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**IDENTITY AND THE FUTURE : THE EXPERIENCE OF
RETIRED FAMILY FARMERS IN THE MANAWATU**

**A dissertation presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of
Masters of Arts in Social Anthropology
at Massey University**

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ABSTRACT

Family farming has, in recent decades, become a growing area of enquiry for social scientists. Post 1980 globally, and in New Zealand, research focused on a perceived rural crisis, which was characterised by the withdrawal of state subsidies and the exposure of the family farmer to the free market. Many began to question whether the family farm would survive. The future of the family farm is a contentious topic, with theories of its impending demise or survival at the forefront of debate. However, in recent literature there is a recognition that a focus on solely structural change is not enough. This study is a response to the recognition that an understanding of the subjective aspects of family farming is required. Taking a small cohort of retired Manawatu farmers this study provides an insight into the subjective dimensions of family farming and the social construction of 'farmer identity'. The participant's accounts are contextualised by a consideration of both regional and national historical processes that have shaped and continue to shape, family farming practice and farmer identity.

The study suggests that accounts which conceptualise 'family' farming as either oppositional or outside of a capitalist system of production are inappropriate in the New Zealand context; ignore the intimate relation between family farming and the capitalist system; which represents a tendency to rely on common sense assumptions about the nature of the family and family farming with no empirical justification. These accounts are typically ahistorical. This study reveals that in taking into account the historical underpinnings of the family farm in the Manawatu and New Zealand more generally, and by focusing on the subjective aspects of what it means to be a farmer engaged in family farming, it is possible to understand the relation between capitalism and family farming.

KEYWORDS: CAPITALISM; CORPORATE; EXPERIENCE; FAMILY; FARMING; FUTURE; IDEOLOGY; IDENTITY; RETIREMENT; SUBJECTIVITY; SUCCESSION.

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CONTENTS

PREFACE	1
INTRODUCTION	3
New Zealand Research	3
The Focus of this Research	6
The Structure of this Thesis	7
CHAPTER ONE: LITERATURE REVIEW	8
Agricultural Economics - New Zealand Literature	9
The New Sociology of Agriculture	13
Foundations of the Contemporary Literature	15
- <i>Structural Accounts</i>	16
- <i>The Incorporation of Agency into Political Economy Perspectives</i>	22
- <i>Farming and the Environment</i>	31
Social Anthropology and The Study of Family Farming	34
- <i>The Ethnographic Method</i>	35
Conclusions	40
CHAPTER TWO: METHODS AND PARTICIPANTS	42
Methodology.....	42
Introducing the Participants	45
Redefining the Farmer.....	51
CHAPTER THREE: THE PAST: THE HISTORY OF NEW ZEALAND FARMING	52
Introduction	52
The Diversity of Settlement	52
The Process of Early European Settlement in New Zealand	53
Conceptions of Land of the Early Settler.....	60
The Development of European Economic and Political Society	62
The History of the Manawatu.....	69
Conclusions	76

CHAPTER FOUR: THE PRESENT: CONTEMPORARY ACCOUNTS OF WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A FARMER IN A FAMILY FARM	78
Retirement Experience	79
Gendered Experience of Retirement	83
Farm Succession	86
Farming and Identity	
- <i>The Masculinity of Farming</i>	92
- <i>Farming as Activity</i>	96
- <i>Farming as Passion - the love of it</i>	98
The Farmer and the Land	100
The Importance of Ownership	101
The Situation of South Island High Country People	105
Conclusions	108
CHAPTER FIVE: THE FUTURE: THE FUTURE OF FAMILY FARMING IN THE MANAWATU	111
The 'Family' in the Family Farm	112
The Future of Family Farming in the Manawatu - <i>The Emic Perspective</i>	117
The Changing Ideology of the Family Farmer	123
- <i>Farming as Activity</i>	123
- <i>The Continuing Masculinity of Farming</i>	124
- <i>Farming as Passion</i>	126
Reply to the Literature on the Future of Family Farming	127
- <i>Reply to Rural Sociology</i>	127
- <i>Reply to Agricultural Economics</i>	129
Conclusions	130
CONCLUSIONS	131
Suggestions for further research	134
BIBLIOGRAPHY	135
APPENDIX 1	145
APPENDIX 2	147
AFTERWORD	149

PREFACE

The reason for my interest in family farming and farmers is perhaps indistinguishable from a lifetime of experiences, but the recent focus and formulation of a thesis topic does derive from specific sources. Born and raised in an urban setting, there was never much cause for me to turn my attention to any aspect of farming. Until I worked for two years as a home aid, for a few hours a week for an elderly couple. The couple, Doug and Laura Williams, had retired to town from a farm in the Rangitikei district. When I first met them Laura was ill, she slowly recovered but never regained her former strength. I would arrive at about 1pm, just as they were finishing lunch (which typically in winter and soup followed by scrambled eggs on toast). The table was crammed with their plates, dishes of scones, jars of jam, salt and pepper, and always a pot of tea and cups and saucers, milk, cream; a huge spread with everything which might be needed, so as to avoid getting up from the table once lunch had commenced. I'd sometimes sit and chat with them as they finished their lunch, then Doug would get up, put his toweling hat on his head and shuffle outside to garden, potter, build or paint something.

Sometimes when I'd visit, Laura would be at bridge and I'd chat with Doug, he'd ask me about university, ask if I'd read so and so, or learnt about this or that yet. Once he commented on the amount of Samoan and Maori people at his granddaughter's graduation from nursing and asked if we "get much of that at Massey?" Doug and I were often on different ideological planes, however, he inspired me not to dismiss his views but to understand them. He was a deeply religious man and was also a politically active person as a member of the National party. He was civic minded and belonged to local clubs, and also was an avid bowls player. Even after he was diagnosed with terminal cancer, he'd put on his cap after lunch and potter around in the garden and then come in for his afternoon rest. He did this until he could physically no longer get about. With his hat, his ute, and his flannel shirt and gumboots, he was in many respects the stereotypical 'farmer', but Laura, on the other hand, had more in common with other retired women I had worked for. However, the conversations I had with the Williams taught me a lot (for in the beginning I knew very little) about rural New Zealand. They

challenged me to investigate further what it means to be a farmer in New Zealand, what is important to them? What is their view of the world? And to contextualise this information within the broader economic and political changes affecting farming.

This text is dedicated to the memory of Doug Williams who past away in 1994 aged 80. Because, knowing the respect and value he had in the printed word, I just know this dedication and the thought that he had influenced me so much would have made his day.

INTRODUCTION

NEW ZEALAND RESEARCH

Ethnographic research on the relationship of farmers to their land has been carried out in New Zealand. Very early on in my research a paper by American anthropologist, Michele Dominy (1990a & b, 1993) who studied high country farmers in the South Island aroused my interest in land. Dominy's work has become doubly relevant to me because beyond writing about the New Zealand farmer's relationship to the land, she had a somewhat controversial involvement in Waitangi Tribunal proceedings. She testified before the tribunal in 1988 suggesting a subjective relationship to land exists for some Pakeha New Zealanders (Dominy:1990b). Dominy's submission, however, caused concern for some members of the New Zealand Association of Social Anthropologists because in speaking on behalf of the high country farmers in the South Island, Dominy's statement was seen as opposing the claim of the indigenous Ngai Tahu who had a land claim under consideration. This is an interesting issue for anthropologists. On the one hand ethical codes suggest people of indigenous status must be represented in a way which is sensitive to their continued way of life, and it seems ahistorical and politically unethical to support the political status quo, if, in aligning oneself with the current landholders and thus power holders (where occupation has been established by colonialist annexation), this undermines the efforts of indigenous peoples to assert their land rights. However this, it appears, is not quite what Dominy saw herself doing. The flip side it seems, is that Dominy was simply putting

forward what was the reality for the people she spoke on behalf of (as any anthropologist should). Dominy asserts that...

“It is important to recognize that my ethnographic statement before the Waitangi Tribunal did not make the claim for the greater authenticity of high country people’s connectedness to the land. It merely stated that relationship to land exists in a context where many New Zealanders miss or deny this connection. My submission to the Tribunal was intended to argue for the recognition of cultural content, and for cultural difference as nuanced rather than sharply oppositional (ibid:23).

Because this thesis implicitly examines farmers’ relationship to land and issues of ownership, it is inextricably connected to wider issues of cultural authority, contested ownership and politics. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to unravel this “Field of contested meanings” (ibid) but Dominy’s research illustrates that all representations are political.

This study focuses on the social construction of ‘farmer’ and family farming. Furthermore it considers what it means to be a farmer and to be a family farmer, for retired farmers in the Manawatu. The participant’s accounts are contextualised both historically and with respect to broader societal and global concerns. This study is confined to a distinctive geographic area; the Manawatu, to illustrate the historical uniqueness of differing geographic locations in New Zealand, and the significance of colonial history to all farming in New Zealand.

Dominy (1993) argues that high country farmers in New Zealand attach cultural meaning to their land as a way to assert their identity and authenticity as ‘indigenous pakeha’ New Zealanders and to “resist inclusion in a static genericised imperialist discourse” (Dominy,1993:570). Dominy suggests this traditionalist rhetoric is occurring in a context where the rights of these farmers to the land are being challenged and where both rural and urban New Zealanders are constructing notions of nationhood, identity and belonging. This study addresses the absence of research which considers the relation between land and identity for farmers in New Zealand.¹

¹ However my research diverges from Dominy’s lead in that identity as farmers emerges from my results as a more important theme to my participants than notions of national identity. This perhaps reflects the

However, there is a small body of research which considers subjectivity and farming in New Zealand. Hatch (1992) investigated social standing in the rural South Island, and while a lot of his work deals with the distinction between working people and landholders, one important finding was that status is based more on a farmer's ability than it is on land size or wealth. This is an important piece of research because it suggests farming is not a purely utilitarian pursuit and challenges notions which suggest that "farmers are business men who use their management skills and a variety of technologies to combine the resources of land, labour and capital in order to produce an output" (New Zealand Planning Council, 1982:16). Hatch's work suggests a unique system of hierarchy amongst rural people, indeed a unique cultural system of meaning. Because Hatch's research focuses on a rural area in the South Island and offers no comparative data, it is difficult to generalize further. However, this research does raise a number of questions which will be considered in this study. For example: in the North Island, with its very different farming history, do farmers also have a unique cultural system of meaning? And what is the relation between farming and capitalism in New Zealand?²

Work into subjective aspects of retirement from farming has also been conducted in New Zealand. (Keating and Little (1990) & Keating and McCrostie-Little (1994). These studies have investigated the transfer of family farms from generation to generation and the perceptions of all those involved in the process from retiring individuals to their successors. Although these studies attempt to account for such things as personal commitment, or stake, in farming and family relationships, they do not consider how these subjectivities are placed within the broader cultural construction of farming and the identity of the farmer. This study will attempt to situate retirement and farm succession within the ideological construction of what it means to be a 'farmer'.

participants' retired status, as opposed to the still active farmers in the process of legitimising their land claims.

² With the changing structure of agriculture this question becomes central to the argument in my discussion.

THE FOCUS OF THIS RESEARCH

This study is an examination of the cultural construction of family farming and identity in the Manawatu. It considers the subjectivity of farming as a social practice. Furthermore, the study considers what it means to be a 'farmer' and what is important for the identity of 'farmer'. This aspect of farming has often been neglected in literature about the future of family farming, hence the focus of this study will contribute to current discussions by presenting an ethnographic account of the subjectivity of farming.

