Once women in this study were empowered, they played a major part in decision-making, which encompassed a range of areas, including household purchases, farm operations and agribusiness finance. The perspective of farming-as-a-business, underpinned by the new requirements for modernising farm businesses, opened an opportunity for women to be more involved, especially in the financial decision-making.

Participating in the business management aspects of the family farm businesses gave several of the participants an understanding of farm financial software, the financial operations of the business, the legal structures that determined everyone’s role, rights and entitlements, what decisions needed to be made and how they were made. Several of the participants discovered that once they understood the financial management, they became interested in learning more about the agronomic side of the business. Consequently, approximately half of the participants were able to make a major contribution to the farm business, build respect, and become part of the decision-making team. This

empowering scenario increased their wellbeing on all fronts, and positioned many of them to be strong, resilient problem-solvers as the family business encountered further unexpected adversities.

Diane (60s, grazier) developed strategies to deal successfully with a group of three bank managers who visited their property with the intent of serving notice of a forced sale. She rallied her family, prepared the paperwork and was able to articulate their case to postpone the closure. In the end, the bank retreated and Diane and her family were able to maintain ownership. Diane's comments echo the sentiments of several of the women, whose confidence increased as they dealt with difficult management situations: "even dealing with the banks has been very challenging, but I think I've risen to the challenge".

One of the women, Penny (50s, producer), a veteran at dealing with a range of challenges, experienced another threat that caught her by surprise. Below is the conversation about her negotiations with a coal seam gas company:

Facilitator: Is that what you've had to do, taking on most of that responsibility?

Penny: With [her husband] [I] have had to. It got too much for [husband]'s father, and he just threw up his hands, because we've got one property out here, just outside [town], and it's had major gas, and we went to mediation twice with [company]. So yeah, that was a huge thing. We had a lawyer, but it's just something that you don't - nothing you were ever trained to do, really. It's just - we were down here three or four times a week, dealing with gas there at one stage. It's gone down now.

Facilitator: Did you get it sorted to your satisfaction?

Penny: We've got a compensation deal that runs for 20 years, and we're quite happy with that, yeah. You can live with that….and

we got money that comes in with the return each year, and it just makes it sweet.

We were down here all the time. It was just unreal.

We'd get a phone call from the lawyer saying that they're doing this, they're doing that, you'd better come down, and we're spending so much time to not have a mediation. Our mediation day started at 9:00 and didn't finish until 9:30 that night. We were not allowed to have our lawyers in with us. They were in a different room, and we could have time out and go in there and talk to them, talk to the lawyers. It's actually - I did most of the negotiations that day, and [husband] was there beside me, but I was the main spokesman and he sat beside me.

At one stage he really - because [husband]'s very quiet. He doesn't [go] on too much. At one stage there, I thought all hell was going to break loose… but we were able to call a time out and go and talk to the lawyer, come back out again, and it was an intense day. Very intense day. But we got what we wanted, so that's the main thing.

Facilitator: How did you get the strength to do that?

Penny: Well, it just evolved … what we found is you've got to draw a line in the ground and just know that you're not going to be pushed over that and stick to it. That's what we found.

Thus, Penny was able to call on her strengths, stay focused, and lead her family through this unexpected adversity. In similar ways, motivated by their love of the land and their preference for the lifestyle, many of the women harnessed the emerging discourse of farming-as-a-business in order to become active participants in ensuring the success of

the farm enterprise. Through this, some of the constraints arising from the discourse of male hegemony (Section 6.4) were subverted.

The next section of this chapter outlines some of suggestions made by these women that could assist this empowerment further, that is, put them in a better position to contribute to their own wellbeing, resilience and empowerment, as well as that of their families, their agricultural businesses, their communities and the agricultural sector.

7.4 Recommendations from participants' perspectives

As has been evidenced in other sectors, having women involved in decision-making in businesses and on governance boards increases the success of those entities (Section 2.4.6). Women bring diverse views, innovative ideas and approaches that have been shown to strengthen relationships, governance and the financial bottom line (Section 2.3.2).

Women in farm families bring their 'outsider' perspectives, their education and experience from elsewhere, and their willingness to look beyond and outside the dominant discourses for inventive ways to solve problems, cope with adversities and contribute significantly to their families, communities and the sector. As Grace (60s, producer) observed, when advocating for workshops and information dissemination to women in the agricultural sector, for innovative initiatives in the farm business and in the sector:

> Women are the strategic thinkers and often the blokes get bogged down, hands on. It's not necessarily the case with everyone, but usually in the farming family set up the women may not be so strategic in the beginning, but once they have children they start thinking about little Johnny and the young family unit starts thinking about down the track. I guess the biggest hurdle they think about [initially] is boarding school fees and how they're going to fund those and they need more money than just the farming allowance. So they really start thinking about strategic stuff then, if not before.

So …if the women get access to this information, they can drive it.

The remainder of this section outlines some of the policies, programs and ideas identified by the women to enable them to increase their participation, contribution and influence on all levels. The women recommended a suite of programs that would assist them in a meaningful way to attain their goals. Given that contributing to the agricultural enterprise was an important strategy for gaining credibility and acceptance by the host family, many of the participants advocated training that was tailored to their needs to understand and contribute to family farm book-keeping, accounting, farm financial and legal structures, office management, agricultural operations and human resources. They were also looking for information and concrete assistance with succession planning to alleviate the stress of family uncertainty and increase their empowerment. Assistance needed for their full participation in these activities included funding for home tutors and child-care provided at workshops.

7.4.1 Farm management training

An initiative mentioned often by the participants was the need for more training opportunities for women. As outlined earlier in this chapter and the other data chapters, for most of them, being able to contribute to the farm business was identified as crucial to their wellbeing, in terms of feelings of acceptance and belonging, and as a segue into participation into the family decision-making processes and the fiscal realities of attaining financial confidence and security.

The women said that they wanted to "get a real grip on what's happening" (Emily, 30s, producer), to "be able to bring something to the table" (Felicity, 30s, producer), and to help to grow the business (Kate, 20s, grower). They wanted to learn about the operational aspects of the farm business, as well as the business management side, and they felt it would be important for young women marrying into agricultural business families to "skill up" as well. In their lists of advice for young women,

several women emphasised "become knowledgeable in the farm business".

Farm business included operational features such as growing grain or managing stock, mechanical work, machinery driving, fencing, road building, buying inputs and selling products, and knowledge about agronomy. Beth (50s, grazier), like many of the women, said that she attended as many workshops and field days as she could to learn about "agronomy, pasture[s], cattle handling…artificial insemination…soil profiles…how to do your property map". Felicity (30s, producer) said she needed to get to both the agronomy updates and the business updates, in order to "bring something to that conversation" with her husband and be an informed business partner. Grace (60s, producer) requested that a range of training be offered because:

> Farms and the people working on them, the financial situation and the passion for rural life, the ability to handle the complexity of the business structure[s] and entities and the ever-changing environment are as individual as cannot be imagined. No one shoe fits all.

Most of the women indicated that the office work and business management portions of agricultural businesses had increased in scope and complexity, and they had to deal with new requirements and constant change. Penny (50s, producer) suggested the sort of additional training programs that were now needed were:

> more into the business side of things, you know management - with all the compliancy that we have to do now with properties … it's really pretty full on with bio-security and that type of thing.

The management scope of agricultural businesses has increased due to farm consolidations, leading to larger and more complex business models. Several women discussed the complexity of the farm business structures, comprised of family trusts, companies which own sections of

the farm assets, partnerships and corporations, and in many situations, a combination of several of those entities.

Grace (60s, producer) concurred that women needed to learn communication skills as well as human resources and psychology competencies. She recommended that young women entering farm family business should research and study "personality types, learning types, and gain understanding into why people do what they do". She also urged new members of a family business to learn to "be team players … accept everyone is different. Learn to work within this new environment and family in a constructive way".

A constraint for many women was "being allowed" by conservative, traditional families to attend events. Thus, a series of workshops that began with non-controversial topics such as office management, book-keeping and learning farm accounting software were recommended and sought by many women. From there, topics such as farm financial structures and succession could be developed.

One of the practical impediments constraining women from attending workshops, field days and other learning opportunities is lack of childcare. Felicity (30s, producer) explained that representatives from the Northern Panel of the Grains Research and Development Corporation (GRDC) came to a meeting of growers in her region to elicit training needs. Felicity and some of the other women advocated that "there should be more training not just …agronomic, and definitely not just for the blokes. They should … consider all the members of the team, including employees and sons and wives." Felicity reported that one of the GRDC staff women acknowledged that "child-care's always the hard thing" when trying to include women in the business updates. Several participants advocated for childcare at both the business and agronomy updates.

7.4.2 Leadership

Women in this study who aspired to leadership roles within the agricultural sector were usually women who were already fulfilling leadership or community builder roles in their communities, in their farm businesses, in school and service organisations, and on local and national advisory bodies. Two of the women had completed the prestigious and rigorous Rural Leadership program, a 15-months challenge-based leadership development course focused on preparation to respond to complex regional, rural and remote challenges and opportunities. Another participant was beginning her journey into involvement in agricultural representative bodies or agri-politics.

Lena (40s, producer), who at the time of the interview was still very involved in helping people deal with the aftermath of the northern Queensland floods of 2019, suggested that for community leaders, many of them women like herself, there should be training in crisis mitigation, that is:

> some training before an event that you can do in rural areas about what actually happens in a crisis and the types of symptoms that you're going to see in a crisis, so that people are just aware of it and they trigger and go, "Oh, hang on. She's acting like that, because she's just been through the flood. What I need to say to her is, look, this is going to be okay … Make one good decision today."
>
> So I think if we could get more people in general understanding - especially community leaders, people that are of influence, get them some higher level of professional development in how to talk people down, what messages they need to portray on social media and making sure that [they]… don't put anything out that's false or misleading or if they don't have to put anything out, don't put anything out.

Many women, like Lena, took on these roles informally or as part of their involvement in community organisations. They emphasised the need for training beyond the farm gate, in dealing with authorities such as resource companies and banks, and the with unexpected such as climate events.

In recent years, a small number of women in agricultural family enterprises have begun to achieve leadership roles within the agricultural sector. Women in rural areas have long been known for their central roles in building and leading their communities; now their skills are being recognised and supported on wider platforms (Section 1.1.2). However, for women in farm families, this has not been a journey without significant barriers. Many women have led and continue to lead their families and communities through the challenges faced by their farm businesses and the agricultural sector, such as threats of bank foreclosures, to dealing with resource companies, to managing the fall-out from extreme climate events. However, as many scholars have noted, much of this work is "invisible" (Section 2.4.1). Further, there has been a dearth of acknowledgment, training or other supports for women interested in pursuing leadership opportunities (Sections 2.4.4 and 2.4.6). The participants who attained competencies in areas such as farm business management, agronomy and advocacy, as well as a recognised legal and financial status within the family farm enterprise, then had the confidence to take on leadership roles.

7.4.3 Succession planning support

Succession planning emerged as a priority for most of the women. In both Chapter 5 and Chapter 6, the importance of succession to the women and their families for their wellbeing and financial confidence has been highlighted. Several participants had undergone difficult but successful succession planning processes and were determined to organise better succession processes in their own families. For over a quarter of the participants, succession had not proceeded well or at all,

with the consequences contributing to unsatisfactory outcomes, including marriage breakdowns. However, because of the complexity of farm financial and legal structures, succession processes usually require professional facilitators, and the input of other advisers, such as solicitors and accountants. Thus, the processes are expensive, and partly for that reason, farm families are sometimes reluctant to commence proceedings.