All the participants in this research had spent their working lives, if not their entire lives, on the farm, but had since retired and moved into town. I have decided to confine my sample to this cohort who have left farming because retirement presents a particular stage in the lifecycle where reflection and a search for the meaning of one's life is often central. That what is important to families varies over the lifecycle is illustrated in Tipples (1987) who draws on a study done by Harris in 1980. This study of farm workers found that as their age increased their main goal in life altered, from 85 percent of those aged 19 or less wanting to own their own farm, to 54 percent of those over 40 having their main goal as wanting to own their own home and to educate their children. Therefore, one controlled variable of the sample population is that they have all retired and moved off the land and into town. This excludes younger cohorts of farmers and those retired farmers who have not left the land (although who may have ceased work on the land, and/or relinquished control) but have not had the same defamiliarising transition in retirement of physically leaving the land.

My approach has been to encourage the people I have talked to to take me with them on a journey through their memories or beliefs about their origins, into their lives on the land, and inevitably into the world of the 'farmer', one who has left the land and must explain the identity of a farmer dispossessed. My reasoning is that by being no longer in a physical, material day to day interaction with the land they will have to look beyond "It's my daily bread - my living, and I'm a farmer because I farm"! Asking instead; "Am I still a farmer even without my farm? What makes it so? What is important to my identity"?

THE STRUCTURE OF THIS STUDY

This thesis explores the subjective perspective of farmers and attempts to describe the ideology of farming in the Manawatu. This discussion is contextualised within an historical account of farming in New Zealand, and also within current interdisciplinary debates about the 'family farm'.

Chapter One reviews literature about family farming. Firstly it considers literature from agricultural economists in New Zealand who discuss the future of family farming. Secondly it reviews international literature from the 'new rural sociology of agriculture', and considers the debate about the future of family farming in advanced Western states. Changing trends within the political economy school, from structural accounts to the incorporation of agency, and the call for more field work based accounts, are also considered. Finally, this chapter considers research which investigates the relationship between the farmer and the environment, and research on family farming by social anthropologists using more ethnographic methods.

Chapter Two introduces the reader to the participants in this study and explains the methodology employed in the research.

Chapter Three provides an overview of the development of farming in New Zealand and looks, in particular, at the creation of family farms in the Manawatu. As it is argued, family farming cannot be considered globally without first being understood as a historically and culturally specific phenomenon.

Chapter Four continues this argument by representing the subjective perspective of retired farmers from the Manawatu and discussing the cultural and ideological construction of farming. Several facets of what it means to be a farmer are identified and discussed.

Chapter Five continues the historical chronology of the thesis and outlines how this study in the Manawatu contributes to our understanding of the family farm and in particular the current concern over its future.

Finally, I conclude what this dissertation can contribute to research on the family farm, and suggestions for future research are also given.

CHAPTER ONE

LITERATURE REVIEW

The majority of literature which investigates 'the future of farming' often falls into two (usually) distinct modes of thought each with its own set of presumptions, lines of argument, and modes of inquiry. The first is that predominantly produced within the discipline of agricultural economics. Noting that there is a vast body of literature which can be broadly labelled agricultural economics, this review will focus on the New Zealand literature, with particular attention being paid to the body of work produced after 1984. 1984 was a significant time of change for New Zealand agriculture. It marks the entry of the fourth Labour Government and with it, sweeping changes in economic policy which saw New Zealand's tightly regulated and heavily subsidised agricultural industry opened up, 'de-regulated', launched into a free market, and exposed fully to the global agro-food chain. The New Zealand literature since 1984, by agricultural economists, reflects this change and articulates the concerns observers had about the future of farming in the face of agricultural restructuring.³

The second body of work (which has been referred to as 'the new sociology of agriculture' (Buttel,1990) includes research conducted mostly in Europe and the United States which attempts to explain the crisis in agriculture over the last few decades (particularly in the United States) as traditional rural sociology was unable to. 'The new sociology of agriculture' draws on classical sociological theory and predominantly takes a political economy approach.

³ Many New Zealand Agricultural economists take a macro perspective questioning the effects of global restructuring on New Zealand. Unfortunately it is beyond the scope of this thesis to review this vast body of literature.

AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS - NEW ZEALAND LITERATURE

“Farmers are businessmen who use their management skills and a variety of technologies to combine the resources of land, labour and capital in order to produce an output” (NZ Planning Council. et al 1982:16)

A substantial body of literature on the future of farming focuses on the economic or business/occupational side of agriculture - farming as industry, export earner and profession. Much of this literature comes from agricultural economists and as the literature is voluminous, I will concentrate on the New Zealand literature written post 1984, and in particular a body of work which forecasts the future for farming in New Zealand.

The most relevant text is *Rural New Zealand What Next* (1987) by L.T Wallace and Ralph Lattimore. In this volume various authors postulate about what may be in store for farming, and in fact what may be the best option to take for agriculture. For example, Pryde suggests that the belief in farming as a way of life and the opposition to separating ownership and management within a farm business has been a major ‘obstacle’ to the more advantageous practice of equity capital financing in farming (Pryde,1987:6-11). Pryde goes on to suggest some indicators for the future. Amongst them he suggests closer links with agribusiness, more emphasis on financial management, and more diverse forms of ownership and management than exist within traditional ‘family’ farm organisation (ibid:6-12).

Similar predictions suggest “The one man farm is slowly being replaced by multiple-owned and corporate firms with better access to required capital and new technology” (Frengley,1987:11-2). Frengley suggests there are many advantages in the move away from the owner-operator farm. For example, more capital is available and financial risk can be spread, processing and marketing can be better done by a company and specialised advice from consultants will be relied on more. He predicts improved farm profits will come about with changes in ownership structures, integration with industry, and new styles of business management (Frengley, 1987:11-15).

It is suggested that, in the future, once the scale of operation is large enough, the successful farmer will spend more time managing and less time actually labouring

on the farm. Farm work will be hired out (Wallace,1987:12-5). Wallace goes on to suggest much of the production will be done on fewer farms. Smaller farms will continue to exist for lifestyle reasons, but there will be less and less medium sized farms as they will slowly over time become one or the other of the two groups (ibid:12-7). Wallace acknowledges that land ownership is still the aim of most farmers but alludes to the economic difficulty involved. He suggests that corporatisation and leasing are economically *sound* options for farmers. Finally, Wallace concludes that the successful farmer will become more and more like the successful urban business person because s/he will be deriving capital and selling to the same kinds of people, and making similar business decisions (ibid:12-11).

Juchau and Newman (1987) in the same volume also do, what they call, 'crystal-ball gazing'. They suggest some future trends for the farming sector may include:

Larger farming units with some vertical integration, increased absentee ownership of on-farm resources, increased productivity per labour unit, increasing substitution of capital for labour [and] increasing on-farm diversification, decreasing input/output ratio (ibid:13-20).

Taking into consideration historical changes in the organisation and management of farming, Fairweather (1987) suggests that if the sequence continues, then farmers will tend to become financial managers. They may no longer have the imprecision over measuring labour that traditional family farmers do. Labour may be contracted out, as it is in non-farming businesses, and producers will be increasingly integrated into agribusiness (ibid:4-12). Fairweather (1987) also comments on some of the demographic changes occurring. He states that in the period between 1972 to 1984, there was only small growth in the amount of land used for pastoral agriculture but a lot of growth in forestry, with some in horticulture. This is important because, as he notes later, industries such as horticulture [and most certainly forestry] are organised around wage labour production where as family farms typically are not. Fairweather's prediction for the future is that the traditional family farm will not continue to dominate New Zealand's pastoral organisation, instead the organisation of farms will be more often characterised by the separation of ownership and labour. "In general, these new

forms of social organisation will take on the characteristics of capitalist production”(ibid:4-13). Some family farms will continue, there will be more part-time or hobby farms, and the rest will be intensive, capitalistic ventures.

Following the theme of concerns expressed above, Johnson (1989) looks at ways agriculture in New Zealand could be financed. He comments that although the goal of land ownership is still desired, the problem with this is that in times of economic downturn the risk and threat of losing the farm can be great for an individual. The solution Johnson suggests is spreading the risk through equity sharing such as leaseholds, share farming, partnerships and equity trusts. However, he comments:

Apparently the power of the freehold is so strong among the New Zealand citizenry, that more efficient and less stressful funding mechanisms are sacrificed on the alter of capital accumulation (ibid:ix)

In areas such as the dairying parts of the North Island (for example the Manawatu), sharefarming and partnerships are quite common. As Johnson notes however, this “seems to be more related to the work-sharing attributes of such agreements than that of risk sharing” (ibid:75). He also notes that sharemilking is seen as a stepping-stone to farm ownership rather than an end in itself. Johnson also discusses organisations which offer financing options for farmers, such as Land Corp which introduced an equity sharing scheme, and The New Zealand Property Trust which is a merchant bank that plays a role in equity sharing of farms. The bank sees its primary function as separating land ownership from farming (ibid:77). This theme of debt caution continues further with Frengley (1993) warning farmers to heed the lessons of history and be cautious about getting into debt because they may not be able to carry it in the days that lie ahead.

Fairweather (1992) considers more fully the ‘future of family farms’. He reviews the major theoretical positions within ‘the new sociology of agriculture’ and after discussing empirical demographic data draws conclusions about the future of family farming in New Zealand. He suggests that since 1984 there has been a small decline in company ownership, a small increase in private ownership, and a steady increase in the number of partnerships. However, he notes this period commenced as wives became legally allowed to enter partnerships. Therefore, these changes do not indicate a move

from family farming to corporate farming, rather they reflect changes in family member participation in the farm (Fairweather,1992:40). Fairweather also finds that some types of farming are more likely to be corporately organised than others - forestry and horticulture being examples. He acknowledges too the subjectivity involved when farmers make decisions, for example; the continuing goal of farmers to have freehold ownership of their land. He writes...

Some agricultural commentators and advisers point to the benefits of separating production from land ownership via renting, leasing or joint venture arrangements. They see land ownership as a burden on efficient business-orientated agricultural production. In New Zealand at the present time there is talk of the benefits of introducing outside capital into farming, especially in the area of forestry for example. However, there is limited scope for these alternative arrangements because as Saunders et al (1991) show, farmers do not operate their business with the sole objective of improving risk and return, but they seek to preserve freehold ownership of land (ibid:49).

He concludes that while there are fewer farms, with mid-sized farms in most decline and large and small holdings increasing, there is no evidence to suggest that corporate farming is supplanting family farming. In fact, he suggests economic changes in New Zealand since 1984 which have increased exposure to market forces, have strengthened family labour relations rather than encouraged the separation of ownership from wage labour. It seems that while some family farms have perished under economic pressure (as described by Christie,1986) others are, as Fairweather suggests, adapting and surviving, often becoming bigger family farms. Within the political economy perspective of rural sociology, Fairweather aligns himself with the synthetic position - a position which acknowledges the impact of capital in agriculture but emphasises the ability of farmers to adapt and respond to new pressures.

The literature which considers farming primarily as a business, tends to overlook the subjective aspects of farming.

The predominant concern of agricultural economics with prices and markets means that current economic models systematically ignore what are considered 'subjective' judgements about rural life and the environment" (Lawrence,1990:112).

While there is much value in looking at statistics and economic patterns, predictions and policy suggestions are somewhat inappropriate if no consideration is given to the

practical, grass roots level of implementation. In the same vein, Marsden et al (1992) support an earlier critique by Friedmann (1980) that agrarian political economists do little more than allude to issues of domination and struggle and the division of labour on farms. Rogers (1987) suggests:

Because the study of American [and New Zealand] agriculture has been dominated by economics, agricultural problems and dynamics are largely perceived and understood, by scholars, farmers, and policy makers alike, in terms strongly colored by the parameters inherent in economic analysis. Therefore the ethnographer can hardly afford to ignore or dismiss the body of knowledge developed by economists or to be unaware of its strengths and weaknesses. At the same time, by offering a specifically anthropological view of agricultural issues, the ethnographer can introduce quite a different slice of reality, potentially correcting, complementing or rendering more precise conventional wisdom in their domain (Rogers, 1987:87).

Fairweather (1992) is one economist who acknowledges the need to look further than the economics paradigm for an understanding of the future of family farming (hence his discussion of rural sociology literature). He also has an appreciation of the subjective aspect of being a farmer and the limited scope for some of the alternatives suggested by economists.

THE NEW SOCIOLOGY OF AGRICULTURE

Rural sociology has been dominated over the last decade or so by a huge volume of literature about the 'future of family farming'. This body of literature has come to be known as The New Sociology of Agriculture, most of which has been written within a Marxist political economy perspective. In attempting to explain the nature of agricultural production in advanced Western economies three fundamental positions have evolved. The first can be termed 'subsumption' theories. The main thesis underpinning these theories is that agricultural production *is*, or *will be*, subsumed by capital. In other words, capital will penetrate non-capitalist forms of production and secure control over production. Debate surrounds the means through which this occurs. For instance, real subsumption implies capital will take hold of the means of production, for example ownership of the farm. When this occurs capitalist

relations of production, such as wage labour, are necessary. Formal subsumption on the other hand implies a less direct method of capitalist control, never-the-less capital secures control of agriculture through input and output industry which can apply various pressures to manipulate production.

The second position is that of the 'survivalist' theorists. The basic tenet here is that non-capitalist forms of production are continuing to survive in the face of advanced capitalism. While few are optimistic enough to guarantee subsumption will never occur, most theorists holding this position, try to explain why and how many areas of agricultural production have *resisted* capital.

The final position is a synthesis of the subsumption and survivalist theories. The 'synthesis' position does not deny subsumption occurs, rather, it is seen as occurring but not all pervasively; sometimes agricultural production is subsumed, sometimes it survives.

Vandergeest (1988) provides a comprehensive review of literature which addresses the development of market relations in non-market areas of production. Much of this literature, from as early as the 1960s, is directed at the 'development' of the Third World (and is thus not applicable here). However, as much of the 'new sociology of agriculture' emerged from this earlier focus, Vandergeest's review contextualises this literature and leads to a very important critique of theory on the development of capital in agriculture in advanced capitalist economies.

The 'commercialisation of agriculture' school of the 1960s, was led by economists, and was based on modernisation theory, neoclassical economics, Weberian and Durkheimian sociology and Parson's hierarchical theory of social evolution. This school considered 'modernisation' to be inherently positive, and saw peasants as 'traditional' in the sense of being behind 'modern' society in their social evolution. The economist theorist held that peasants were rational beings and that given the knowledge and opportunity, they would give up their inefficient traditional ways for more efficient, profit-accumulating, modern practices. The sociologists and anthropologists of this school, while supporting the basic tenets of the paradigm, saw *cultural practices* as the barriers to the adoption of modern practices. The second school, the 'commoditisation of production' arose as a critique to the first and was based on Marxist theory. Following the earlier dependency theory, this body of literature denied there was

anything inherently good about modernisation and, in fact, argued that the low productivity that commercialisation theorists blamed on 'traditional' practices, was the result of penetration by capitalist market relations. Thus began the literature on the penetration of capital into non-capitalist modes of production.

FOUNDATIONS TO THE CONTEMPORARY LITERATURE

Marx distinguished between capitalist production and family production on the basis of how labour was organised. In capitalist production of any sort, all factors of production are commoditized, including labour power. Therefore labour as a commodity is sold by one class, who do not own their own means of production, and is purchased by another class who are owners. In this process, profit is accumulated by the owning class through surplus value, that is the difference between what value the labour is given on the market (ie. what the labourer gets for it), and the value labour adds to the product (Mann,1990:7). Capitalist production then, is necessarily characterised by two antagonistic classes, and the logic of profit accumulation. Family production on the other hand is organised differently. The owner of the means of production also supplies the labour or, to put it another way; the family who own the farm are the farmers. There is no economic class differentiation in this mode of production (although wage labour is sometimes hired, this is not usually considered an intrinsic feature) hence, no profit needs to be accumulated via surplus value, and therefore, family production is not founded on exploitation⁴. Marx called this mode of production Simple Commodity Production (SCP), although it is sometimes referred to as Petty Commodity Production (PCP). SCP does imply other characteristics, for example it is distinguished from 'household' production because it is specialised, competitive and subsistence must be purchased in the market (Friedmann, 1978:548). Simple Commodity Producers have also been distinguished from 'peasants' (although not by Marx) because the term peasant is "derived through empirical generalisation..[and]... does not allow for deductive propositions about reproduction or class relations" (Friedmann, 1980:163).

⁴ Although some Marxists have argued that a form of self-exploitation occurs. See Goss et al (1980), cited in Salamon & Davis-Brown (1986).

SCP on the other hand is a term specific to a political economy approach and implies the necessary integration of the phenomena into a broader capitalist economy (ibid:167).

Marx had an evolutionary approach to SCP, he argued that this mode of production was transitory, that it was 'pre-capitalist' and would eventually disappear as capitalism gained economic momentum (Mann,1990:10). Hence, family organised farm production in advanced economies was theorised as a relic of a traditional past.

Rural sociology tended, on the whole, to overlook the fact that the family farm was continuing to persist. It was not until the mid-1970s, and the critique of modernisation theories and development orthodoxies by dependency and world systems theorists such as Frank and Wallerstein, that a change in rural sociology occurred (Buttel et, al, 1990). This was because it was a Marxist conceived anomaly and Marxism had little emphasis in rural sociology in the first half of this century.

The more recent rural sociology literature, that of the 'new rural sociology of agriculture' is reviewed below. This review is divided into theoretical categories which illustrate shifts in theoretical thought that have occurred. Such shifts are not exclusive to rural sociology, but are characteristic of broader trends which have occurred in the social sciences generally. I begin in the late 1970s with structural accounts.

STRUCTURAL ACCOUNTS

In 1978 Mann and Dickinson published *Obstacles to the Development of a Capitalist Agriculture*. In this article they articulated an anomaly for Marxist rural sociologists - they asked why non-capitalist forms of production continued to exist in advanced capitalist societies. They rejected non-Marxist theories about the family farm. Firstly the 'subjective' explanations which suggest that it is the internal organisation of family farming, or their social relations of production, which allows for their contemporary existence within capitalism, and secondly, the explanations which point to advantageousness in technical innovation. They theorised that the secret of the 'anomaly' of family farm existence is to be found in the logic of capitalism itself (Mann & Dickinson, 1978:478).

What came to be known as the 'Mann & Dickinson thesis' postulated that the reason capitalism had not fully subsumed all agricultural production was because in

many areas of agriculture, production cannot be sped up. Certain aspects of nature (for example the process which takes a seed to being an ear of corn) simply take a certain amount of time - turnover cannot be quickened. It seems that the logic of capitalist production finds this lack of control unattractive because Mann & Dickinson go on to suggest that:

When the conditions of production are sufficiently altered by advances in science, technology etc. so as to overcome these barriers, there is no reason to believe that capitalism will not thrive in and conquer them as it has done in industry proper. (ibid)

Mann & Dickinson's thesis stimulated a lot of debate, but perhaps the most damning critique was launched by Mooney (1983). Mooney suggested that capitalism was not the only mode of production which endeavoured to increase turnover in production, that is, create a greater unity between production time (the entire length of time production takes) and labour time (time when labour is being applied). He argued that the variation in production in agriculture:

...contributes to the refutation of naturalistic explanations. Different historical experiences and state policies create divergent conditions which allow the same commodity to be produced under extremely different forms of production (Mooney, 1983:289).

Mooney argues that Mann & Dickinson's view of capitalist production, as the presence or absence of wage labour, was too static and reductionist. He argues that, in fact, many of the criteria they avoided, because they did not consider them social relations, *are* manifestations of social relations. And further that these criteria such as debt, contract production, off-farm employment and tenancy are "exploitative in nature and potentially antagonistic in the extraction of surplus value and the subversion of the autonomy of the independent farmer" (ibid).

Mooney's argument here seems to be one of formal subsumption, he talks about some of the 'detours' that capitalism may take around the 'obstacles'. Thus, as he suggests, "This alternative approach to analysis of capitalist development is offered in the spirit of remaining within the Marxist problematic" (ibid). However, Mooney does suggest that in order to fully understand these detours "may demand stepping outside the problematic of Marxist structuralism and into the realm of subjectivism, an area Mann & Dickinson wish to deny" (ibid). I will return to Mooney's suggestion later.

In 1990 Susan Mann published a book called "Agrarian Capitalism in Theory and Practice". Here she argued that:

Micro-subjectivist theories [like those of Weber and Chayanov] are unable to explain why family labor enterprises are not reproduced in industry, while macro-structuralist theorists cannot explain why wage labor/ capitalist class relations are not reproduced in the countryside" (Mann, 1990:27).

The answer for Mann lies in what makes agricultural production different to industrial production and this, she argues, is 'nature'. So, once again, Mann reiterates her argument that some natural aspects of agricultural production, such as the time it takes for something to grow, don't allow for increased productivity, and as capital needs expanded production for long term viability while family farmers don't, family farms can operate where capital is obstructed by unprofitability. Mann again defends the Mann & Dickinson thesis against some of the criticisms made against it. She argues that the Mann & Dickinson thesis did not treat agriculture as a monolithic whole, but rather suggested that in some areas of agriculture the production process has a specific nature. She suggests that the question for theorists is no longer explaining the obstacles to capitalist penetration, but explaining the *unevenness* of penetration. Mann also argues that the Mann & Dickinson thesis is not biologically reductionist, nor is it ahistorical and deterministic. On the contrary, she explains that the 'natural' obstacles she had suggested are only a barrier to *capitalist* forms of production. The thesis examines the interrelationship *between* the natural and the social looking at the historically specific conditions set up by capitalist production which may or may not be the same for all farmers (Mann,1990:32). Mann therefore sees the reasons ultimately lying in the structure of capitalism itself as she concludes that "uneven and distorted development is in the last instance created by capitalism's own logic and lust for private profits" (ibid:140).

Mann argues also that the Mann & Dickinson thesis does not see non-wage forms of production (SCP) as providing for forms of dependency and exploitation equivalent to the extraction of surplus value via wage labour. The argument here is that unlike Mooney, who sees SCP as currently being *formally* subsumed by capital (through debt etc.), Mann does not. She instead believes subsumption will only occur for SCP in a direct or *real* form, hence she is a *survivalist* theorist (ie. she explains how

and why SCP is surviving). However, considering historic specificity, she notes that when the conditions of productions alter enough (that technology etc. develop enough) capitalism *will* conquer agriculture as it has in industry (ibid:41). Yet, she reminds the reader that “Capitalist development is neither invincible nor inevitable” (ibid:128). Mann uses the majority of her book to address Mooney’s accusation that the Mann & Dickinson thesis is empirically invalid and uses empirical evidence from the United States to support her theory.

Chevalier (1983), a subsumption theorist, argues that SCP has been theorised simplistically, based on misleading premises. He suggests that SCP takes on many forms and that, in some instances, what is called SCP is in fact completely subsumed “although in their own particular fashion under the logic of capital” (Chevalier,1983:159). This is possible because “the formal domination of labour by capital can occur without the legal sale of the worker’s labour by capital” (ibid:164). The producer’s labour is economically ‘purchased’ by capital, capital controls labour because capital circulation and production are a precondition of the SCP’s labour (ibid). The market is seen here as dictating up stream to production, thus Chevalier’s major contribution to the topic is the emphasis he places on the distinction between formal and real subsumption. Chevalier also rejects early evolutionary Marxist ideas that see SCP as a precapitalist form which will necessarily disappear as capitalism grows because for Chevalier the dissolution of self-employed owner/labourers into antagonistic classes of owners and workers is not necessary for the subsumption of labour by capital.