The first step, according to participants, is to attend succession information workshops. However, "succession planning workshops … effectively all come down to it's not the place of the daughter-in-law to bring up that conversation" (Maddison, 40s, producer). Nonetheless, these workshops explained the overall concepts and processes. A few of the women asserted that it was helpful, if possible, to include their husbands in these initial information sessions, as many of the husbands were as Maddison observed likely to be "fairly conservative about his ideas as well, he's not going to change those for me overnight either. He has to want to".

Once the husbands and families were ready to commence succession planning, they were confronted with the costs. Grace (60s, producer) explained:

> Well, it's so expensive to do all the strategic planning and [with] the solicitors and the accountants, to have everyone, the team in the room. So I guess for many families to get the family unit together, it means travel, accommodation, babysitting, because you want to have everyone in the room together and you want to be away from the home situation. So just doing that exercise is really, really expensive, but we've got that skill set now that – those resources are out there that we can tap into that, whereas years ago it wasn't there at all. The young ones I think know enough to go to a financial counsellor, or go to someone that's free, to start their conversations and there are workshops, so they can go in various directions to get information.

> But I think the stumbling ground is when you come back and you say “I want to have a family meeting and we want to sort all this out”, you're looking at $30,000 and $40,000 with wills … because everything, the whole lot has to be synchronised at the same time. I guess if you've got a whole lot of young ones pushing the older parents who don't want to do that, then there's a $50,000 bill or something, maybe that's too hard. So you need to lead people into that process and [state government rural assistance body] at the moment have got a 50/50 grant. You pay $2500, they'll pay $2500 towards succession planning, but it's not enough money because I think any meeting is going to be over $10,000. So I really think that grant should be increased just to get people in the door.

Most of the women in this study who had successfully navigated into empowered positions as co-owners of family agricultural businesses and who were at the time of the interview (or soon-to-be) mothers-in-law, tried to begin the succession planning early. Their rationale was that this could help with spreading succession costs over a few years, as well as providing some early and timely certainty for the young people and avoiding years of conflict and anxiety. The importance of having a good facilitator was emphasised by Lena (40s, producer):

> I think a good facilitator …. would be an excellent resource long term. Maybe not all the time, but certainly every few years … being up front and talking about it and I think getting …an independent third-party in to talk about issues, that would probably save a lot of angst in the beginning and to continue on, so that's how we would structure it, is that we would always have - especially in the business side of things and those assets, having a third party continually - succession planning just doesn't end because you've made a plan. You need to review it, the assets change, people change, so it's continual conversation all the time.

Different from the experiences that some of these same women had in their own birth farm families, or in their husbands' families, these participants were actively developing succession plans when their children were still in school, and furthermore, including the girls.

7.4.4 The hidden resource: playgroup

Although most of the women were involved in a plethora of organisations, one activity that was most mentioned was playgroup: formal or informal regular gatherings of young mothers with their babies and toddlers, held at community venues, or at members' homes. Playgroup Australia is a national not-for-profit organisation which provides support to locally organised playgroups. Ostensibly organised to provided socialisation and play opportunities for the children, it was well recognised that playgroup sessions were a significant support for the young mothers in their maternal roles learning how to care for and raise their children. Also acknowledged was the role these gatherings had as a source of companionship and mutual support for the young women:

> looking back at the fun times I've had as a group of women over the years, there has been, I suppose, the smaller group of our friends, we all sort of had children together, the same age and from that we were all having kids, we've got newborns, we're breastfeeding, we're doing all of that…Yeah, they were some really wonderful sanity saving times as young mums because most of us out there didn't have family or close family around that we could call on to help with the kids (Helen, 40s, grazier).

The participants in this study identified several other benefits of playgroups. According to many of the women, playgroup was crucial for their mental health; a place they could go to relax and socialise and let go of their concerns. It was a place where they could let off steam, get away from the pressures of the farm business, especially in difficult times such as drought. It was where many of them made their sustaining life-long friendships:

> it started with playgroup because the kids were obviously pre - before school age and get to meet - you certainly get to meet people that way (Cassie, 50s, grazier).

Several women explained that it was difficult to meet people when they were at such great distances from their neighbours.

> We had playgroup. Yeah. That was really good. We had someone come out with this huge bus and they came once a month and we shared it around each of the properties and it was probably - sometimes there was only two families. Sometimes there was three or four, but it was an excuse to get together and the kids played and they brought all their own Play-Doh and stuff, so that was great (Lena, 40s, producer)

The playgroup was a mechanism of connectedness and contributed to the development of social capital, to be drawn upon for the rest of their lives.

> We socialised, all our main social life was through all we mothers and children used to go once a month to meet with, to go up for the Flying Doctor day. We would, it started off being a playgroup and then we evolved that and just it wasn't a playgroup as in for under school age groups, it was just, it was a get together. So we just took, it was a social day for our children and for us and it was the best social outing.

Besides peer learning regarding childrearing, the women also learned, through chatting and exchanging stories, about the norms, values and beliefs of the region. Thus, playgroup contributed to their acculturation. The stories and visits to each other’s homes also helped with information, both stated and tacit, about the strategies that other women used successfully and unsuccessfully in their quests to attain autonomy in their homes, and to move from outsider to insider status

within their new family business situations. For some, it also encouraged further subsequent external engagement l:

> From that we started an ICPA branch, so that's an Isolated Children's and Parents' branch and we also started a PCAP branch. So I was the inaugural chair of both of those. So that's the, PCAP's Priority Country Area Program, so it's a way of getting funds out into, you know, to be able to assist rural children, yeah, particularly with education (Beth 50s, grazier).

7.4.5 Support for education in remote areas

Many of the participants identified difficulties in accessing educational opportunities for their children, due to a combination of the tyranny of distance, the neo-liberal depletion of educational infrastructure in remote areas and their own gendered invisibility and concomitant outsider status weakening their effectiveness as advocates for their own children (McInnerney 2020). Most of the mothers either supported their childen's distance education through home schooling or drove countless hours to transport their children to the closest schools, sometimes hours away, or sent their children to boarding school. Every family in this study utilised the boarding school option at some point, most often at Year Seven (age 12), although some children left for boarding as young as Year Five (age 10). Four of the mothers moved to the nearest regional cities for several years to educate their children, sometimes adding stress to the marriage and the farm business.

Asked what policy suggestions that they might have about schooling, the participants said that they would like more resources for education of their children including home tutoring subsidies for governesses, better training and resourcing of staff in small rural schools, and more subsidies for boarding school. Interestingly, they mentioned that they would like more acknowledgment of their own lived experience and expertise, by policy makers, education administrators and politicians.

Their invisibility contributed to their marginalisation in this area (McInnerney, 2020).

7.4.6 Roads, railways and internet

The participants touched on infrastructure needs. A few women mentioned roads and railways, “what I do want is a decent railway network that's cheap to send my cattle to slaughter” (Lena, 40, producer). But what many of the women considered the priority to be good internet access:

> I want a decent internet, so I can have a second job that's comparable in price and data to what we have here. (Lena, 40s, producer)

> The downside is that you don't have technology. You don't have access to fixing the technology. If you do get an internet connection - today it took half an hour to get the internet connection working because the satellite didn't want to talk to the computer. I've got someone here doing my books with me and we can't get the accounting system to work. It's all in the cloud now so technology's a massive limitation. (Emily, 30s, producer)

Even those with reasonable internet access advocated better service for their neighbours:

> internet access for [everyone] - I mean, I'm lucky, where we live here we do have mobile phone service because we are close enough to a tower. But in the bush, I'd say we are definitely the minority. We're probably in a 20% group of people living out of a town, out of a built-up area that has mobile phone service. (Cassie, 50s, producer)

Some women highlighted that if internet access was better, the opportunities for value-adding independent small businesses would increase. This could significantly enhance the ability of women on properties to initiate internet businesses and augment their incomes,

thereby increasing their autonomy as well as their choices regarding contributing to the farm incomes:

> where people have got, in rural areas, … really good internet and really good data, cheap, all these other things started happening. So they were selling stuff on Amazon and [laughs] all sorts of other little businesses were cropping up. Somebody was consulting. Somebody was doing a webinar. So some of those things … that helps [to] build the economy. (Lena, 40s, producer)

Other women pointed out that the internet is also important for physical and mental health, both in terms of connectedness and actual telehealth appointments with health care professionals. The lack of internet made this problematic:

> there's not a lot of support for people out west or in situations like I am. There's not from a financial point of view; accessing specialists like psychologists and psychiatrists is expensive. Even if you can get a mental health plan, you still need your specialist to do Skype sessions. Now it's fantastic if you live in an area with reliable internet but sadly a lot of people like me don't live in areas with reliable internet. (Maddison, 40s, producer)

7.5 Empowered women in farm families

Grace, (60s, producer) eloquently summarised how many of the empowered and active women in this study described as their roles:

> you have all sorts of hats or roles you wear, ... So, it's very varied because - there's on the farm. Well I'm the CEO and the administrator. I'm the long-term strategy person and the source of information, so I get the fresh ideas. … I'm in the cattle and the sheep yards. I used to do the mustering and tractor driving but I've reduced it down to backyard work … I'm investments officer, additional cashflow provider, website business and roles in the community, industry, networking, land care lobby groups. I have

> [roles as] advocacy and informal mentor and general bossy boots. Then within the family - daughter, wife, mother, mother-in-law, grandmother, sister, sister-in-law, aunty, housekeeper, gardener, washerwoman, cook, cuddler of grandchildren and custodian of the family history. So you don't know which hat you've got on and then I guess how you're feeling or how you're being projected to as to how emotionally you respond to those roles. The role of cook is never a happy one.

Grace, similar to approximately half of the women interviewed, was a strong, empowered woman, a wholistic thinker and strategist who was a hands-on operator. She is an example of someone who was successfully acculturated into her husband's family and then, in turn, changed that culture and integrated her family into the modified norms and values. She has integrated her daughter and daughter-in-law into the farm business, enacted leadership in her family and community, and experimented with new forms of land management. She still is subject to interpellation, sometimes not knowing which hat she has on until someone hails her, (how you're being projected). Grace has incorporated all three dominant discourses, agrarianism, the importance of intergenerational family farming part of the traditional masculine discourse, and farming-as-a-business.

7.6 Conclusion

Farming-as-a-business, the third dominant discourse identified by the participants, is a relatively new discourse compared to the other two dominant discourses of agrarianism and conservative, traditional masculine hegemony. The data from the participants indicated that farming-as-a-business did not supplant the other discourses, but instead produced obstacles and well as provided support for attaining agrarian ideals, and for some aspects of traditional culture. The farming-as-a-business discourse did offer an avenue for the participants to participate effectively in the farm businesses, and gain empowerment by doing so,

thereby diminishing the impact and strength of masculine hegemony. Grace (60s, producer) stated that for many women on farms, having a more business-like approach allowed a young couple to: "…have opportunities and say 'yes' or 'no' based on a business decision rather than the heartache of not …wanting to change something because his father did it that way …".

Overall, the analysis in this and the two proceeding chapters has found that the road to wellbeing, resilience and empowerment for women in farming families was replete with gates that had to be opened, jumped or circumvented, discourse currents and constellations that had to be navigated, and many negotiations that needed to occur. Furthermore, there were multiple decision points where the women had to choose, tacitly or deliberatively, resilience or empowerment measures. The participants' narratives contained obstacles and challenges that were consistent across the interviewees. As young wives, and initially outsider daughters-in-law, many underwent acculturation, as they attempted to understand and adapt to their husband's families and the new work-world and place-world. As part of that process, their agrarian ideals of love of the land and the way of life as producers were formed or augmented. They also incorporated traditional notions of the supremacy of the family farm as a high value. Lengthy droughts and devastating floods, rural restructuring and other issues, such as threatened foreclosures and resource industry demands, threw up many obstacles along the way that they needed to draw on their resilience and empowerment strategies to manage. For many of the participants, the advent of their first child stimulated questions about their financial security and ability to raise and educate their children, the finances of the farm business and their future as a family on the land. They discussed their resilience actions to tread carefully along the pathway to successful succession planning. Concurrently, over half of the participants found ways to participate in the family business, most often through executing the financial bookwork and other aspects of farm business management. Most of those who were able

to negotiate the gates of acceptance, participation and succession reported strong wellbeing and satisfaction with their lives.