Harriet Friedmann is another important contributor to the literature on the persistence of the family farm. There is some confusion over exactly what position Friedmann takes. Moran and Cocklin (1989) and Buttel (1990) suggest she is of the survivalist school while Mann (1990) finds it difficult to define her as a Marxist because she “employs a world systems approach that combines some of the macro features of both Marx and Weber’s writings” (Mann,1990:24).

Moran and Cocklin (1989:318) suggest Friedmann’s special contribution is her illustration of how family farms are both ‘peasant’ and ‘capitalist’ organisations. As mentioned above, Friedmann (1980) redefines the concept of SCP as a theoretical and empirical category. She sees the concept of SCP as referring specifically to a form of

production which firstly combines ownership with labour; and secondly exists within an advanced capitalist economy. Thus, as she suggests later on, "SCP does not include either families or households in its concept: it is simply the unity of property and labour within the context of generalised circulation of commodities" (Friedmann,1986:47).

Goodman and Redclift (1985) have rejected Friedmann's concept of SCP. Instead of seeing it as a theoretical concept they see it as "an historically contingent phenomena, which consequently can be expected to undergo significant transformation and variation in the course of capitalist development" (ibid:238). Like Mann, Goodman and Redclift see the only constraints on capitalist development as being organic nature, however, unlike Mann, they are subsumption theorists, and consider SCP a transitory stage in the inevitable development of capitalism. They argue that because some family farmers hire labour the distinction between SCP and Capitalism based on the unity between ownership and labour is not valid and in fact means these farmers are capitalistic. They take this argument a step further, and argue that the idea that farmers form a single class is a myth which hides their class interests and legitimates their labour processes.

The conceptualised family producer has sought, and in large measure achieved, political legitimacy by seeking to distance himself from 'capitalism' at the ideological level, while fully embracing it at the economic level (Goodman & Redclift,1985:243).

Friedmann (1986a) replies to Goodman and Redclift. She argues that relations to production, or the labour process, are just as important in distinguishing family farmers from capitalists, as is the unity of property and labour.

As long as they remain family enterprises (whether or not they hire additional labour, and or family members work outside for wages), their relations of production distinguish them from capitalist enterprises (ibid:187).

Friedmann further argues that in the family organisation of labour, patriarchy and kinship relations prevail, thus for Goodmann & Redclift to claim that when family farmers hire wage labour they are indistinguishable from capitalist farmers, ignores the dynamic context of these farmers. She suggests:

Non-capitalist interests' dread of proletarianization, commitment to a 'way of life' etc - lead to survivalist strategies nonsensical from a

'capitalist' point of view: they continue with loss-making activities beyond the logic of capitalist profit accounting, they go further and subsidise unprofitable enterprises through wages earned outside (ibid:188).

Friedmann also criticises Goodmann and Redclift's notion that the persistence of the family farm is passively at the mercy of technological progress. She argues that technology is not entirely externally governed but is also shaped by the demands of users such as farmers... "This counter-tendency is at least as important as the refusal of sheep to give up grazing in favour of a way of life more convenient to Capital" (ibid:189). She goes on to criticise Goodman & Redclift's assumption that SCP is but a stage on the way to the inevitable full development of capitalism, arguing that SCP first arose in agriculture after capitalist production was in place, and has risen, fallen, and persisted in many areas of production. She rejects the idea that agriculture is uniquely tied to nature, suggesting that maybe the tourist industry is also, but adding "Since capital has succeeded in manufacturing life forms in laboratories and rearing animals on concrete, it is difficult to delimit 'agriculture' at all" (ibid:190). Finally Friedmann argues that "ideology is not simply conjured up by farm lobbies. It has a material base" (ibid:191). She suggests Goodman & Redclift ignore this material basis which informs ideology, and the contradictory experience for farmers existing as both capitalist owners and non-capitalist workers.

Beyond emphasising the need for consideration of internal characteristics of SCP in political economy theory, Friedmann has further contributed to the family farming literature by analysing these characteristics. Friedmann (1986b) discusses the patriarchy of commodity production. Based on her earlier definition of SCP, Friedmann sees "the organisation of production and consumption through kinship and residence [as] far older and wider than SCP" (ibid:48). Even though such forms are characteristic of SCP they do not necessarily imply it, nor are these forms relics of tradition. Friedmann argues however, that they are "part of the present and near future of advanced capitalism" (ibid:47). Before undertaking historical analysis, Friedmann constructs her theoretical categories of forms of relations into 'ideal types'. This allows for theoretical clarity (Goodmann & Redclift, 1985). However, it also creates rigid, inflexible, and limited conceptual boxes (Whatmore et al, 1986).

Whatmore et al's (1986) criticism of Friedmann's 'ideal types' is not dissimilar to broader criticisms that have been directed at structural accounts. Similarly, over-structural emphasis can be inflexible to variation. It is often deductive; fitting the situation to the model, and does not account for the agency of people.

THE INCORPORATION OF AGENCY INTO POLITICAL ECONOMY PERSPECTIVES

The dialogue that took place between Mooney and Mann & Dickinson is characteristic of the structure/agency debate. Mooney was one of the first rural sociologists to advance the incorporation of agency into political economy analysis.

Mooney (1987) replies to Mann & Dickinson's response to his earlier critique of their thesis. Criticised for trying to synthesise Marx and Weber, Mooney claims this was not his aim and that he was simply trying to suggest incorporating both objective and subjective factors into understanding agricultural class relations as many notable theorists have done before with great success. He states:

The point of my critique was a) to undermine the notion that capitalist development *need* flow in any particular direction, b) to contend that the teleological unfolding of history towards a complete polarisation of classes (one good, one evil) and society's redemption through the insurrection and accession of the proletariat (a faith which some Marxists defend with religious zeal) is undermined, and c) to remember that history (to borrow a phrase) is still made by people, though not perhaps exactly as they choose (Mooney, 1987:293).

Vandergeest (1988) identifies Friedmann (1980), Chevalier (1983) and Goodman & Redclift (1985) as forming part of the 'commoditisation' literature in development sociology. He suggests that, besides the usual critique of Marxist theory, ie. their stress on external dynamics, and lack of consideration to every day experience, "the underlying reasons for many of these problems and the unresolved debates are epistemological and related to a lack of practical dimension in the tradition" (Vandergeest, 1988:21). Vandergeest suggests his own position is neo-Weberian in that he considers all categories are subjective 'ideal types'. They are theoretical tools not to be confused as existing in reality. He argues all theory and categories are "historically contingent, ideological, and interpretive social products" (ibid). He critiques the

deductive approach endemic in the literature and the tendency to reify social change.

He argues:

The world is a complex whole which can only be investigated empirically and understood through theory... it cannot be reduced to the simple working out of a model derived through deductive logic... there is no single deductive logic (such as the logic of exchange - value or accumulation) underlying or determining all relations in a capitalist formation, but there are different, historically contingent principals which we can only investigate through empirical research (ibid:21-22).

Vandergeest (1988) suggests that a useful tool for analysis when using this alternative approach which delves into the realm of 'culture', is the theory of Bourdieu (1977) although he does not elaborate on this any further. Vandergeest summarises his argument by concluding that "The lacunae identified above could only arise from a heavily deductive approach which does not encourage researchers to get their hands dirty in any inductive way" (Vandergeest, 1988:26).

It has been observed that to revitalise the rural sociology of development, theorists should consider ideology and agency within a historical-structural framework. Long and Van der Pleog (1988) consider such an agenda is difficult but suggest an actor-oriented perspective which can consider power differentials and reveal various ways of viewing the world, is important for studying the effects of agrarian development policy (Long & Van der Ploeg, 1988:39).

Lem (1988) builds on Friedmann's work. She suggests that unlike Chevalier who sees domestic relations as fully commodified, or Friedmann who sees them as completely non-commodified, they may in fact be partially commodified in some contexts (Lem, 1988:504). Lem also uses ethnographic evidence and cites the work of (Rogers, 1983) an anthropologist. She argues that family continuity, and thus intergenerational transfer, are so much a part of family farm identity that it must be seen as part of Petty Commodity Production. Therefore, the resistance of PCP to capital is not structurally programmed, but "is part of a conscious and overt social and political strategy undertaken by producers to preserve the family farm and also a particular way of life" (ibid:526).

Whatmore et al (1986) critique both Friedmann (ibid) and Goodman & Redclift (ibid). They agree with Friedmann that Goodman & Redclift ignore internal family relation, but suggest that Friedmann herself fails to consider the relationship between the internal relations of production and external capitals. They also criticise Friedmann's use of ideal types arguing that they are static and could only account for 10%-20% of the family farmers in *their* survey. They see these theorists as equally reductionist too, agreeing with Goodman & Redclift that Friedmann places too much emphasis on the presence or absence of family labour, while also agreeing with Friedmann that Goodman & Redclift put too much emphasis on the presence or absence of wage labour. Finally, they comment that neither of the above theorists sufficiently develops the concept of labour on family farms, nor address the interaction between production and reproduction.

Whatmore et al (1987a and b) attempt to overcome these and other deficiencies by providing a political economy approach to the study of farming in advanced capitalist economies that acknowledges the diversity of the 'family farm' and incorporates both external and internal relations of production. Moreover, their concern is not to distinguish between family and non-family forms of production, but to describe and categorise the entire continuum in between. "Our specific research interest is in the changing pattern of direct and indirect controls over the farm production process and its implications for the environment" (Whatmore et al, 1987a:22).

Whatmore et al's approach is to construct a typology of farm businesses which "seeks to relate, in a theoretically informed way, the attempts by industrial and finance capitals to penetrate agriculture to the specific responses and compromises that are made at the point of production"(Whatmore et al,1987:119). They stress that theirs is a realist effort based on theory; a structural or relational typology, not a positivist effort based on the 'observable', which they note can obscure the individual agent's activities (Whatmore et al,1986:25). They also note:

Typologies, however they are constructed, are limited in their analytical role, mediating empirical investigation and theoretical explanation. They cannot be used as a substitute for either of these levels of analysis. (ibid:26).

Buttel et al (1990:92) and Moran & Cocklin (1987: 318) both identify Whatmore and her co-authors as subsumption theorists. Whatmore et al, they claim, are interested in the way capitalism is increasingly penetrating relations of production on family farms. Like Chevalier (1983), they emphasise two kinds of subsumption; firstly, real or direct, which involves the direct ownership and control of the farm by one class and the employment of wage labour of another (that is the full commoditisation of labour relations) and secondly, the formal or indirect kind of subsumption which is:

The appropriation of surplus value from the farm production process by external capitals without necessarily transforming the labour process or directly controlling the technical means of production but entailing some degree or form of indirect control over production relations on the farm (Whatmore et al,1987a:26).

Their typology is firmly grounded in a political economy framework and they illustrate a subsumptionist position, therefore, the criteria and categories they use reflect this orientation. Firstly, Whatmore et al distinguishes common sets of internal and external production relations in farm businesses and, secondly, they assess the degree of direct and indirect subsumption. The internal relations are seen as being 1) the ownership of capital, 2) the ownership of land, 3) management control and 4) labour relations. "The degree to which ownership and control of these elements are diffused away from a single family operator indicates the level of direct subsumption" (ibid:30). Whereas, the external relations with indirect control are identified as 1) technological dependence, 2) dependence on credit, and 3) marketing linkages. Whatmore et al put internal relations (:degree of direct subsumption) along one axis, and external relations (:degree of indirect subsumption) along the other. The entire range of farm businesses and their internal and external indices of subsumption (based on the criteria Whatmore et al have used) can therefore be represented on a graph. However, four ideal types are identified, each in succession, representing a fuller stage of subsumption both directly and indirectly. Furthermore, they note:

As ideal types they focus attention upon sets of on-going social and economic processes underlying particular farm production relations rather than specific 'constellations of empirical features' in the positivist sense (ibid:35).

For Whatmore et al, subsumption can be either formal or real, or a combination of both types, their typology is simply an illustration of this variation. They view the process of subsumption, however, as dynamic. It often progresses from directly and indirectly non-subsumed by capital to very indirectly and directly subsumed by capital, although they do not see this progression as necessary and see change as historically and spatially specific. Finally, Whatmore et al emphasise the importance of ethnographic research:

The field investigation plays a central role in the elaboration and development of the typology and in the refinement of our theoretical understanding of the nature of farm business change. This position emphasises the interaction between structural and ethnographic processes, and the need to view change on the farm within the wider development of production relations within advanced capitalism. (ibid:34).

In recognition of the importance of empirical data Whatmore et al published another paper in which they illustrate the use of their typology with empirical data from England. They find that in all the areas studied indirect (formal) subsumption of farm production by capital is far more extensive than direct (real) subsumption. However, they note geographical variation and emphasise the importance of local circumstances as a major catalyst in, and a product of, the uneven process of capital penetration. Therefore, they conclude that there is nothing inevitable about this process (Whatmore et al, 1987b) and re-emphasise the need to see the family on the farm as agents participating in the process.

Marsden, Munton (both part of the Whatmore et al team) and Ward (1992) follow on from the research of Whatmore et al (ibid). They suggest that the findings from this previous research (that external capitals penetrate farm production through informal or indirect subsumption more extensively than they do through real or direct subsumption) means that "the relations between external capitals and internal farm production processes be viewed as in a constant state of interaction" (Marsden et al, 1992:408). They argue that, "whilst broad tendencies can be identified in the process of subsumption, they are regularly contradicted at the individual farm level" (ibid:409). Hence, their paper focuses on the point of production on the farm and the relation "between capital's need to accumulate and the family's wish to maintain control..."

(ibid:417). Their aim, therefore, is to incorporate 'social trajectories' into the analysis of uneven agrarian development.

Drawing on research in Britain, Marsden et al claim that the main aim of farmers is to maintain family control of the farm and to pass on an economically viable farm to the next generation. Therefore some conflict and the need for compromise in meeting both goals, might be expected. They go on to suggest that "there have been no surveys which record a *substantial* lowering of the expectation that most farmers have of one or more of their children succeeding to the business" (Harmon,1975 cited in ibid:419). Although Marsden et al found that the degree of expectation of succession varied over different areas, commitment to family continuity increases as farms become more subsumed, therefore:

The evidence suggests a *complementarity* and the increasing tendency for external capitals to reduce the independence and autonomy of farm families. The likelihood of the survival of farm families into the next generation appears to increase as farms become more engaged with technological, marketing and credit links, and generally as they experience a higher level of subsumption of production relations through more complex labour and farm structures (ibid:423).

Marsden et al conclude that although the goals of capital and those of family relations appear contradictory, they may in fact be "mutually reinforcing" (ibid:425). Furthermore, they suggest, family forms of production may be a 'prerequisite' to capitalist penetration of agriculture, although it appears they see nothing necessary about this route of change as they add,

It could be suggested that the establishment of complex exchange relations with external capitals may provide a commodified means to more socially oriented ends associated with ensuring family continuity and succession (ibid:426).

Hence, far from being subsumption theorists, Marsden et al (1992) (based on empirical field research), argue family farm production is surviving - unevenly. They reject unilinear theories of development which simply do not correspond to empirical realities, suggesting theorists need to examine the relation between internal and external considerations and take into account the social reproduction of family farms in order to understand how the complex processes of change are occurring. In essence what they are suggesting is a dialectical process between external capital and internal farm

ideology (although they don't use this term) the specifics of which vary for different areas, and which is mediated at the individual farm level. The success of this mediation will also subsequently vary, as is suggested here:

The price of failing is not an abrupt extinction through subsumption, but displacement by those families who have been able to synchronise rather better the demands of capital and their own aspirations to land occupancy (ibid:426).

The literature of The New Sociology of Agriculture has recently begun to broaden its focus. Ward and Munton (1992) argue that there is a need to consider the environment, and its protection more in agricultural studies (with a corresponding reduction in concern over production). In particular they are interested in

How farmers assess the environmental 'risks' arising from their production strategies, especially as many of them still give priority - on the basis of past experience, expertise, fixed investment and economic gain - to food production over environmental goods (Ward & Munton, 1992:131).

Because of the predominantly structural emphasis of political economy approaches, Ward and Munton criticise their lack of consideration to agency and corresponding inability to account for subjective, socially and historically constructed values and meaning associated with the environment. They propose the incorporation of a 'knowledge systems' approach which *can* account for subjectivity. They suggest...

Such ...social-cultural...approach(es) need not deny the insights of political economy. It suggests instead, we would argue,... that the constructs of agrarian political economy, such as subsumption (Marsden,Whatmore) or appropriationism and substitutionism (see Goodman) should be treated as frameworks mediated by action and not as rigid determinants. Changes on farms result from choices *and* constraints, which a 'knowledge systems' approach can help explicate (ibid:132).

Ward and Munton suggest that the concepts of 'negotiation' and 'strategy' are useful in linking 'knowledge systems' and political economy approaches because they consider both subjective and structural tendencies and the relationship or process between them.

Schulman, Zimmer and Danaher (1994) provide the last word here⁵. As Ward & Munton (1992) and Vandergeest (1988) and others have, they too review and criticise the political economy literature for its lack of consideration of micro level analyses. They suggest that while a rich set of material about agriculture in advanced capitalist societies has been developed,

A gap between macro level and micro level analyses characterises the literature - especially with regards to methodology and the traditional boundaries between quantitative rural sociology and qualitative social anthropology" (Schulman et al, 1994:230).

They suggest their paper is an attempt at bridging this gap. They do not use the ideal type approach of other researchers such as Marsden et al (1992) but have similar findings about the uneven nature of agricultural production and the variation in response of farmers to similar conditions. They conclude:

Understanding the process of farmer failure/survival requires a multilevel approach that takes into account how household and enterprise variables constrain and enable individual behaviour and action within historically specific spatial contexts (ibid:245).

Even rural sociology, which acknowledges agency, has its limitations. This is because rural sociology which discusses the future of family farming, has been almost completely written from within a political economy perspective. While this perspective has offered enormous insight and vast amounts of research, it works from within a somewhat confined theoretical space. The large body of literature reviewed here arose from the identification of family farming as an 'anomaly' in advanced capitalist societies, and to see a cultural phenomenon in such a way, one must have accepted certain premises about the nature of the social world; for example, Marx's theorisation about the nature of capitalist development. While a lot of debate surrounds the exact

⁵This review of the literature on the future of family farming within the 'new rural sociology of agriculture' is by no means exhaustive. Comprehensive reviews have been published elsewhere, for example see Vandergeest, 1988; Moran & Cocklin, 1989; Buttel et al, 1990; Mann, 1990; Fairweather, 1992; Ward & Munton, 1992 and Schulman et al, 1994. All provide alternative accounts. However, I have attempted to give a somewhat chronologically ordered overview of the major theoretical developments, illustrating some of the relevant positions taken and the ensuing debate which has occurred.

nature of capitalist development and no two theorists seem to agree on all points, at an epistemological level the perspective is the same.

Structural changes globally, indeed the rural 'crisis' which has occurred in many countries, and the response by researchers to this crisis has led to what could perhaps aptly be labelled the new 'salvage' paradigm. The desire to salvage family farming is premised on the assumption that the family farm is worth saving. Implicit in the concern over the future of the family farm in much of this literature is the assumption that 'family farming' might be threatened by the corporate farm which would imply a deterioration in the situation for rural people, because in becoming wage workers, conditions of wage labour and therefore exploitation through the expropriation of value, would occur - a 'good' verses 'evil' scenario. Friedmann (1986a&b) however, does acknowledge and address some of the inequalities which may exist on the family farm through her discussion of patriarchy. But nevertheless the greater evil is still consistently presumed to be corporate organisation. Goodman & Redclift (1986) overtly acknowledge the inequalities in family farming but they only achieve this by arguing that family farms are no different to capitalist production because they hire wage labour. Therefore, 'family' organised labour on the whole tends to be treated as a preferred form of production, mostly void of the nasty characteristics of ruthless capitalism (or its existence is denied). But is this the case, at least in New Zealand?

We have seen in the above review that rural sociology has shifted significantly in its position over the past 15 or so years. An over-emphasis on structural features, the reification of such features and lack of understanding of what is actually happening 'down on the farm' are all criticisms which form part of the on-going structure/agency debate, as Buttel et al (1990) illustrate in their review of the development of rural sociology. They suggest necessity arguments and deductive theory, which assume a homogeneity in capitalist social relations globally, are no longer acceptable. They go on to suggest:

There is a need for more critical ethnographic fieldwork research in the sociology of agriculture... Field research is done in many styles, and consensus among practitioners on important issues is unlikely, but its contributions could come in several different ways. Perhaps the highest priority for the contribution of fieldwork will lie in its application to issues relating to the role of "subjectivity" or "agency"

(versus "structure") in sociological explanations (Buttel et al,1990:185).

And as we have also seen this sentiment is similarly articulated by other researchers. Mooney (1983), for example, proposes more attention be paid to subjectivity, and Whatmore et al (1987) see the field investigation as helping to develop and elaborate their typology, which in turn was created to help analyse the variance in the penetration of capital. Marsden et al (1992) work to a similar agenda, and Ward and Munton (1992) suggest the incorporation of a knowledge system approach into the political economy perspective. Vandergeest (1988) and Schulman et al (1994) also propose emphasis be placed on 'field' research.

FARMING AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Throughout the 1980s researchers have been concerned about the impact of farming on the environment. Buttel et al (1990) suggest that since the mid 1970s the concern with the ecological consequences of agriculture, and the impact of environmental factors on the structure of agriculture, has been one of the two major theoretical areas developed in the 'new sociology of agriculture'⁶ (ibid:127). A considerable proportion of the literature which addresses the impact of farming on the environment has focused on the environmental degradation caused by 'big business' or 'agribusiness'. For example, a common theme is that,

By fostering corporate farming rather than family farming, agribusiness helps promote short-term farming practices which are linked to environmental problems such as soil exhaustion and erosion (Sargent,1985:229).

This statement by Sargent has been echoed by other authors such as Fox (1986) who begins the title of his book with the term 'agricide'. In discussing the case in the United States, Fox argues 'agribusiness' exploitation of natural resources is in part responsible for the widespread problem of soil erosion and the depletion of deep-water aquifers. This is a consequence of shareholders in agribusiness companies wanting quick returns; and in response to this, agricultural practices are not based on sound, long-term

⁶ The other major theoretical area being the political economy literature reviewed earlier.

planning (Fox, 1986:xiii). Fox claims that family farms and rural communities provide the foundations for a “sound and self-sustaining agriculture” (ibid:xv).

While concerns about the impact of corporate practices on the environment are well founded, what is problematic about this literature is the assumption that ‘family farming’ practices are intrinsically *more* sound and less linked to environmental problems. This is a similar theme to that which pervades much of the political economy literature concerned with the future of the family farm. As researchers we need to be critical of such assumptions and avoid buying into ideology without challenging its foundations and understanding the context of its construction.