Most of the participants had moulded a new agrarianism discourse, that is, a love of the land and intergenerational family farming informed by better business practices. Their agrarianism gave them the motivation to enact resilience measures such as adapting and withstanding adversities, and the impetus to empower themselves and their families to improve conditions to be able to maintain and improve the land for their children. Although all the participants were shaped by the different discourses, and indicated similar norms, beliefs and values, no two women, and no two farms were the same. The participants also had a range of suggestions on what might further enable this empowerment.

Further suggestions for external support agencies arising from this research are presented in the next chapter. Additionally, in that chapter, the answers to the research questions posed for this study that the data analysis has provided are discussed. Also reviewed are the overall contributions of this study, the researcher’s reflections and future research that could follow on from the study.

CHAPTER 8: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

8.1 Overview

In this chapter, as explained in Section 8.3 below, and summarised in Appendix C – Discussion Table, the contributions of this thesis are discussed in terms of new or expanded knowledge about:

- The dominant discourses within which women live their lives on the family farm, and the inter-relationships between these discourses:
    - The study found that the three dominant discourses were agrarianism, masculine hegemony, and farming-as-a-business. These main discourses were overarching discourses comprising many sub-discourses, as described in Chapter 4 and illustrated in Tables 4.2 and 4.3. Moreover while the masculine hegemony discourse might inhibit women from achieving full participation in family farming, it simultaneously increases their (agrarian-based) belief that the family farm is of very high value, to be worked for and protected. The women also worked within the farming as business discourse to develop their roles on the farm and to navigate towards agrarian goals.
    - From the data emerged a new contemporary agrarian discourse (new agrarianism), combining elements of all three dominant discourses.
- The meaning of wellbeing, arising from these discourses and within the context of farming families:
    - Women's wellbeing is defined by how much of the agrarian ideal they can realise, that is, acquiring and maintaining life on a landowning farm.
- How women in farming families are impacted by and harness these dominant discourses through resilience measures and empowerment actions, in order to achieve their wellbeing:

    - Threats to women's wellbeing goals are met with resilience measures when empowerment actions would result in increased risk for the woman e.g. exclusion from the farm. Empowerment actions were taken when the risk of repercussions is perceived to be low.
- The role of social science concepts such as acculturation and interpellation in understanding the family farm agricultural sector:
    - This study found that women were acculturated by their husband's families, including through processes of interpellation, into embracing the dominant discourses, especially agrarianism and the primacy of the family farm. While in the literature the concept of acculturation is used mainly in immigration and cross-cultural studies, this study extended the theory into the rural women's arena.
- How farming operations and productivity are affected by farm family dynamics:
    - Scholars and practitioners have noted that farm productivity is adversely affected by ineffective succession processes (Section 2.4.6). Succession planning is crucial for the intergenerational viability of farm businesses (Stephens 2020, and if not handled well, can lead to stress and uncertainty which can undermine current farm businesses (Santhanam-Martin, 2019), impacting adversely on the agricultural industry as a whole (Conway et al. 2016). Literature suggested that farm family emotional dynamics can be instrumental in the success or otherwise of succession processes (Conway et al., 2016). It is necessary to impart "successor identity" on young people to increase energy, innovation and productivity (Chiswell 2016). Whether succession planning is done well or not, it takes a considerable toll on the family members, occupying time and energy. This effect was alluded to in the Queensland Farmer's

Federation Report (Ressia et al., 2020) which described a major reason women farmers gave for not being able to begin or complete leadership training was the time they needed to devote to succession planning This thesis explains the family dynamics behind the stress and uncertainty that may lead to a lack of productivity. These dynamics include the exclusion of the daughters-in-law from discussions about their futures, the uncertainty of the young couple regarding successor status, and tension and acrimony in the families and among siblings if processes are not clear.

- Innovations in the application of theory, the conceptual framework and the research methodology:
    - I applied a post-structuralist approach in combination with theories of acculturation, wellbeing, resilience and empowerment, which are generally founded in constructivist and realist ontologies. The use of ethnographic methods to conduct extended and/or multiple interviews with participants, enabled the development and interpretation of rich data that revealed the ways in which prevailing discourses played out in women's lives, and the ways in which they constructed their worlds within and around these discourses.
    - The post-structural perspective encouraged me to consider the power relations and discourses in agricultural Australia as a flexible and mutating web that could be navigated, rather than something fixed. Post-structuralism tends towards "a much more encompassing view of power and influence, one that likely integrates their various forms and conceives of them in both positive and negative terms" (Fairhurst, 2008, p. 516). In other words, post structuralism does not promote a structural view of power relations, and instead sees power as nuanced and permeable, with multiple aspects, meanings

    - and effects. This research questioned those actions of apparent withdrawal or silence for their underlying complexities. Some previous researchers perceived certain actions or inactions as evidence of subservience. Although the situation of women on farms is not always ideal, the women in the semi-structured interviews told stories of strategies, which might include acquiescence or silence for a time, until the situation was assessed as being appropriate for action. The questions of the research, and the analysis, might not have discerned this flexible, nimble level of activity without the post-structural influence.
- The implications of the research for policies and programs to support and engage women in farm families and through them, farm families and the agricultural sector:
    - The thesis provides new insights into the complex values base and roles of women in farm families. Women's agrarian-based motivation, their connection with their other, pre-farm, identities, as well as digital and other skills, bring diversity, and innovative and holistic thinking into the farm unit. These are assets for the sustainability of the farm sector, and for the flourishing of farm families.

Drawing from this discussion, recommendations and possible directions for future research are outlined, followed by reflections on my personal learnings from undertaking the research. Below is a summary of my motivations, including the clear gaps in current research, and my decision to take a post-structuralist approach and adopt ethnographic methods.

8.2 Research context

8.2.1 Motivation and gaps in the literature

This study was motivated by my lived experience as a woman born in Canada who married into a farm family in Western Queensland, and my

professional role as a regional development practitioner. These experiences stimulated my curiousity about women in farm families in Australia, their lived experiences, their perceptions of their lives, their cultural milieu and their wellbeing, resilience and empowerment.

The literature review undertaken in this research study reinforced Pini's assertion that the "issue of gendered power relations in family farms has not been subject to analysis" (Pini, 2007, p. 46) (Section 2.5). The literature (Sections 2.2 and 2.4) highlights the disadvantages women face in terms of invisibility (Alston, 2018), lack of acknowledgment or appropriate recompense for their contributions (Broad, 2021), and lack of control over decision-making (lack of empowerment) (Newsome, 2002) as well as risks for their financial security (Broad, 2021). These disadvantages are attributed to the enduring grip of masculine hegemony in rural areas, highlighted by many researchers (Coldwell, 2010, Luhrs, 2016, Voyce, 2007) (see Section 2.4).

The review drew from many disciplines and fields of inquiry and practice (Section 1.1.3), including rural sociology, cultural geography, social work and health studies, regional economic and community development work, women's studies and environmental studies. It was noted (in Section 2.5) that researchers from a range of disciplines and practices had identified the need for more consideration of the culture of people on the land when attempting to support them. This applied to support relating to their agricultural practices (Johnsen, 2003), their resilience in the face of adversities and disasters (Harvey, 2007), their individual and collective opportunities for development (Darnhofer et al., 2016), their financial structures and succession processes (Stephens, 2020; Broad, 2021), and their strategies for land management in a climate change environment (Alston, 2018; Gosnell et al., 2019).

A common theme that emerged from the literature review was the need for research that investigated the culture of people in farm families, growers and graziers, to illuminate the decision-making processes within farm families and collectively, within their communities and the

agricultural sector (Conway et al., 2016; Smith, 2015). In fact, the literature claims the emotional dynamics of farm families are important to research even on financial decision-making, especially succession (Conway et al., 2016). The literature regarding women in this culture overwhelmingly concurred that male power was a decisive factor in this rural culture (Alston, 2018; Chiswell, 2016; Luhrs, 2016; Pini 2007).

Accordingly, I sought a conceptual framework and research design methodology that would lend itself to exploring the complex layers of culture imbued with power and disempowerment factors influencing the lives of women in farm families.

8.2.2 Conceptual framework and research design

The theoretical framework I chose for this study was post-structuralism. It was clear from the post-structuralist literature that this approach would be useful in unravelling and describing influential cultural "systems of thought" (Lessa, 2006, p. 285), and the idea of the permeability of power (Foucault, 1976) (Section 4.4.1). Post-structuralism offers the concept of discourses (Barrett, 2005; Fairhurst, 2009) (Sections 1.2 and 4.4.2). More generally, the theory of post-structuralism facilitated the study's findings, discussed later in this chapter, by encouraging the researcher to look through the "network of power relations" (Foucault, 1976, p. 96) and try to decipher what was happening between and behind those nodes, which also include "points of resistance" (Foucault, 1976, p. 96) (see Section 4.4.1). In this thesis, I use the term "discourses" to describe what is referred to in the literature as big D discourses, that is, "systems of thought" (Lessa, 2006, p. 285), "historically marked constellations of talk patterns, ideas, logics, and assumptions that constitute objects and subject" (Fairhurst, 2008, p. 512), and "ways of being in the world" (Gee, 1989, p. 6) (see Section 1.2).

A theoretical innovation of this study was the use of a post-structuralist approach in combination with theories of acculturation, wellbeing, resilience and empowerment, which are generally founded in

constructivist and realist ontologies. One of the connections was the idea that processes such as acculturation and identity formation depend in part on how people are perceived, treated and "interpellated" repeatedly by the people and societies around them (Harding et al., 2014), and by the discourses that permeate the social world that they inhabit (Gee, 1989; Bunch, 2013). (See Sections 1.2, 3.2 for the literature and Section 6.3.2 for the related data). However within and around these interpellations, individuals actively construct a world in which resilience and empowerment strategies play an important role (Brodsky & Cattaneo, 2013; Papadimitropoulos, 2018).

Coupled with this conceptual framework was the choice of qualitative ethnographic research methods entailing in-depth multiple interviews with the participants, some of whom were interviewed up to five times. This approach allowed me to explore multiple levels of the cultural world that these women inhabited, to identify deeply influential discourses and their impacts, and develop rich descriptions of the worlds they construct.

The synergy between the research gaps identified in the literature, my own experiences, and the philosophical perspective taken for this study produced the overall research question: *From the perspectives of the participants, how do the discourses framing women in farm families enable and constrain their wellbeing, resilience and empowerment?*

Underpinning this question, were four sub-questions, namely:

- RQ1. From the perspectives of the participants, what are the dominant discourses framing women in farm families?
- RQ2. How do these discourses work to constrain and enable their wellbeing, resilience and empowerment?
- RQ3. How do women in farm families navigate and negotiate through and within their discourses to increase or decrease their wellbeing, resilience and empowerment?
- RQ4. Given the answers to the preceding questions, how could rural women's organisations, industry bodies and governments

better support women in farm families to increase their wellbeing, resilience and empowerment for the benefit of themselves, their families, their farming enterprises and the sector?

8.3 Research findings

8.3.1 Dominant discourses in the lives of women in farm families

This study found that the three most dominant discourses in the lives of women in farm families were agrarianism, masculine hegemony, and farming-as-a-business (Section 4.7.5). These main discourses were overarching discourses comprising many sub-discourses, as described in Chapter 4 and illustrated in Tables 4.2 and 4.3. The literature suggests that agrarianism as prevailing policy ideology has been waning for many decades (Cockfield & Botterill, 2012) (Section 1.3.1). This study found that the strongest discourse for the participants was agrarianism (Chapter 5). Agrarianism is a collection of norms and values including love of the land, enjoyment of the agricultural lifestyle, and the belief that living as a landowning farm family is better than urban life. The literature does not emphasise the importance of the agrarian discourse in the lives of women on the land, except for its healing influence for mental health issues (Harvey, 2007) (Section 3.3.2). This study gives new insights into the influence of the discourse of agrarianism in forming the norms, values and belief systems of women in farm families, and most significantly, the role of agrarianism as a motivating discourse for their resilience and empowerment measures towards increased wellbeing.

Some of the literature suggests that the loyalty and hard on-farm work of the women and their contributions to farm expenses from their off-farm work are attributable to their indoctrination into the patriarchal norms (Luhrs, 2016; Chiswell, 2016) (Section 2.2.2). Researchers did note a shift in farm women's perspectives and actions after the 1970s "when the baby boomers came of age with their ideas of gender equality" (Teather, 1996, p.184) (Section 2.2.2). Many rural women's organisaations in the 1990s were instituted with women's rights on the

agenda (Alston, 2009). However, researchers continued to find that women were acting from their patriarchal indoctrination (Chiswell, 2016). Luhrs (2016) asserted that farm wives, "consciously or unconsciously, uphold the patriarchal order in farming communities" (Luhrs, 2016, p. 1087) (Section 2.2.2).

This study interrogates and nuances this apparent dominance of the masculine hegemony discourse (see also Section 2.5, Chapter 6). Building on and departing from this literature are the findings of this study which assert that the surface acquiescence of the women to male hegemony is not the whole story, that in fact, women have been successfully empowering themselves and their daughters, and are finding ways through the webs of male power. Quiet acceptance may be viewed as subservience or, as in this study, it may be perceived as temporary retreat while risks are high (Chapters 6 and 7). I did find that the masculine hegemony discourse was still powerful and openly acknowledged by the women. Their responses ranged from indignation and irritation to bemusement, sometimes distress, resistance and conflict, and satisfaction when they were able to navigate and negotiate around and through the impediments of patriarchal power (Chapter 6). Resistance was evident in critical comments made by the participants in interviews, in the women's withdrawal of trade from patriarchal businesses, in vocalising more modern and progressive attitudes, and in noting the lack of need for male muscles in modern farming (Section 6.2.1). These are new findings that make a distinctive contribution to the literature in the area.

Where agrarianism provided aspirational wellbeing goals, the conservative traditional masculine hegemonic discourses often constructed obstacles to navigate, for instance, leaving daughters out of farm succession plans, positioning daughters-in-law as "outlaws" (Pini, 2007, p. 40) (see Section 2.2.2) and disadvantaging women in numerous ways, using them as unpaid labour in the family farm (Alston, 2009; Pini, 2007), denying them decision-making authority (Anderson et al., 2021)

and contributing to unfair financial arrangements (Broad, 2021) (see Sections 1.1.2, 1.3.3, 2.2.2, 2.4.5, 2.4.6 and Chapter 6). Nevertheless, this same discursive reality augmented the agrarian ideal of family farming passed from generation to generation. Although the traditional conservative masculine hegemony discourse might contribute to preventing women from achieving full participation in family farming or family decision-making, it simultaneously increases their belief that the existence, maintenance and intergenerational continuance of the family farm is very important, to be worked for and protected. Many women in the literature and in this investigation, expressed appreciation for their farm family situation which gave them and their families intergenerational access to a beautiful outdoor setting, a place of employment, and a future (Trussell & Shaw, 2009; Luhrs, 2016). Furthermore, due to many of the participants sharing their stories of their challenges and successes over the last three or four decades, I discerned a shift in the attitudes of farm families, for example, in the patrilineal practice of the transferring agricultural properties to sons. Many of the participants had the decision-making power and the intent to include their daughters in farm succession plans, contrary to what they themselves experienced as young adults. The potential for farm daughters to inherit farms is a significant change in the traditional patrilineal practices. This aligns with the statistics which show a gradual increase across Australia in the percentage of daughters inheriting farms, from 5% in the 1990s to 10% more recently (Hough & Early, 2016) (Section 2.4.2). This shift indicates a change in perspective among farm families towards gender equality.

The third dominant discourse, the neoliberal discourse of farming-as-a-business had many deleterious effects on women in farm families. It initially excluded women from decision-making roles and increased their workloads (Alston, 2009; Newsome, 2020; Stehlick et al., 2000) (Section 1.3.3). This is still a high risk for women in this productivist discourse. It also promotes efficiency and productivity over family and community, views land as a commodity rather than something imbued with meaning

and multiple roles, and privileges profits over people and traditions (Baldwin et al., 2019; Birch, 2017; O'Keeffe, 2017) (Sections 1.3.1 and 2.3.2). However, although the discourse of farming-as-a-business rather than as a lifestyle or obligatory intergenerational tradition did initially undermine the two other discourses of agrarianism and masculine hegemony, I found, through extended discussions with participants, that this is no longer always the case. The women used the demands of this discourse to navigate towards agrarian goals despite both the masculinist hegemony and the more constraining elements of the productivist farming-as-a-business discourse.

For example, it was clear from the interviews that most of the women were involved in providing the necessities for farming-as-a-business, such as the use of computer and other technologies, preparation of financials, development of business plans and dealing with their banks as well as other agencies. This involvement gave them a place to make a significant contribution to the farm operation, and for some, to become decision-makers within their operations (Chapter 7). More strategically, it enabled them to navigate the prevailing masculine hegemony in pursuit of their agrarian priorities. In many cases, female equality was enacted through involvement in the business and practical side of the agricultural business and making contributions on an equal footing with husbands. This finding extends brief observations in the literature that the contemporary requirement for the use of computer technology was increasing the influence of women in farms (Hay & Pearce, 2014; Hay, 2018) (Section 2.2.2).

These key contributions and insights from the study have major implications that shape the response to RQ4 (how could rural women's organisations, industry bodies and governments better support women in farm families?) as discussed in Section 8.4. But first I discuss further contributions of this study with respect to the experiences of wellbeing, resilience and empowerment of women in farm families. These add to the implications for practitioners as well as directions for further research.

8.3.2 Constructing wellbeing, resilience and empowerment

Agrarianism is the dominant discourse of the participant women in farm families and drives their wellbeing goals. Women's wellbeing is defined by how much of the agrarian ideal they can realise. Therefore, for most of these participants, achieving the wellbeing goals of acquiring and maintaining life in a landowning farm situation is the objective of resilience measures as well as the purpose of actions that increase empowerment (Chapters 5, 6 and 7).

These agrarian ideals forming their wellbeing aspirations were found to be the main motivating factors for the processes of adaptation, resilience, and empowerment of the women. The capacity for resilience and empowerment were based partially on knowledge within previous discourses brought by the women into their new situations. These new female entrants to the family farms also iteratively practiced both resilience measures and empowerment actions during the acculturation processes that they undertook (Chapters 5, 6 and 7). These iterative enactments of resilience and empowerment measures positioned the participants to be able to handle later threats to their farm units, such as those posed by banks and mining companies.

An additional insight from this study is the use of the post-structuralist concept of interpellation (Harding et al., 2014) (Section 1.2), combined with the cross-cultural concept of acculturation (Paloma et al., 2010) (Section 3.2), to describe how women who marry into farming families adapt to and adopt the discursive values and norms of their husbands' families. The literature only alludes to these processes when it suggests that women are responsible for inculcating patriarchal values into their own children (Cassidy, 2019; Luhrs, 2016) (Section 2.2.2).

Post-structuralism cautions that discourses are constructed, often arbitrary and therefore not fixed, immutable or natural (Foucault, 1980) (Section 4.4.1). This applies to the multiple identities of all subjects (Barrett, 2005; Pini, 2007) (Section 4.4.3) which includes both men and

women in farm families. Furthermore, the discourses influence groups and individuals through many means, media sources and marketing techniques (Hatter & Howard, 2013; Pajnik & Lesjak-Tusek, 2002) (Section 1.2). One of the ways that discourses are imprinted is through interpellation (Sections 1.2 and 3.2), that is, speaking to and dealing with people as if they are already the objects of the discourse (Bunch, 2013). Interpellation is one aspect of acculturation (Berry, 2005; Kelly 2016) (Section 3.2).

8.3.2.1 Acculturation

This study found that women were acculturated by their husband's families into embracing the dominant discourses, especially agrarianism and, from both agrarianism and the male hegemonic discourses, the primacy of the family farm.

While in the literature the concept of acculturation is used mainly in immigration and cross-cultural studies (Berry, 2005; Kelly, 2016; Paloma et al., 2010) (Section 3.2), this study extended the theory into the rural women's arena. Using this study's findings, the experiences of the women in this can be mapped onto Berry's (2021) framework (Section 3.2) as shown in Figure 8.1.

Figure 8.1

Mapping of study findings onto Berry’s (2005) acculturation framework (Grigoryev & Berry, 2021, p. 8)

<table>
<tr><td rowspan="3">+↑---New-Cultural Affiliation ----↓</td><td>Assimilation
Some participants take on new culture, shed previous culture</td><td>Integration
Majority of women maintain their previous values in parallel with the dominant discourses.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Marginalisation
None of the participants are completely unable to maintain previous values or take on new values.</td><td>Separatism
Small number of participants are unable to combine previous with current values, stay with previous values.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Original Cultural Affiliation -----------→ +</td></tr>
</table>

As Figure 8.1 illustrates:

- Among the participants, only a few came close to embracing the new culture to the exclusion of their previous ways of being, thus enacting assimilation. Some reframed their upbringing to emphasise elements that were similar to their current previous lives.
- The opposite to assimilation is separatism which in this context applies to women who could not or would not alter their original values and ways of being. For a range of reasons, including in some cases exclusion by the host family, a small number of participants did not engage with the values and goals of their husband’s families. The consequences of this separatism ranged across deep distress, disengagement, and exclusion with some living a separate life within a conflicted marriage, to marriage breakdown, mental health issues and in a few cases, the family farm enterprise being dissolved. However, two or three

participants adapted enough to live comfortably in the new culture and found ways using their previous cultural norms to maintain connections and engage with new people.

- The worst outcome in Berry's framework is marginalisation. This occurs when people shed their original cultural affiliations and connections but do not fit into the new setting (Section 3.2). None of the participants were in this category.
- The optimal outcome in Berry's work is integration. In this, the incoming individual retains a high affiliation with their previous culture and ways of being yet simultaneously develops a high affiliation with the new culture, with significant social engagement in both cultures (Section 3.2). In post-structural terms, most of the women in the study integrated with some measure of success, carried their pre-marriage discursive identities into the farm family situation and adopted new discursive identities. This group of women includes those participants, about 12 of the 20, who were the most successfully involved within the farming family. In this way, these women developed similar values and objectives to those of their host families but also retained enough of their original discursive identities to be able to contribute fresh insights, skills and new perspectives to their family businesses. This process has implications for the growth, sustainability and productivity of the agricultural sector which are further discussed in Section 8.4 below.

8.3.2.2 Managing risk for resilience and empowerment

Another contribution by this thesis is the finding that the acculturation of women in farming families into agrarianism formed the basis of their wellbeing goals, which were then the motivation for their resilience measures and empowerment actions. Because agrarian ideals, which give primacy to the family farm, were the highest wellbeing goals, anything that threatened those goals triggered a decision process.