Research into the relationship between family farming and the environment has been undertaken. Buttel et al (1990) argue that research has found that farmers’ perception of the extent of soil erosion and the urgency of controlling the problem, even on their own farms, has little or modest impact on their conservation practices. Ward & Lowe (1994) have conducted research into the relationship between succession expectation and perceptions of farm pollution problems. In Britain in the 1980s the pollution of waterways from the silage and slurry washed off cattle yards became a serious problem. It seems

The pollution potential load from the slurry and silage produced by a single, average-sized Devon dairy farm has been estimated to be equivalent to that of a small sized town of 10,800 people... Inadequate effluent storage facilities on farms, coupled with lax handling of farm effluents, have been widely acknowledged as the main cause of pollution incidents (Ward & Lowe,1994:177).

The response by the state was to encourage farmers to install pollution control facilities by providing a 50% grant and fines of up to £20,000. Ward & Lowe surveyed farmers in Devon to gain insight into farmer’s representations and understandings of the pollution problems. Although it was more likely that investment in pollution control would occur on a farm where succession to the next generation was planned for (two thirds as opposed to one third on farms where succession had been ruled out), Ward & Lowe argue that the acquisition of pollution control equipment alone is not a good indicator of sound environmental management practices, as equipment needs regular maintenance and sound practices need to be routine on the farm (ibid:178).

In their Devon study Ward & Lowe identified three groups of farmers. Group A they called the “sceptical” farmers, and they represented 17% of the sample population. Sceptical farmers’ typical position was “What pollution problem”? They perceived the whole issue as blown out of proportion. Group B represented 62% of the sample and were called the “Ambivalent” farmers. While these farmers were aware that there was a pollution problem, their main concern was the possibility of getting into trouble for not meeting state requirements and controlling effluent pollution on their farms. Finally, group C, or the “Radical” farmers, who represented the remaining 22% of the sample, not only acknowledged the problem, but they thought state regulation to encourage farmers to control the problem was a necessary thing. The interesting thing about this study is the further ideological divisions between these groups. The “Sceptical” farmers were also family farmers, they saw themselves as very much a special group, and are described by Ward & Lowe as being locked into a productivist agricultural way of thinking, having an agrocentric world view, and being less likely to diversify their production. These farmers invested in pollution control simply to meet legal requirements. The “Radical” farmers, on the other hand, tended to be younger and had broader views of the world. They placed less value in family continuity and in fact Ward & Lowe suggest that these farmers viewed themselves as rural entrepreneurs or ‘businessmen’.

Farmers often say that one of their main goals is to pass on their farm to the next generation in a ‘better condition’ than when they took it on themselves. This sense of farm ‘improvement’ is thus often linked to notions of family continuity and succession. However, the sentiment conceals two different notions of conservation: one productivist, preoccupied with physical capital; the other environmentalist, and concerned with natural capital. Thus, for some farmers, ‘better condition’ means that the farm is more *productive*, economically viable or easier to work... This sense of a better farm being a more productive one is dominant among those farmers planning for succession. On the other hand, a minority of farmers, particularly including radicals and those without successors, saw the notion of a farm being in a ‘better condition’ as meaning that the land had been farmed sensitively, within environmental constraints, and would articulate this in terms of not “robbing the land” or “taking out more than you put in”(Ward & Lowe,1994:182).

Efforts to 'preserve' the tradition of family farming have been linked to furthering environmental degradation. Moran & Cocklin (1989) argue that subsidies to farming have "encouraged land resources that are inherently unsuited to sustained intensive production" (Moran & Cocklin, 1989:322). This has resulted in declining soil quality, erosion, deforestation, overuse of chemicals, and thus pollution of waterways.

Therefore, implicit notions (without rigorous and situationally specific empirical investigation) that family farming is 'traditional' and thus somehow the practices are more in tune with nature, or easier on the environment than non-family farm production, are unfounded and possibly false. As I have suggested these notions are often implicitly assumed in the work of academics as they fit the philosophical assumptions of the school of thought. In doing so they also uncritically legitimise the emic history and ideology of the family farmer. In this study the ideology of farming will be unfolded and with this the material practices down on the farm revealed. The assumptions often made by academics, illustrated in this critique, reveal a correspondence between the ideology of farming and academic theorising. These assumptions will be challenged in this study.

SOCIAL ANTHROPOLOGY AND THE STUDY OF FAMILY FARMING

Social anthropologists have been involved in the 'rural' for a considerable period of time. Some of the authors reviewed above are in fact anthropologists, and many anthropologists, including for example Scott (1986) who edited a special issue of *Social Analysis* in 1986 entitled "Rethinking Petty Commodity Production", are fully involved in the political economy approach dominated by rural sociologists. Social anthropologists, however, have traditionally studied the "other" which had predominantly meant peoples outside Western capitalist society.

Anthropologists have dominated the study of non-industrial farming systems, working with tribal and peasant peoples... Almost all social scientific examination of agriculture in industrial countries, however, have been carried out by rural sociologists, geographers and economists (Chibnik,1987:12).

This trend is changing with the repatriation of anthropology, as the study of 'peasants' and farmers within advanced capitalist societies is popular. Perhaps this is a case of finding the other, that is pre-capitalist 'primitives', or at least non-capitalist peoples, in our own back yard. Anthropological literature which romanticises the 'rural way of life' hints at such an agenda. The majority of rural anthropological literature looks at more than just family farmers; for example Hatch (1992), who studied a whole community in a rural area including wage workers as well as family farmers. Hatch's research is relevant here because it was conducted in New Zealand. Internationally however, there are many ethnographies which consider at least some aspects of, if not a whole rural or farming community, within advanced capitalist societies. In this chapter I have considered only those anthropological accounts which firstly use ethnographic research, and secondly are related directly to questions about the *future* of family farming.

THE ETHNOGRAPHIC METHOD

Chibnik (1987) argues that while rural sociology has produced a vast body of work, there are limitations within this discipline which are related to research setting and methodology. In the United States at least, it seems that most rural sociologists have been employed by either land-grant universities or state departments concerned with agricultural policy. However, land-grant universities are intimately connected with agribusiness. Chibnik suggests that this may have affected the neutrality of some rural sociologists, making them less likely to produce research which is critical to agribusiness. He further suggests that rural sociology has put a growing emphasis on survey analysis, and does not conduct the ethnographic field research of anthropologists. Chibnik suggests ethnographic data is an important contribution in and of itself, and anthropology can look at farming from a cross-cultural perspective. Moreover, that the holistic and qualitative research methods of social anthropology can combine micro-level processes with macro level data. He claims that "ethnographic descriptions of farm life are meaningless without an understanding of the larger political and economic forces shaping rural culture"(ibid:23).

Bartlett (1987) takes up the question of whether family farms will be replaced by corporate farms or agribusiness controlled operations. Drawing on her own ethnographic data she argues that, despite the trend of declining numbers of farms and the increasing size of those that persist, it is premature to think that this indicates the corporatisation of agriculture. This is because there is no evidence to suggest that this change in numbers and size is paralleled to a growing separation between ownership and management on the farm - farmers are still simultaneously owning and working their land. However, Bartlett indicates that this is no guarantee that it will not happen in the future and she suggests debt and also vertical integration (formal subsumption), are the biggest threats to medium sized family farmers.

Roger and Salamon (1983) compare their respective ethnographic data on farm families. Roger's research was conducted in two communities in France, Salmon's with two communities in the United States. They argue that family farmers share many things in common; for example the importance of succession, seeing farming as an occupation and way of life, and the strong connection between work relations and kin relations, but that different communities have divergent strategies for confronting these things. Rogers and Salamon compared inheritance ideology and attitudes to family size, celibacy and migration. They found that one community from each country practiced multiple heir inheritance; that is, there is equal division of the inheritance between siblings; and the other two communities from the respective countries practiced single heir inheritance when one sole heir is selected. They found that in the communities where multiple heir inheritance was common, large families were considered unwise, all children tended to marry and local relationships were considered more important than those with out-migrants. In the communities where single heir inheritance is usually practised large families are prevalent and so too are unmarried adults, also permanent out-migrants are frequently referred to.

Rogers and Salamon suggest these findings are similar to those of Habakkuk (1955, cited in Rogers and Salamon, 1983). The first important finding here is that variation can cut across nation and macroeconomic differences, ie. one French community is more like an American community in inheritance ideology and some social practices than it is to another French community etc. The second important finding is that while perhaps sharing common goals and concerns (and perhaps even

external pressures), different communities develop different response strategies (seen here as inheritance ideology) in order to maintain farm and family continuity. They summarise;

Social organisation is shaped by culturally determined responses to those shared concerns in the form of inheritance ideology and variations in the degree to which these ideologies may be put into practice. Specifically, patterns of demographic behaviour tend to correspond to the type of inheritance strategy preferred, while patterns of interjectional behaviour correspond to the degree of divergence between preferred inheritance ideology and actual practice (ibid:546).

The last important finding is that whether family farmers are producing for commercial consumption or subsistence farming, the factors affecting social organisation are basically the same. What this implies is that

At least where the family remains a property-controlling unit of production, such variables as degree of market integration and scale of operation may be irrelevant as either categorical criteria or explanatory variables in discussions of relationships within the family and community. Such patterns of social relationships do not necessarily change as the larger economic context undergoes change (ibid:547).

Salamon and Davis-Brown (1986) argue that culturally constructed goals, and the strategies used to meet them, are crucial factors not revealed by an 'economic' framework. These factors help account for the differential impact of the (US) agricultural crisis of the 1980s on family farmers. Salamon and Davis-Brown's ethnographic evidence comes from research with farmers from Illinois in the United States. They distinguish between two types of farmers found there; one is what they describe as the 'Yeoman' farmer, the other is the 'entrepreneur' farmer. They suggest that these two 'types' illustrate points at either end of a continuum.

Yeoman farmers in this area are generally of German origin, they are financially conservative and risk adverse. Yeoman farmers see success as being able to pass on the farm to successive generations and this goal ensures their management decisions put security ahead of expansion - they will only expand to meet family needs. Family play a large part in the farm operation, they see farming as a way of life and value land ownership. Salmon and Davis-Brown argue that the conservative financial practices and

family cooperation characteristic of Yeoman farmers has helped them to survive economic downturns.

Entrepreneurial farmers, on the other hand, usually of Yankee origin (of British descent) farm larger, more specialised operations. They see success as getting the best returns for their input, they tend to take more risks to achieve this goal, family are less likely to be intimately involved and farming is considered to be just an occupation. "Entrepreneurs are not especially committed to agriculture as a family legacy or trust but view it as a risk-taking business, a game" (ibid:509). To lose the farm through over extending oneself is obviously very problematic for the entrepreneurial farmer but the experience is dissimilar to the Yeoman farmer...

For the Yeoman; who has the responsibility of the legacy in the farm, a loss represents a debt to past and future family members. Yeoman operators who lose a family farm through entrepreneurial risk-taking are therefore likely to experience the most emotional distress (ibid:11).

Salamon and Davis-Brown suggest that while Yeoman are not entrepreneurial or heavily capitalised, they are still capitalist producers and part of global markets, "they are however, willing to sacrifice to accomplish their continuity goal, while more entrepreneurial operators are not because of their profit optimisation and individualistic goal" (ibid:510).

Salamon (1987) argues that "Although few non-economic explanations have been offered for why some American rural communities have declined while others have flourished, cultural and historical factors certainly play a part" (Salamon,1987). In Yeoman farming families, parents take on most of the responsibility for intergenerational transfer, where as, in entrepreneurial families, it is felt the younger generation should be left to make their own decision about what profession they choose. "Yankee children are encouraged to obtain an education and to explore non-farming career alternatives before deciding to farm"(ibid:178). These different goals reflect different conceptions of land and the nature of land attachment gives "the economic and social system its central logic"(ibid:169). Salamon describes the Yeoman attachment to land as an almost sacred trust:

"Even for children and grandchildren who have moved away, this is home, this is where their roots are, where their parents and grandparents are buried, this is where their land is" (ibid:176).