The relationship between resilience and empowerment for women was elucidated by Brodsky and Cattaneo (2016) as hinging on the context of fundamental risk (Section 3.6). My study expanded on the conceptual framework of Brodsky and Cattaneo (2016) as illustrated in Figure 3.3 (Section 3.6.1) which proposes that women choose resilience measures or empowerment actions depending on their assessment, tacit or conscious, of the severity of risk factors and threats. In Brodsky and Cattaneo (2016) the threats were about potential loss of life. In this study, the threats were about loss of an idealised agrarian place and lifestyle, loss of emotional or financial security derived from the farm, and the possibility of social rejection and exclusion within the farm and the farm community, that is, their agrarian infused notions of wellbeing. Accordingly, the risks that stimulate resilience and empowerment actions are context-specific, as are the actions themselves. They depend on the prevailing notions of wellbeing as formed by and within influential discourse(s). This is an idea that could be researched in other settings.

This study made a further addition to the literature regarding resilience. The literature refers to many resilience theories, which are stimulated by stressors (Norris et al., 2008) (see Section 3.4.1, Figure 3.2), and if successful, produce post-event functioning adapted to an altered environment. This study extends that literature by finding that the concepts of changes, adversities and threats that spur actors to initiate resilience or empowerment measures applies to not only current stressors but to the possibility of future adversities that might impact on aspirational wellbeing goals. Examples of future possibilities that cause current anxieties and trigger resilience measures are fears of loss of the farm property and lack of succession, fears of future droughts and other climate events, as well as commodity price crashes and interest rate rises. There are also geo-political conflicts, pandemics, plagues and stock or crop diseases that cannot be predicted. Some of the women expressed the feeling that life on the farm was a challenge, with one adversity following another, to be met with good planning, resolve and a mind open

to opportunities (Sections 5.4.2.1 and 5.4.3.1). As described in Chapters 5, 6 and 7, the women assessed each current or potential hurdle or adversity, intuitively or deliberatively, to determine if there were threats to their wellbeing goals, that is, acquisition of and maintenance of an agrarian life on a family farm.

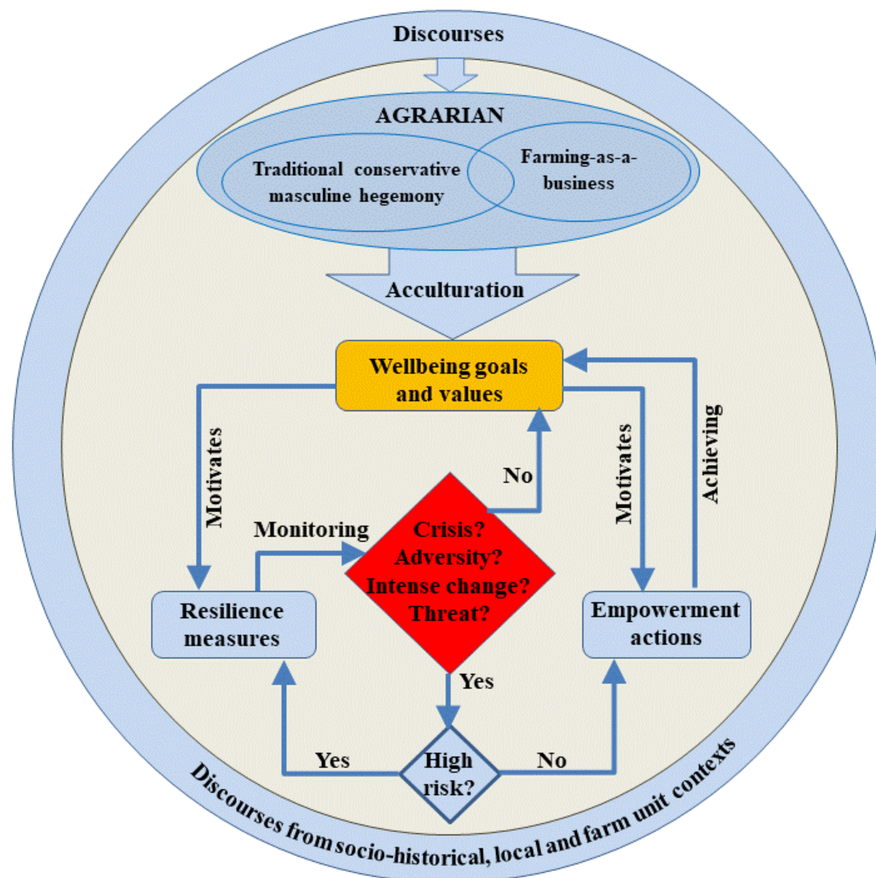
Another area where the findings of this study extend Brodsky and Cattaneo's 2016 paper is in adding the concepts of retreat and self-care to resilience measures (Section 6.4.2.6). It was clear from the data that after trigger points were experienced by some of the participants, actions that might have appeared to be subservience or acceptance of their secondary roles as described in the literature (Cassidy, 2019; Chiswell 2018; Luhrs, 2016; Teather, 1996) (Section 2.2.2) were often manifestations of strategic withdrawal until the risks of expulsion or rejection or financial loss were lessened, and an opportunity to progress arose or was created. At such opportunity points, participants who may have appeared to outside scholars to be acquiescent, moved into empowering actions and were able to enact decision-making roles which brought them closer to their wellbeing goals. Conversely, some of the participants who did not retreat at appropriate times, or appeared to be challenging, suffered severe consequences, including 'excommunication' as one participant put it (Section 6.4.2.4).

This study also newly identifies some of those gateways, such as the process of mutual accommodation into the husband's family and community, the struggle for autonomy over their physical home, succession processes, and dealing with droughts, banks, and external threats. The resilience and empowerment measures taken when facing the earlier hurdles such as acceptance into the husband's family served them well for other later adversities. Ultimately, the focus for the women was on growing and protecting the family farm unit, as the entity of highest value, and if possible, transferring it down through the generations.

The foundations of the conceptual framework for this study were illustrated in Figure 3.3 (Section 3.6.1). This showed wellbeing, resilience and empowerment for women in farming families as connected, with the aim of the study data would explore those connections. Incorporating the findings from the data analysis with respect to the relative weight of the discourses and their interrelationships with wellbeing, resilience and empowerment processes resulted in Figure 8.2, a research-informed refinement of Figure 3.3. Figure 8.2 summarises the relationships between discourses, acculturation, wellbeing, resilience measures and empowerment actions.

Figure 8.2

The relationship between the discourses and wellbeing, resilience and empowerment for women on the land



8.3.2.3 Succession

One of the crucial points of challenge and threat for women entering farm families as daughters-in-law is the succession process. It affects themselves and their husbands, and indeed the entire family and business viability. Far from being a peripheral concern, it has emerged in this study as one of the main vulnerabilities for women on farms (Conway et al., 2016; Ressia et al., 2020) and for farm families (Stephens, 2020) (Sections 6.3.2 and 6.4.4.2). It is a core transition point of the family farm structure and can impact on the viability and productivity of the family farm and in the aggregate, the farm sector, if not handled well (Cavicchioli et al., 2018; Conway et al., 2016; Stephens, 2020) (Section 2.2.2). The findings in this study demonstrate a commonly experienced emotional distress of the daughters-in-law as well as their husbands in some situations in being excluded from family discussion on this and other topics, and the uncertainty of their positions (Sections 6.3.2 and 6.4). The findings reinforce that having "successor identity" (Chiswell, 2018) (Section 2.4.6), if backed up by legal documents, was positive for the emotional and financial wellbeing of the farm family and its members including in terms of security and ability to borrow funds (Section 6.4.4.2). This study contributes to the literature the inside stories of why prolonged or difficult succession is unsettling, and why it is so important to the wellbeing and productivity of both the women and the men in farm families. Furthermore, this research indicates that the significance of succession in a family farm setting is for the women (at least) more than the transfer of business assets. It represents certainty about their cherished place-based agrarian values and goals, their own position and identity within those parameters, and the financial future of their families.

After succession, most of the participants were much more confident and active. They were involved in top-level business and sometimes agronomic decision-making and taking the lead on interactions with outside potential threats, such as banks and resource companies

(Section 7.3.3). The literature is very scant on this issue but does note that middle aged women on the land are more content and satisfied with life than their urban counterparts, attributing that to their connection with the land (Harvey, 2007) (Section 3.3). The literature mentions that women on farms report higher wellbeing than their urban counterparts especially as they get older, attributing this phenomenon to a spiritual connection to the land (Harvey, 2007, p.6) (Section 3.4.2). This study supports that contention of a deep connection with the land and adds the finding that the women who were successfully acculturated enjoyed the interconnectedness of their home, their family work, and the physical environment. This enmeshment of work-world and place-world (Casey 2001, p. 684) (Section 2.2.1) was more pronounced and more satisfying for the women once succession was successfully completed. Thus, this study found that it was not necessarily the age of women that contributed to their feelings of wellbeing, but how successfully acculturated they were and most importantly, their situation regarding the family farm succession processes.

8.3.2.4 Resistance to the concept of resilience

One of the manifestations of resistance that the study participants showed was resistance to the concept of resilience itself. Indeed, a caution arising from this thesis, particularly for resilience intervention and policy considerations, is the necessity to carefully consider the context and the implications of the use of the concept of resilience.

As discussed in Section 3.4., the literature asserts that the notion of resilience can be used in a negative manner such as in policy and the media to deflect attention from conditions that need changing (Harris et al., 2018) or to blame people for not coping well with adversities that are out of their control (Prowell, 2019). This study captured some strong resistance on the part of the women to such notions of resilience (Section 7.3.3). The women did not appreciate the word being used as a rationale for not giving assistance to rural areas in times of stress, such as during

droughts, and used as an assumption that the women, their husbands and their families should be able to cope with anything. Several questioned the ubiquitousness of the term and whether that rendered it meaningless. The implications of this for policy makers and practitioners along with those of all previously mentioned findings are outlined in the following.

8.4 Implications

This sub-section specifically addresses the fourth research sub-question, that is, implications from this research for how agencies such as rural women's organisations, industry bodies and governments could support women in farming families to increase their wellbeing, resilience and empowerment, and with that, their contribution to the future of farm families and agriculture more generally.

The first consideration is what the women themselves identified as supporting them in their own resilience and empowerment efforts, as discussed in Section 7.5.5. Given its relevance to the provision of those services and support as well as those identified in the following discussion, it would be remiss here to not highlight the need for reliable digital connectivity.

A fundamental implication of this research for all third parties working in the sector is the need to recognise that although women may acknowledge, respect and work around the male "dividend of patriarchy" (Newsome, 2020) (Section 2.4.2), they are strategic rather than subservient. Male hegemony while present is not the most dominant, that is, the most influential discourse. Instead, love of the land and the lifestyle, the agrarian discourse, as the basis of wellbeing, is the motivator and the goal. The discourse of farming-as-a-business is used by the women as a means to achieve that goal despite a tension between the productivist commodification of land and those who work the land, versus the agrarian and the traditional discourses which privilege intergenerational attachment and ideas of land stewardship. Such

recognition of the discourses at play should shape the nature of approaches, engagement and support. The women's agrarian-based motivation along with their retention of previous discursive identities, as well as their digital and other skills, bring diversity, and innovative and holistic thinking into their farm families. These are assets for the farm sector and contribute to the flourishing of women in farm families.

Despite successive Australian federal and state governments having withdrawn support from the agricultural sector (Cockfield & Botterill, 2012) (Section 1.3.1), the government and agricultural sector are currently promoting an increase in production to $100 billion a year by 2030 (Chan 2021) from the current $70 billion (Marshall, 2022) (Section 1.1), and simultaneously seeking ways to increase the resilience of the sector. Informed by this research, a way forward could be that a collaboration of government, agricultural sector groups and the other relevant sectors could work together to offer support to women in the sector. Women may seek information and guidance regarding this new culture as they navigate and negotiate towards wellbeing, resilience and empowerment for themselves, their families and communities, and the sector itself. Support could be offered through the following avenues:

- Support for peer information exchange groups and gatherings (Playgroup, rural women's groups, art and culture groups etc.)
- Support for peer agricultural sector information groups and more formal upskilling including online education in:
  - Farm management
  - Farm financial management
  - Staff management
  - Agronomy
  - Farm office management
- Support for succession planning from early considerations to execution. Currently, there are some funds available but these need to be increased.