This deep attachment to land extends also to a commitment to the community, they retain oral history, and it is a love for the land and farming, not money, which keeps them farming and makes them want their children to carry it on. Yankee farmers do not have the same attachment to land, they do not see it as 'family' land, but rather as a commercial asset. They do not have much oral history and they are more concerned with the farm as a business in the 'here and now' rather than an heirloom.

Salamon argues that family goals shape inheritance patterns and affect land use practices. The persistence of Yankee farmers may be partially explained by their more diversified operations, which have helped them maintain viable farms. Yeoman, on the other hand will take up 'off farm' jobs to help support and preserve their way of life and keep hold of the farm for the next generation.

Rogers (1987) also discusses attachment to land among American farmers. The farmers she studied had a very strong commitment to land and the long term viability of the farm. "They therefore generally think well beyond their own life times doing what they can to ensure that their children and grandchildren will inherit a farm from which they can make a reasonable living" (Rogers,1987:69). Rogers claims that one is not a farmer by simply working the land, but must also own it, "renting is acceptable as a way to supplement the farm's acreage or as a temporary arrangement in anticipation of eventually inheriting. Ownership though, is what counts" (ibid: 70). It is title to the land not simply usage rights which must be transferred, "one cannot be a true farmer or a proper steward of the family patrimony without both owning and working the land" (ibid:71). Similar to the findings of Salamon, Rogers writes;

The inextricable link in Freiburg [the place where Rogers conducted her fieldwork] between landownership and farming is, in turn, very much bound up with farmers' strong commitment to intergenerational continuity of their farms. They farm not only because it is the occupation they have chosen, but also because they feel considerable responsibility as stewards of the family patrimony, seeing themselves as part of the family life extending into the past and into the future. Farming successfully is not just an end in itself, but a way to fulfil one's obligations to the past by providing for future generations (ibid:70).

This ethnographic and anthropological literature offers accounts which consider the subjective aspects of being a farmer. In doing so they challenge overly structuralist or economic understandings and explanations of family farming and its existence. However, it seems the dichotomy between farmers that Salmon & Davis-Brown (1986) present has been abstracted and applied by the researchers as they comment that the two poles *should* be seen as a continuum. That they should pick "Yeoman" versus "Entrepreneur" is interesting, and perhaps more telling about the perspective of the researchers than that of the participants. It echoes the capitalist versus non-capitalist dichotomy and places 'family' values in opposition to 'capitalist' values. Perhaps this is the case in the United States, but is it in the Manawatu, or New Zealand? The dichotomy used by Salmon & Davis-Brown (*ibid*), coupled with a lack of critical analysis of the 'family' organisation of the family farm, suggests the somewhat romantic repatriated anthropology I suggested earlier, one that treats the non-capitalist Western farmer as the equivalent of the romantic Noble Savage of earlier anthropology. This perspective posited that what was conceived of as 'primitive' and therefore closer to nature was thus 'idyllic' compared to 'advanced' society which was considered more removed from nature. This contemporary repatriated romanticism which tends to pervade all of the disciplines reviewed here, I shall call the Noble Farmer concept. This study will ask if the Noble (Family) Farmer exists outside of academic ideology.

CONCLUSIONS

This chapter has reviewed inter-disciplinary literature about family farming. I have demonstrated how agricultural economists consistently overlook the subjectivity of farmers presuming economic survival is the only important consideration for farmers. I have reviewed a changing trend in theoretical position, particularly within the 'new rural sociology of agriculture', from structural accounts to the consideration of agency and finally to the suggestion of ethnographic field work. However, there has been a tendency in this field to over emphasise, in a broad structural way, the future of the family farm, and under theorise the subjective experience of the farm family, especially in any critical way. Only recently has the ecological 'soundness' of family farming practices come under scrutiny. Even less has been written about the possibility

of inequality existing in the family farm. Finally, we have seen how consideration of subjectivity has dominated anthropological literature, but again little critical analysis has occurred, suggesting that in both anthropology and sociology there may exist an unchallenged ideological construction of what the concept of the 'family farmer' constitutes. This has important implications if researchers proceed to conduct their work without critically evaluating their common-sense understandings of farmers and family farming.

In the following chapter I redress the imbalance in the literature which favours generalised analysis by providing an historical account of the development of farming in New Zealand, and in particular the Manawatu. This provides the foundation for my case study but also provides a parallel history which I will later compare to the subjective history of the participants.

CHAPTER TWO

METHODS AND PARTICIPANTS

METHODOLOGY

The interdisciplinary nature of this research demands a thorough explanation of my methodological foundations. The interviewing method which has been employed in this study had been shaped by the ethnographic method because I have been concerned to produce "thick description" (Geertz, 1972) or rather a deeper understanding of people's motivations, desires and feelings (by spending time talking and getting to know people) which solely observational research cannot provide. Although no 'participant-observation' was conducted, as a member of the Manawatu community I am at least partially an observer of everyday life here.

Keating and Little (1991) perhaps come closer to this method than any other non-anthropologist who has studied farmers in New Zealand with their use of 'grounded theory'.

The theory method is based on an assumption of Symbolic Interaction Theory that the meaning of a phenomenon is an internal process. The method provides the opportunity for respondents to be the experts on their experience and to 'tell their story' without the imposition of an external set of assumptions by the researcher (Keating and Little, 1991:6).

However, it is perhaps not as simple as Keating and Little suggest. The researcher to some degree, always carries certain expectations and no matter how hard we may try to be simply a detached and omniscient observer, our presence is in some way always felt, and particularly with social research we become part of the scene we are studying. Anthropologists have traditionally valued this immersion; the participation aspect of

fieldwork, however only in the last few decades, with the reflexive trend, have we begun to consider the form this interaction takes and the implications, even subjecting our own position to analysis. While my purpose here has not been to write an overtly reflexive account, I have not attempted to remove myself, nor for that matter the humanity of my participants, from the research.

When I began this research I told many people that I was looking for retired farmers in the Manawatu to interview and several people suggested people to contact. I would then contact the suggested person and inform them of my research and ask if they wished to participate. This is how I met many of my participants. Participants would often send me on to someone else but I was also kindly given a list of possible participants by Janet Reid from the department of agricultural research at Massey University. I never specified gender, I just asked to interview 'farmers' and when I rang, I would ask whoever answered, be they male or female if they would like to participate. I wanted to talk to whoever considered themselves 'farmers', and as I knew little about farming I didn't want to assume I should talk to men, but also I didn't want to insist on talking to a woman, who may not wish to take part in the research, or may feel uncomfortable identifying herself as a 'retired farmer'.

Of the four couples I contacted, the responses in themselves were interesting. Firstly, one woman answered the phone and when I introduced myself, she said "Oh I'll get my husband for you", and then when I came to interview the woman and her husband she greeted me but made herself scarce during the actual interview. With another couple I talked to the husband on the phone and at our meeting only he was home, at the second interview his wife was home, but after meeting me she said "I'll let you get on with it" and promptly left the room. With the third and fourth couples the wives answered the phone, one asked "do you wish to speak with both of us" to which I replied; "If you are both farmers that would be great!" With both of these couples both husband and wife took part in the research. Of the four other participants three were widowed women and one was a widowed man. Quite by accident (or perhaps the longer life expectancy of females) I ended up with five male and five female participants. While this is a small sample and thus is not statistically significant, it is large enough to produce some consistencies and dominant themes with respect to what it means to be a 'farmer' and the meaning of family farming. Furthermore, I suspect that the accounts

provided by the participants in this study are not typical. However, only further research can validate such a suspicion.

Traditionally, ethnographic inquiry demanded an extended period of immersion into the community under study. Field work allows the researcher to observe and participate in the lives of the participants, developing rapport and friendship, building trust and experiencing and making familiar the unfamiliar way of life in order to gain empathetic humanistic understanding. Because anthropology attempts to be holistic, and because, traditionally, anthropologists have studied 'others', anthropologists would typically leave (usually *his*) own society, for another, which was often vastly different. In setting off to the new destination and armed with the functionalist paradigm (dominant in early anthropology), the anthropologist's perceptions were often shaped by the assumption that the 'other' occupied not only separate geographical 'space' but was somehow socially bounded. The myth of such boundedness (and hence disconnection from other societies), even in the 19th century conditions, has long been exposed, but the method of participant observation remains the hall mark of the discipline.

With repatriated anthropology, otherwise known as 'anthropology at home' - how does one carry out research? Retired farmers who have shifted into town are not geographically isolated from urban people (nor were they when they were on the farm), they are physically and socially integrated into a broader community, of which I am also a member. I can't shift and leave my community to enter their's because they are my neighbours. They mingle with and perhaps share concerns common to urban retired people - do they distinguish themselves from others? Do they share a unique culture? Or is it simply my classification which binds them as an entity? As my research reveals, retired farmers are not a neatly bounded homogenous group, even within the geographical limits of the Manawatu. However, their similar histories, life experiences, and their identity as farmers does ensure commonality and a unity in perspective and world view.

My method of conducting research then was to meet face to face with these people in the situation in which they ordinarily exist, as individuals or couples in their private homes with or without their spouse and occasionally with other family.

After initial phone contact and arrangement of a meeting I would go to the home of a participant, typically I would be led through to a lounge or sitting room and engage

in casual conversation. Most often I would start by talking about myself, my university study, my part-time jobs, where I was from and who had suggested they would be a possible as participant. If I had been referred to them from a mutual friend or acquaintance (which was the norm) we would speak of the person and our relationship to them, and through that quickly establish a link and be strangers no more. In my effort to establish rapport and align myself socially with a person (in order to breakdown social distance), I would inform them that my grandfather had been a dairy farmer at Bunnythorpe. The Manawatu is not such a large region and one participant, it turned out, knew him very well. I would let casual conversation go on as long as possible, sometimes up to an hour and once a whole first interview. It was often interrupted by the participants' concern that that they were holding me up and they would say something like "Oh well, you'd better ask me some questions then". For this reason I began taking a list of questions with me, it was what they seemed to expect, usually though after one or two of my questions, the conversations would flow naturally and the questions I asked were usually only those we had not covered in normal dialogue. I was careful not to control the situation, my intention was to let the participants lead me into the topics to do with farming, hence farm succession frequently arose for instance, and was then added to my list of questions.

All interviews were taped, I would ask the participants at the first opportunity if this was alright with them, and explain I wasn't a very quick handwriter and taping meant we could chat away and I wouldn't miss anything. All agreed, although some seemed nervous at first, after some conversation, both participants and I tended to forget the recorder was there. Interviews lasted about a minimum of an hour and up to two and a half hours (often including afternoon tea). For several people I made repeat visits to continue the conversations.

INTRODUCING THE PARTICIPANTS

My first few interviews were considered 'test runs' and information from them is not used in this thesis. The data used in this thesis was collected from interviews with 10 participants. In order to protect the identity of the people who so openly shared their

thoughts and ideas here, all names have been changed and some small place names have been changed also.

Mary Watson is a slim, graceful and softly spoken woman with a passion for gardening. She and her husband farmed a predominately dairy farm outside of Feilding. Mary's husband had inherited their farm from his father, and together they raised two children on the farm. Mary came from a comfortable background, her father was a doctor trained in England. Mary and her husband were financially well off also, and both their children attended prestigious boarding schools. However, when Mary's husband became ill they were forced to sell the farm as neither of the children wanted it. Mary was widowed several years ago and now lives in a retirement village.

Ida Fleming formally did housework for Mary when they were both farming. Ida and her husband came from a less well off background and spent many years working on other people's land before they could purchase their own farm. But even with the dairy farm she continued to clean for other people, and does so to this day although she is in her late sixties - she says it keeps her busy. Ida is a cheerful person with a wide smile and a boisterous laugh, unlike Mary she speaks powerfully and unselfconsciously. Ida's husband died suddenly several years after they had bought their own farm. At the time, two of her eight children were still living at home. Ida ran the farm herself until several years after the last children had left home, but sold the farm when none of her children wanted it and they convinced her to move into town. Ida now lives in a unit in Palmerston North.