An important area that would be well-informed by this research concerns climate action. Indeed, recently researchers and practitioners in the climate area have called for more research into farm family dynamics to determine best-case approaches to engagement of the sector to enhance or change land-use management practices for achieving net zero emissions (Gosnell et al., 2019) (Section 2.6).

Almost all the women in this study are tertiary educated, highly skilled and computer literate, with tertiary qualifications in agriculture, arts, business, education, law, nursing, veterinary and workplace health and safety. This supports them in finding off-farm work, while simultaneously contributing to their frustration when their geographical situations prevented them from attaining employment (Section 5.4.2.3). Some of these women travelled considerable distances to engage in off-farm work; others were restricted by onerous distances despite wishing to participate in the workforce. An implication of this is that there is potentially an untapped workforce resident in the regions, capable of a range of work, with the provisos that the work can be undertaken from a home office and that there is adequate internet. In Australia, in 2018-19, there were approximately 87,800 farms of which 57,300 were categorised as broadacre farms (ABARES Insights 2021, p. 4). Broadacre farms, being larger and in more remote locations, are the places where women seeking work are most affected by the tyranny of distance. They may be the places where a skilled, heretofore hidden, workforce resides.

Another recommendation supports Alston's (2018) call for better statistics on the contributions of women in farm families: how many hours of work they do, in what areas, what are their qualifications, what is their level of employment on and off-farm, and/or underemployment. How many are directors or partners in the farm family businesses?

As already mentioned, one of the key findings of the research is the importance of the discourse of agrarianism to the wellbeing and motivations of women. The implications of this finding are many. First, given the enmeshment of most of the women in this study within the

family farm as a business, it means that it would be beneficial for policy makers to consider anew the role of family farming in the new larger societal discourses of environmental conservation and climate change mitigation, for instance, the special land stewardship role farmers play in managing land to reduce the effects of climate change. Instead of policy settings which lean towards withdrawing support and services from family farms and communities (Cockfield and Botterill, 2021) (Section 1.3.1) and supporting corporate or private sector farming (O'Keeffe, 2017) (Section 2.3.2), it might be worthwhile to appreciate and encourage the cohort of dedicated, hard-working families who are willing to take care of the land (Darnhofer et al., 2016). There should be an increase in land and agronomy extension workers (withdrawn by governments over the last 30 years). Policies could be developed to encourage, support and reward farm families who manage innovative approaches for sustainable farming and value-adding. Research could be undertaken to compare on-the-ground results of farm family cohorts, supported and not supported, as well as the sustainability outcomes of farm family land management versus that of corporate farmers.

Second, the importance of agrarianism as a discourse in farm families should be taken into consideration by practitioners in their approaches to people on the land in a range of areas. For instance:

- Financial and succession planners need to understand these values in assisting families to maintain and pass on their land.
- Climate mitigation advocates need to respect the general high levels of dedication and care of the land performed by farm families, men and women both, and approach the situation with a strengths-based mindset.
- Mental health practitioners should consider the wellbeing values and aspirations of people on rural agricultural properties, and work within the farm context, for both service delivery and mental health recovery.

- Regional development officers need to be aware that for women in family farms, the farm is not just the backdrop, it is the highest value and priority. Again, a values and strengths-based approaches would be the most effective.
- All practitioners should be cognisant of the multiple roles and considerable on-farm and off-farm work and responsibilities of women in farm families, both obstructed by and supported by the masculinist and productivist discourses, but motivated by agrarian values.

In order to successfully employ a values-respecting approach to engagement with communities, it is necessary for practitioners to understand the community's values. This thesis contributes to the literature on the complex, nuanced values base of the community of women in farm families, thus assisting practitioners of many disciplines involved with rural families.

Another key finding is that women in farm families are often constrained and sometimes disadvantaged by general and specific masculine privilege and other pressures in rural areas and on farms. The women, consciously or not, assess the risks of each challenge and then enact resilience or empowerment measures, depending on the severity of the risk. The implications of this for practitioners is the necessity to understand that these women face real risks, social, emotional and financial, and to respect their sometimes-precarious situations. It is also important for practitioners to try to assess where women are situated in terms of their risk profile to avoid putting undue pressure on them.

On the other hand, policy makers, program designers and practitioners need to re-orient their approaches to acknowledge this study's findings that women in family farms are gaining in empowerment and that they bring fresh and innovative perspectives. Their approaches to the farm sector need to focus on or fully include the women as a priority. All policy and programs should be subject to a gender lens, that

is, scrutiny with particular attention to gender imbalances, implicit or inherent biases and assumptions, and inclusion.

Including women necessitates providing support for women on farms in myriad ways. This must include the provision of childcare for all farm related events and timing these to suit women. This support also ranges from better internet access to better resourced education for children in remote areas; support for social soft and hard infrastructure; encouragement and financial support for women to be involved in agricultural organisations, boards and committees as well as pressure on those organisations to construct rules and processes that welcome the involvement of women. Women already are making substantial contributions to the farm sector and could bring even more innovation and energy if supported.

This research indicates that a pre-requisite for engagement with farm families is respect for their capabilities, intentions and deep knowledge of their own businesses, land management and sector, and in particular the skills, knowledge and motivations of women which have hitherto been overlooked. Also indicated is the need for more cultural training for policy makers and practitioners. For instance, funds to mitigate mental health issues on farms need to come in forms that genuinely engage people on farms, rather than being dispensed to easier to reach groups.

8.5 Further research

A specific recommendation for the next stage of this research in this area would be to repeat the study with cohorts of women in farm families from different regions and/or in dissimilar forms of production. This would be to determine if the identified discourses are alike in these variations of context and if the discourses similarly impact on wellbeing, resilience and empowerment. Longer term, given the more gender inclusive cultural change already under way, a longitudinal study approach could prove worthwhile. The study could be repeated with a similar cohort from the same area but a decade (or generation) later. An alternative future

research direction would be to undertake a similar analysis with cohorts of men in farming families.

In addition, the insights obtained in this study with respect to the conceptual framework adopted opens up directions for future research. Investigating and analysing prevailing discourses to understand impacts and influences on wellbeing, resilience and empowerment could be applied to a range of situations. For instance, reversing the research's unique application of acculturation to the context of farming families, such analysis, with its expanded focus, could be applied in the migration context. The findings concerning responses to potential threats (as distinct from current adversities) to wellbeing in activating resilience and empowerment actions could also inform further research questions. Another future direction researchers could take might be the expansion of the concept of how women "bypass" the strictures of some of their dominant discourses, by seeking "existing alternatives" and supporting "new possibilities and desirabilities" (Sherwood et al., 2016, p. 15).

The following lists some of the questions for future research that I am already considering:

- Has there been an increase in participation from women in farm families in their farms, organisations and the agricultural sector over the last decade? In what way, if any, is this making a difference?
- What are the relationships between women on farms and their local town communities and local or regional Indigenous communities? How do these groups work together to improve wellbeing for all members of their rural community, and the liveability of their regions?
- What are the demographics of women in farm families, that is, ages, educational levels, ownership status, participation in farm operations, and how do these factors influence their participation in decision-making within their farm enterprises, and within the sector?

- Following Acosta et al. 2016, what is the level of "intra-household" decision-making that women currently have in family farm decision-making, and what is the level they would like?
- What are the gendered breakdowns of work on family farms by family members, and what type of work do they do? What work receives pay and what work is not accounted for?
- With respect to women in farm families who are making an impact on sustainable land management practices and climate action, what discourses inform their activities? What influenced them? What was the turning point for them? How were they able to influence the direction of their farm operations?
- Drawing on work in the 1990s of the velvet triangle (farm women, feminist academics and female bureaucrats) (Pini & Brown, 2004), how could such a collaboration be formed currently, is it needed, and what work could it do? Could the work progress the challenge of making "local knowledges and logics visible" to institutions (Eversole, 2018, p. 338)? How could policy-makers, practitioners and researchers co-learn "for systemic governance transformations" (van Bommel et al., 2016, p.231) in the agricultural sector?
- Using criteria from agricultural climate mitigation scholars, and using the findings from this study, does the agrarian discourse or ideology of farm families make a difference in terms of effective climate mitigation production processes on family farms? This could be in comparison with corporate farming and perhaps across a range of production types – grazing, broadacre, horticulture, small farms, dairying, viticulture etc.
- Could developing a pilot project/study with a small cohort of women producers and graziers working with an academic facilitator and/ or regional development practitioner take a strengths-based approach to advance understanding of the following issue: what are the current initiatives and successes of

members of this group in sustainable management? It could consider such questions as: What were/ are the obstacles to these initiatives? How were/ are the obstacles overcome? What does the cohort need in further support/ information/ resources/ alleviation or help with red tape? What are the next steps in promoting these methods and successes to a larger group? This could be part of a larger research issue of university and community collaboration, and practitioner and community interactions. It would be based on theories of mutual respect, social capital, community learning, reciprocity, acculturation, knowledge transfer (both ways), discursive identities, transformational resilience and change management.

8.6 Researcher's reflections

There are limitations to the study that arise from and were considered in my own learning journey as an emerging researcher across the thesis process. These are briefly overviewed in this section.

Through this research experience, I learned that it was important to consider my philosophical stance at a deep level as it had to sustain me through a long journey where strong connections were made with my participants. Choosing a philosophical approach required reflection on my values to ensure that the approach aligned with my worldview. This is because the approach informed the questions, the research design analysis and the outcomes of the research. That is a learning in itself and heightened my awareness of the approaches taken in academic research and how these approaches must be taken into account when assessing other work. I wrangled conscientiously with this choice for some time and let go of my previous critical realist perspectives. Learning how a philosophical perspective could open new ways of seeing a situation was a significant discovery for me.

Although I knew before the interviews that traditional, conservative masculine hegemony was a significant discourse in the agricultural sector,

I was nonetheless surprised that it was so prevalent in the 21st century and had such serious impacts on women in farm families. Even more surprising was the strength of the attachment of the women to the land, and to their intergenerational family farm ideals. Although the findings were not what I expected, I am confident that I now understand many of the dynamics at play in the lives of my participants, women in family farms, and how those dynamics are informed by current discourses. At the same time, I was aware from the literature that discourses change, overlap and compete. I had the privilege of being present for conversations that mapped some of those overlaps, contradictions, and subtle changes. An exciting learning for me was realising that the subjects of these discourses were quietly using their agency to slowly alter aspects of the discourses.

Another learning was the importance of the "So what?" question. My career as a regional practitioner gave me a strong impetus to make use of the knowledge produced, and a clear idea about how the information could be invaluable to practitioners in many areas. This motivation was important for driving the research.

I am now far more confident that I could successfully undertake the research process for other related topics, mentioned in Section 8.5, including identifying the challenge or issue, conducting a thorough literature review, collecting appropriate data ethically, analysing and discussing the findings. Most important, however, was my humbling realisation of the mountains of thorough and painstaking research and scholarly work by thousands of researchers in this subject area before I undertook this study, without which I could not have proceeded. Furthermore, I have a heightened appreciation for research itself, an understanding that my contribution is part of a much bigger knowledge-seeking endeavour and the awareness that I have so much more to learn. In other words, I have a better idea now of how much I do not know, and I am curious and interested in continuing on this path.

I have reflected on the nature of this study and its constraints, discussed below. My insider status facilitated a level of trust which contributed to women divulging deeper and more nuanced perspectives and lived experiences. Many of the women agreed to at least two interviews, and some were very generous with up to five interviews each. As a result, much valuable data was collected that lead to insights such as the importance of the agrarian (love of the land) discourse.

An advantage of the intensive interviews which captured the lifespans of the participants was that I was able to perceive the shape of changes over time. Although the data collection does reflect the temporal slice of lived experience and memory in the specific band of time the interviews were collected, namely 2018 and 2019, the participants freely shared their life stories. This made it possible to see, through their eyes, the evolution of the discourses, the effect of the discourses on them, strategies played out over time and the impact of the women on the discourses over a thirty-year period. For example, I was able to see that participants who tactically retreated during some conflict, and therefore who might have appeared subservient, emerged later when the threat was lessened, or the situation changed, through their own interative efforts or through exogenous events, and enacted empowerment measures.

I recognise that another potential limitation is that only one homogenous cohort was studied, that is, women in family farms on large prosperous broadacre properties in one geographical grain and sheep belt. Furthermore, it emerged that all the participants were white, middle-class or upper middle-class women. This is despite the geographical area being very large (about the size of Austria) and many of the women not being known to each other despite being from similar types of farming operations. Nonetheless, I did use the snowball method for recruitment and the participants may have recruited others of like mind. However, it is my impression, partially from the literature, and partially from my own observations, that this phenomenon is a function of the reality of this

sector. It is a relatively wealthy, white, middle-class sector in the region under study (Pini & Castro, 2021) (Section 1.3.3 and Section 2.4.5). In contrast, the population in the towns in the region are mostly concentrated in the lowest two socio-economic quintiles. This has implications for the relationships between the landowning families and their nearest town communities. These relationships, between the farm families and their local communities, warrant further research in terms of regional development, workforce attraction and retention, and wellbeing.

I noted that the seeming limitation with respect to women of different ethnicities and women of lower socio-economic status aligns with the suggestion in the literature that these women receive very little attention in rural literature and rural journals (Pini & Castro, 2021) (Section 2.4.5). Studies of farmers and farm families have focused on white middle-class people, possibly because in many regions, that is the demographic of landowning farmers (Section 2.4.5). Rural is a broad term, and it might be helpful if scholars understood that there are many distinct cultural groups in rural areas, including farm families engaged in different types of production, town communities, Indigenous communities and backpacker or other itinerant workers, each with their own demographics, and their own issues. There is another area of study which privileges work with Indigenous people, and yet another, regional development, which often focuses on people who live in rural towns. I recognise that research is needed to map out these very distinct cultures to see where, if at all, they overlap, and what the implications are for collaborative regional development, as well as the distribution of resources, including academic attention.

8.7 Conclusion

The chapter began with a summary of the areas in which the thesis makes an original contribution to knowledge.

Many of the findings built on previous research, and some noted a difference over time from conclusions drawn by researchers in the past.

There is also discussion in this chapter on how the post-structuralist perspective facilitated a different set of conclusions when considering similar data to that gathered by those earlier researchers. In this chapter, the conceptual framework diagram in Section 3.7 was compared to the concluding diagram (Figure 8.2) to illustrate this study's finding that the women in farm families exist within an amalgam of the dominant discourses and are shaped by them through processes such as acculturation and interpellation. This shaping along with how the women navigate and indeed re-shape these discourses had significant impact on their wellbeing, resilience and empowerment.

Finally, the chapter presented an overview of implications and recommendations including possible directions for future research stemming from this study as well as consideration of study limitations and researcher learnings.

Third party practitioners should acknowledge the rising influence of women in farming families and the agricultural sector. They should seek to understand the nature and impact of the dominant discourses particularly the motivating agrarian attachment and how risks to that agrarian wellbeing ideal motivate resilience and empowerment actions. These women need to be included in all efforts to approach and engage farm families in shaping the future of agriculture and its response to changing circumstances, including climate change.

Overall perhaps the strongest impression from this study is that of the successful and actualised participants (more than half of them). They had so firmly adopted the agrarian discourse of love of land and the farming lifestyle that it was central to their wellbeing. At the same time, they were very cognisant of the masculine hegemony discourse in their farm families and across the rural sector. But they had retained much of their original culture formed within other discourses, such as the equality of women and the value of innovating to improve their family relationships and improve their farm outcomes. They were gradually altering the most obvious manifestations of male power, such as

patrilineal succession practices, often by harnessing both the discourse of farming-as-a-business and of farming as an agrarian passion. Succession, they contended, should go to the children who love the land, and also are able to manage the business. But they were doing it strategically depending on level of risk and possible repercussions operating within the discourse of conservative, traditional masculine hegemony.

Due to the innovative mindsets of many of the women in farm families, and their strong attachment to family farming and love of the land, it is clear that it would benefit women, their families and the agricultural sector if women were supported in all facets of farm life, from operations to management to leadership in the sector. Newsome (2020) suggested that women farmers are flourishing in small niche markets. This study found that women are making inroads in the mainstream male-dominated broadacre sector as well. This study concludes that, as Alston (2003) predicted, women are the new entrepreneurs of agriculture. Furthermore, they are a key resource for the agricultural sector in terms of economic viability, sustainable land management and the vitality of rural communities. The combination of the three discourses, agrarianism, traditional conservative masculine hegemony and farming-as-a-business, as reconfigured and practiced by the participants, indicated the emergence of a new contemporary agrarianism: a more egalitarian discourse embracing the inclusion of women, reinforcing the love of the land and agrarian pursuits, with a business viability inflection.

This study concludes that women in farming families should be acknowledged, respected and recompensed for their contributions to their family farming enterprises and the sector, their innovative mindsets and their strategic resilience and empowerment capacities. They are a key resource for the future of the agricultural sector in terms of economic viability, sustainable land management and the vitality of rural communities, and managing the challenges in rural Australia of the present and the future, including climate change and other adversities and threats not yet known.

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APPENDIX A: TERMINOLOGY

Term	Meaning in this thesis
Actor	… "individuals endowed with the ability to develop strategies and act within a certain set of opportunities and constraints". (Johnsen, 2003, p. 133, drawing on Hindess 1988).
AgForce	AgForce is a peak organisation representing Queensland's rural producers https://www.agforceqld.org.au/
AgriFutures	Formerly Rural Industries Research Development Corporation https://www.agrifutures.com.au/about/
Broadacre farm	Broadacre is a term used, mainly in Australia, to describe farms or industries engaged in the production of grains, oilseeds and other crops (especially wheat, barley, peas, sorghum, maize, hemp, safflower, and sunflower), or the grazing of livestock for meat or wool, on a large scale (i.e., using extensive parcels of land). https://stats.oecd.org/glossary/detail.asp?ID=235
The bush	In Australia, "'the bush' is used as a catch all phrase that denotes rural places as well as rural people, communities and practices" (Wardell-Johnson 2008, p. 6)).
Empowerment (Section 3.5)	Empowerment is "a process through which people reduce their powerlessness and alienation and gain greater control over all aspects of their lives and social environment" (Mullaly, 2007, p. 299 cited in Harvey, 2009, p. 359). Empowerment actions change the power relations to make real change.

Term	Meaning in this thesis
Family farm	"An Australian primary production business owned and operated by members of one family … a family comprises: A couple (or the surviving parent) the children of that couple, the spouses or partners of the children and their children" (Stephens 2020, p. 15)
Farm **Property** **Station**	A piece of land over 40 hectares used for primary production. Colloquially, a farm is less than 10,000 acres; a property is approximately 10,000 acres to 100,000 acres; anything over 100,000 acres is a station.
Farm Management Deposits (FMDs)	The farm management deposits (FMD) scheme offered by the federal government allows eligible primary producers to set aside pre-tax income from their primary production activities during years of high income. The income can then be drawn in future years as needed. https://www.ato.gov.au/business/primary-producers/in-detail/farm-management-deposits-scheme/
Farmer	A person who grows crops for food or fibre. In Australia, grain producer or grain grower are the terms used in *The Country Life* and in government documents to describe those who grow grain, such as wheat, sorghum, chickpeas, linseed, etc. on broadacre places, rather than using the term 'farmer'. Those who grow cotton are also referred to as cotton growers or cotton producers. Farmer is used usually for those growing vegetables, horticulture, on smaller farms east of the Great Divide. Sometimes, owners of broadacre operations will refer to the activities of growing grain on a section of their land as farming or cropping.

Term	Meaning in this thesis
Grazier	In Australia, a person who owns, manages, and sells stock such as cattle or sheep which graze on pastures is a grazier, in North America, known as a rancher.
GRDC	Grains Research and Development Corporation - Investing in research, development and extension to create enduring profitability for Australian grain growers. https://grdc.com.au/
Grower	In Australia, used mainly for those who grow grain or cotton but can be used interchangeably with grazier, such as wool grower
ICPA	Isolated Children's and Parent's Association: "Working together for equity of access to education for all students who live in rural and remote Australia". https://icpa.com.au/
Lived experience	"The complex world of lived experience from the point of view of those who live it" (Schwandt, 1994, p. 118).
Navigation	Navigation in this thesis is action taken to interact with the dominant discourses. If the dominant discourses are conceived as currents in a river, women navigate with, between and across the currents. If the metaphor is about points of power and resistance within a multi-directional galaxy, women might be imagined navigating a spaceship between and around the points. Navigating discourses, which surround people like a miasma, is complex.
Negotiation	Negotiation in this study can be understood as a tacit or deliberative communication between several parties "either attempting to reach consensus or to represent difference" (Wardell-Johnson 2008, p. 22).

Term	Meaning in this thesis
Resilience	The thesis differentiates between types of resilience actions, such as transformational resilience actions, which attempt to change power relations and adaptive resilience measures. Efforts to change power relations are referred to as empowerment actions. In this thesis, the concept of resilience is understood as a suite of adaption capacities used to safeguard wellbeing within the status quo in situations of risk and adversity and enacted iteratively with empowerment to mitigate adversities.
Rurality	Rurality in this thesis incorporates "issues of family inheritance, the need for closeness and a sense of belonging in a particular community, and values of family unity and gender roles" (Wendt & Hornosty, 2010, p. 60). See Section 3.3.2. Rurality is often associated with the masculinist agrarian values of "control, toughness, hard work, self denial and of pride and pleasure of working in farming as a way of life" (Hay & Pearce, 2014, p. 319)
Wellbeing (Section 3.3)	For this study, wellbeing is defined as context-dependent, and by the values and goals of the individuals and groups in each situation (White, 2013). Individuals and groups strive to attain their goals informed by their values, and how aligned their lives are with those values and goals constitutes their wellbeing (White 2013).

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

The interview conversations were loosely based on these questions. However, these questions were used mainly as a guide for me, to check that issues were covered, while the interviews themselves were largely unstructured. Often in the telling of their story (Question 1), the participants covered most of the other questions.

1) What is your background? How did you come to be on the land? Tell me your story.
2) What do you produce on your property? How big it is? What is the ownership structure?
3) How are decisions made in your farm business?
4) How are you and your family coping with the current drought? What are your strategies, now and into the future?
5) How would you identify yourself? Do you consider yourself to be a rural woman? A regional woman? A woman on the land?
6) What are the roles you play on your farm and in the community?
7) How do you think most of the women in this district or this region identify themselves? What roles do they play (what hats do they wear?)
8) Can you tell me what you think the most prevalent norms, beliefs and values are in this area – for yourself, for other women in the area, and for people in general in this area?
9) What do you love about living on a farm property?
10) What are the challenges of living on a farm property?
11) Which policies, changes or programs would you like governments, rural organisations, women's organisations and others to develop to support women in farming families?
12) What advice would you give to a young woman who is about to or has just married into a farm family, about the values and norms in

general of farm families, and what might be helpful for her as she adjusts to her new life?

13) What is your view on climate change or climate variability, and does it affect your future plans? (I asked this question in about eight of the later interviews as the fieldwork and my learning progressed)

APPENDIX C: DISCUSSION TABLE

<table>
<tr><th>Research questions and gaps</th><th>Discussion</th></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">RQ1: From the perspectives of the participants, what are the dominant discourses of women in farm families?</td></tr>
<tr><td>Noted was a knowledge gap in the literature regarding the personal level of deeply held values in farm families (Gosnell et al., 2019; Rickards & Howden, 2012).</td><td rowspan="5">The three dominant discourses were agrarianism, masculine hegemony, and farming as a business. Of these, the agrarian discourse was the most prominent, arising from the deeply held values of the participants, and shaping their lives.

Complex insights into the impact and influence of the masculine hegemony discourse within farm families

Exploration of the farming as a business discourse and how it competed and overlapped with the other two dominant discourses. Extends brief observations in the literature that the contemporary requirements for the use of computer technology is increasing the influence of women in farms (Section 2.2.2).

From the participants' perspective, commentary on community's role within those dominant discourses as well as its role in their wellbeing, resilience and empowerment processes.

The emergence of a new contemporary agrarian discourse (new agrarianism), combining elements of all three dominant discourses.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Calls for more research into "the culture of rural communities" (Norris et al., 2008). (Section 2.5)</td></tr>
<tr><td>Coldwell suggests that a more inclusive account of "the social relations of agriculture" is needed (2009, p. 192).</td></tr>
<tr><td>Johnsen (2003) calls for "greater attention to the way cultural expectations influence farm practice and the way these constructions might be time and place specific" (p. 133).</td></tr>
<tr><td>Further research needed on "potentially relevant social science concepts about communities that have been overlooked or underappreciated in social–ecological resilience thinking" (Berkes & Ross, 2012, p. 17)</td></tr>
</table>

Research questions and gaps	Discussion
RQ2. How do these discourses work to enable and to constrain their wellbeing, resilience and empowerment?	
Pini's assertion that "The issue of gendered power relations in family farms has not been subject to analysis" (2007, p. 46) (Section 2.5)	
Scholars have called for more research on the "human dynamics" (Conway et al., 2016, p. 174) of farm families.	
RQ3. How do women in farm families navigate and negotiate through and within their discourses to increase or decrease their wellbeing, resilience and empowerment?	
"…it is not clear how women negotiate rural identity and the broader social, cultural and physical environment in which they live, in order to achieve health and wellbeing. Research which draws on the voices of women themselves is needed to explicate this further" (Harvey, 2007, p. 10).	Threats to women's wellbeing goals are met with resilience measures when empowerment actions would result in increased risk for the woman e.g. exclusion from the farm. Empowerment actions were taken when the risk of repercussions is perceived to be low. Resistance was evident in critical comments made in interviews, in withdrawal of trade from patriarchal businesses, in vocalising more modern and progressive attitudes, and in noting the lack of need for male muscles in modern farming (Section 6.2.1). More nuanced understanding of the emotions of farm family dynamics which contributes to understanding issues such as productivity and innovation, impacting on individual
In resilience literature, several scholars note that the constructs of community resilience are "culture-specific" and that resilience studies need to feature "local culture and mores prominently" (Norris et al., 2008, p. 145).	
More research needed on the complexities of processes like resilience "from the participants' perspectives" (Gerrard et al., 2004, p. 60).	

Research questions and gaps	Discussion
Limited systematic investigation in the literature of empowerment processes for people who are dealing with change, shocks and stressors (Berkes & Ross, 2012) (Section 3.4.2)	farm businesses, and in the aggregate, the farm sector. Scholars and practitioners have noted that farm productivity is adversely affected by succession processes (Sections 2.2.2 and 8.3.2.3). This thesis explains the family dynamics behind that lack of productivity. These dynamics include the exclusion of the daughters-in-law from discussions about their futures, the uncertainty of the young couple regarding successor status, and tension and acrimony in the families and amongst siblings if processes are not clear.
RQ4: Given the answers to the preceding questions how could rural women's organisations, industry bodies and governments better support women in farm families to increase their wellbeing, resilience and empowerment for the benefit of themselves, their families, their farming enterprises, and the sector?	
Call from scholars to emphasise "particular, local, regional knowledge" (Foucault, 1980, p. 82) (See Section 1.2) and the "need to make local knowledges and logics visible" to institutions (Eversole, 2018, p. 338)	Informed by the findings of this research, which also offers avenues and opportunities suggested by the participants, government, agricultural sector groups and the other relevant sectors could work together more effectively to offer support to women in the sector.
Theoretical, conceptual and methodological contributions	
A theoretical innovation of this study was the combination of post-structuralism with theories of acculturation, and resilience theories. More specifically, this thesis took the approach of aligning a post-structural approach with more traditional theories that have their genesis in constructivist and realist ontologies. One of the connections was the idea that processes such as acculturation and identity formation depend in part on how people are perceived, treated and "interpellated" repetitively by the people and societies around them, and by the discourses that permeate the social world that they inhabit (Sections 1.2, 3.2, 6.3.2).	

APPENDIX D: PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Project Details

Title of Project:

The Shooter's Woman: The ways collective identity and culture impact on resilience for women on the land

Human Research Ethics Approval Number: H17REA262

Research Team Contact Details

Principal Investigator Details
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Mobile: 0427 026855

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Professor Jim Cavaye
Email: Jim.Cavaye@usq.edu.au
Ph: 4631 2479
Mobile: 0428 387 722

Description

Title of Project: The ways cultural narratives or discourses of women on the land in South West Queensland and the border regions work to constrain and enable their resilience in the face of climate change.

This project is being undertaken as part of a PhD Project. The purpose of this project is to explore the resilience of women on the land, and how rural culture impacts on that resilience, and how women are coping with extreme climate events.

The research team requests your assistance because it is important to talk with women who are currently on the land to find out what you think about these issues.

Participation

Your participation will involve participation in an interview that will take approximately one hour to an hour and a half of your time.

The interview will take place at a time and venue that is convenient to you.

I am looking for women to converse with me in semi-structured interviews, and together, hopefully, we can unravel and explore the cultural narratives of women on the land, and how they might impact on your resilience, and that of your families and communities, specifically in relation to coping with climate variability and extreme climate events.

The questions are likely to be something along these lines:

1) How did you come to be on the land?
2) How would you identify yourself? Do you consider yourself to be a rural woman? A regional woman? A woman on the land?
3) How do you think most of the women in this district or this region identify themselves?
4) What do you think are the characteristics (and capacities) of this identity?
5) If we think of resilience as the ability to draw on capacities to cope and adapt to major difficulties and/ or with surprising change, do you have any examples or stories of yourself, your family or your community's handling of such difficult circumstances?
6) How are you and your family coping with the current drought? What are your strategies, now and into the future?

The interview will be audio recorded.

Purpose of Research:

Although rural women are often acknowledged for their crucial role in supporting rural families and communities, there is a lack of research into resilience for rural women, rural identity and culture, gender and power considerations, and what the relationship is between the collective identity and cultural narratives of rural women and how you develop and maintain resilience for yourselves, your families and your communities, especially in the face of prolonged drought and other extreme climate events.

This project will create a far richer picture of the complexities of the cultural, economic and family situations of rural women in family agri-businesses than has been previously presented. New knowledge will emerge regarding the influence of cultural and collective identity factors on resilience, including unspoken expectations, emotions, norms and beliefs. The project will contribute to theory, methodology, policy and practice, in supporting rural women and your families, now and in the future, especially when dealing with drought and other climate issues.

Outputs:

The main output for this study is the PhD dissertation, which will include data analysis, as well as short narratives or vignettes, from the interviews, and from my own experiences (auto-ethnography).

The de-identified transcripts will be analysed for themes. The themes will be described in the dissertation. These conversations may also yield comments, stories and ways of looking at things that may be incorporated into the vignettes, again de-identified.

Your participation in this project is entirely voluntary. If you do not wish to take part, you are not obliged to. You may also request that any data collected about you be destroyed. If you do wish to withdraw from this project or withdraw data collected about you, please contact myself or one of my supervisors, Prof Jim Cavaye (074631 2479), Dr Nike Sulway (074631 1076) or Assoc Prof Lara Lamb (074631 1069).

Your decision whether you take part, do not take part, or to take part and then withdraw, will in no way impact your current or future relationship with the University of Southern Queensland.

Expected Benefits

It is expected that this project will not directly benefit you. However, it may benefit women on the land generally by raising awareness of issues that impact adversely or positively on women's resilience.

Risks

This is a low risk project. However, there are minimal risks associated with your participation in this project. Sometimes thinking about the sorts of issues raised in the interview can create some uncomfortable or distressing feelings. If you need to talk to someone about this right away, please contact Lifeline on 13 11 14. You may also wish to consider consulting your General Practitioner (GP) for additional support. I will bring a list of service providers with me as well.

Privacy and Confidentiality

All comments and responses will be treated confidentially unless required by law. The identity of participants will not be disclosed to each other, or to anyone else.

The transcript or a summary of your interview will be sent back to you, so that you can add or delete as you wish. You will have two weeks to review your transcript and make changes, and I will make contact with you within those two weeks to see if you have any questions. If I don't hear from you, and cannot connect with you, I will assume that you do not wish to have any changes made, and that the transcript is able to be used for my research.

Any data collected as a part of this project will be stored securely as per University of Southern Queensland's Research Data Management policy. This de-identified data will be able to be used by me for further research beyond my phd. Other researchers, if interested, may apply to me to use it in the future. If I approve their request, they will be required to go through a separate ethics process at USQ.

Consent to Participate

We would like to ask you to sign a written consent form (enclosed) to confirm your agreement to participate in this project. Please return your signed consent form to a member of the Research Team prior to participating in your interview.

Questions or Further Information about the Project

Please refer to the Research Team Contact Details at the top of the form to have any questions answered or to request further information about this project.

Concerns or Complaints Regarding the Conduct of the Project

If you have any concerns or complaints about the ethical conduct of the project you may contact the University of Southern Queensland Ethics Coordinator on (07) 4631 2690 or email ethics@usq.edu.au. The Ethics Coordinator is not connected with the research project and can facilitate a resolution to your concern in an unbiased manner.

Thank you for taking the time to help with this research project. Please keep this sheet for your information.

APPENDIX E: CONSENT FORM

Consent Form for USQ Research Project Interview

Project Details

Title of Project:

The Shooter's Woman: The ways collective identity and culture impact on resilience for women on the land

Human Research Ethics Approval Number: H17REA262

Research Team Contact Details

Principal Investigator Details
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Professor Jim Cavaye
Email: Jim.Cavaye@usq.edu.au
Ph: 4631 2479
Mobile: 0428 387 722

Statement of Consent

By signing below, you are indicating that you:

- Have read and understood the information document regarding this project.
- Have had any questions answered to your satisfaction.
- Understand that if I have any additional questions I can contact the research team.
- Understand that the interview will be audio recorded and then transcribed. The interview will remain confidential at all stages.
- Understand that I will be provided with a summary of the transcript of the interview for my perusal and endorsement prior to inclusion of this data in the project.
- Understand that I am free to withdraw from the interview at any time, without comment or penalty, and also I may withdraw after viewing the transcript of my interview.
- Understand that the material will be de-identified and will be stored securely as per University of Southern Queensland's Research Data Management policy.
- Understand that I can contact the University of Southern Queensland Ethics Coordinator on (07) 4631 2690 or email ethics@usq.edu.au if I have any concerns or complaints about the ethical conduct of this project.
- Are over 18 years of age.

- Agree to participate in the project.

Participant Name	
Participant Signature	
Date	

Please return this sheet to a Research Team member prior to undertaking the interview.