William and Alice McPherson made a comfortable living out of dairy farming. Like Ida, although they both came from farming families, they did not inherit a farm and had to manage other people's farms and sharemilk until they could afford to buy their own farm. Alice is a very active and outgoing woman, William is more softly spoken, but both loved to tell stories from their life on the farm(s) and their youth. They raised three children and have several grandchildren now. However, the farm was too small to be economically viable for their children to take over and was sold. They now live in Palmerston North.

Grace Spenser is a story teller. She is articulate and her narration captivating. I spent many hours listening to Grace. She grew up on a farm in the Manawatu, one of 10 children, but now, since her husband died recently, she has moved into a retirement

home. Grace has three children, none of whom went farming, and only one lives close to her; a son in Wellington. Her alertness leads to frustration these days as her mobility and physical independence is slowly diminishing.

Grace would be lucky to get a word in around Jack Dunthorpe however. Jack always spoke to me with energy and earnest conviction, his passion for farming expressed in an almost rhapsodical fashion. Jack farmed his father's sheep farm after his father died, later he owned a dairy farm. He had cousins farming nearby as his uncle also farmed family land. Jack lives on the outskirts of Palmerston North with his wife (who was not interviewed). They are only ten minutes drive away from the family farm where one son lives, and a little further to the other son's farm. Jack and his wife are in their 70's and since retiring have found a passion in travelling to foreign countries.

Howard Brown spoke with confidence but was less animated than Jack. He had worked in partnership with his brother on the dairy farm that was their father's. Howard and his wife Margery (Margery wasn't interviewed) have no children, so their farm is leased to Howard's brother's two sons. Now living in Palmerston North, Howard continues with a hobby which, for much of his life on the farm, was a part-time career.

George Reid managed his cousin's farm for the most part of his working life. Now a widower he has recently had to shift from his house in town to his daughter's because of his emphysema. George left home at 15, after a disagreement with his father, and worked as a farm labourer. Of a family of 13, only one brother inherited the small family farm. However, some of George's siblings went into farming also, and George had various nieces and nephews farming in the Manawatu - and probably now their children. George and his wife had four children, none of whom went into farming, although one daughter and her husband were interested, but the farm was not George's to give them.

Finally, I interviewed Fred and Mavis Brown, Howard's brother and sister-in-law. They too now live in Palmerston North, and it is their two sons who now run the family farm. Fred is quietly spoken, although he was often smiling, Mavis was very talkative and open. They both enjoy bowls and Fred enjoys going down to the farm to help out if he is needed.

When making inquiries and trying to locate possible participants, I was careful the only prerequisite be that they were retired farmers in the Manawatu. However, all the participants I eventually met and interviewed were either dairy farmers or sheep farmers whose farms were always family controlled, be that a 'one man unit' (that is a one nuclear family unit) or a larger business which involved two or more nuclear families, or adult children. There are two possible reasons for why the sample of retired farmers I received is so narrow in variation when farming in New Zealand is now so diversified, (one only has to drive to Horowhenua to see orchards for instance⁷). Firstly, it could simply be because this study focuses on 'retired' farmers, people who ceased farming by the 1990s and began many decades before, some as early as the 1920s, and that people actively involved in the last few decades of change in New Zealand agriculture, on the whole, have yet to retire. The cohort I have researched perhaps avoided severe changes in their working lives and they mostly retired in the 1980s, a similar sample taken of those who retire in the year 2000 may reflect more variety in farming operations.

But this answer is not entirely satisfactory, certainly some farmers who are now retired at some point diversified into at least deer if not kiwifruit. Someone must have had to sell their farm to a neighbour whose business was growing in to a large scale operation - who did Jack Dunthorpe (a participant in this research) buy his extra land from? The other possible reason for the lack of variety in retired farmers I received (which is not so much an alternative reason but works in conjunction with the first reason), is the subjective definition of 'farmer' perhaps had by many of the people I spoke to about my research, and who suggested someone I could interview. Many individuals I encountered replied "Oh I know someone you could interview". I think now the suggestions were informed by their ideas about what constitutes a 'typical New Zealand farmer' - now retired. (This stereotype of a farmer is a theme I elaborate on later).

The diversity of farming practice and the subjective aspects of 'community' in New Zealand have been the subject of research. The New Zealand Planning Council et al (1982) made some particularly interesting findings in their study of four sample

⁷Horticulture, more often than not, is run not as a family unit due to the seasonal labour (Fairweather,1987:4-12). And forecasts show that the medium sized farm (common to all my participants) is in decline (Fairweather,1987, Frengly,1987, Wallace,1987).

locations around New Zealand. Firstly, they found no unified feeling of 'rural community' in fact:

Generally the feeling of the task force, was that Southland was a 'law unto itself'. There was a strong tradition of coherence and independence in the region, which set it apart from the rest of New Zealand (ibid:50).

The impression gained by the researchers was that "one could not generalize about pastoral farming from a national viewpoint, and that there were growing differentials between regions" (ibid:54). Although, amongst the farmers in all regions, there was a similar sense of the place and importance of the land in the establishment of identity: "'We are committed to history in continuing to farm' was the comment of one South Island farmer" (ibid:55). So while we can find similarities across regions, it is clear also that there is a need to conduct research by region in order that valid comparisons can be made. It is for this reason this study focuses on the Manawatu. The Manawatu has its own unique history, but also shares in common developmental issues central to family farming (more generally) in the North Island and New Zealand since settlement. Before proceeding with an account of the historical underpinnings of family farming in New Zealand, particularly the Manawatu is necessary. Let us return to the participants.

The first person I interviewed was Mary Watson, she highlighted for me some of the issues which will be explored more fully in this study. Mary distanced herself from "*real* rural women who help on the farm", suggesting instead that she spent so much time at committee meetings and traveling between town and the farm, she spent little time on the farm. Mary suggests here an ideal type or stereotype of what a real rural woman should be like, but at the same time alludes to the fact that she, as a farmer's wife, took up an alternative role. Other participants, such as Alice McPherson and Mavis Brown, always aligned themselves with hegemonic ideals, for instance being the 'hand' on the farm. Grace Spencer also suggested what the dominant idea of a farmer's wife should be when she commented to me that her sister-in-law "*never knew what it meant to be a farmer's wife, loved being out in the paddocks and up on the hills and all that, but had no meals ready for the men when they came in*".

It seems there are certain expectations about what the role of a 'real rural woman' or a 'farmer's wife' should be. However, alternative modes of behaviour do

exist for rural women and the women who participated in this research displayed this diversity.

Participants also revealed differences in status (and possibly class) within the farming community. For example, Mary Watson knew Ida Fleming (also a farmer's wife) and suggested I might interview her. Ida used to clean Mary's house, when we discussed their friendship Ida said of Mary...

Ida: She was in a different bracket to me you know, I mean he was a big land owner, they were very very nice though, money, 'cause we didn't have any money, but we were on the other scale, but you wouldn't know it, I think she wasn't as well off when she was young, but she's a lovely person. They all (*the women Ida worked for*) belonged to the women's club, they all played bridge, they were doctor's wives and farmer's wives and you know, hoity toity. Although they were higher class than me they never made me feel as though I was the worker, I was treated as one of the family, and as I say all the women belonged to the women's club and all the men belonged to the men's club. But they were all the same type of people, you get some who go to those places are hoity toity, but there's none of them I ever worked with. You call her Mary, but to me it was always Mr and Mrs cause that was the way I was brought up. Working for them was good, you can always find work if you want it and if you don't get above yourself, I mean I know my limitations, I mean I'm not a scholar in anyway. I could have gone into a shop, but I wasn't, didn't have the brains to do anything much.

Ida's was the most explicit expression of class differentiation. Recall, initially Ida and her husband worked (for wages) sharemilking. Both Ida and her husband eventually experienced upward mobility - and acquired their own farm. The point is, that initially (in economic/social terms) for Ida and Mary the differences amounted to more than status -(class). The only other was perhaps George Reid who I sensed differentiated himself from farmers who owned their own farms and had financial family support to do so. Ida, particularly, is perhaps the exception rather than the rule, as most of the other participants gave me the impression that farming was more egalitarian, in that while some farmers may have been a lot more successful than others, the ideology of the 'farming community' overrides status differences. Hatch (1993) also found this amongst farmers in the South Island. It seems to me the *practice* of farming in the Manawatu is the most important point of commonality and unity (for instance all

draw on the history of rugged pioneering) and thus, status differences and indeed class differences are quite secondary with respect to social interaction

REDEFINING THE “FARMER”

Having reviewed the literature on the family farm, some discussion about how the term family farm is defined and used in this study is now necessary. As Friedmann (1980) argues the concept of ‘Simple Commodity Producer’ is a theoretical construct of political economy. It refers solely to economic characteristics and implies nothing about the ‘household’ or the ‘family’. I would add it also tells us very little about the self-definition of the people it refers to. While such concepts have their use, SCP is inappropriate here. Arising solely out of theory (although many would argue it is based on empirical evidence), it has the effect of homogenising in *our* perception what are in fact a diversity of ethnic, social, political and economic histories. Arguably most categories, names or labels do this, but what I have found more useful is to use the themes that came directly from my participants, which consequently formed the focus of my research. Therefore I think the term ‘family farmer’ is more appropriate. While it may not be as theoretically rigid and definable as Simple Commodity Production, it is derived from empirical research and it is informed, and used by and understandable to my participants. The term is flexible - allowing variation in empirical possibility, it reflects the dominant theme established in this research (for example had I concentrated on gender I might have used the term ‘the farming man’) and it is broad enough to incorporate subjectivity and meaning. It is assumed and accepted that ‘what a family farmer is’ in the Manawatu will not *necessarily* be the same elsewhere, thus cross-cultural comparison and the identification of similarities as well as differences is very important.

For the participants in this study ‘family’ has meant the nuclear family, but when family is linked to farm, it is not only the immediate family (nuclear) who fall into frame. It is, rather their family’s (nuclear) relation to successive generations, throughout the patriline.⁸

⁸ ‘Family’ is an ambiguous concept, and when used must be both culturally and historically located. For instance the nuclear family in New Zealand has only been a dominant form post 1930 and until the 1970s.

CHAPTER THREE

THE PAST:

The History of Farming in New Zealand

INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter has revealed that family farming and SCP are global practices, which cut across geographical and social/cultural boundaries. Much of the literature focuses on the similarities which emerge globally and while this is important and necessary it is also necessary to consider how social/cultural processes shape different practices. Specifically, if we are to appreciate the significance of regional variation or be able to predict likely outcomes for farmers and family farming in the future, we need to contextualise contemporary issues within an historical framework. This chapter seeks to contextualise the experience of farming and the construction of farmer identity to historical processes peculiar to farming in New Zealand and specifically farming in the Manawatu.

THE DIVERSITY OF SETTLEMENT

The history of European land occupation in New Zealand is the juxtaposition of various, sometimes simultaneous, sometimes staggered, events. Turnbull (1975) comments that:

The isolation of the new settlements of the 1840s shows very clearly that the history of New Zealand is not the history of one place just because it is the history of what is now one country. It is the history of many separate communities... separate communities which were often very different from each other (Turnbull,1975:47).

For example, Waikanae, only about 80km south of Palmerston North, was a settlement established in conjunction with the whaling station at Kapiti Island, well before 1840. Yet the Manawatu was not cleared and settled until the late 1880s onwards, after the main rail link, the advent of refrigeration, and well after the land wars in Taranaki and the Waikato. Thus, the history of the Manawatu was very different to other regions. The key characteristic of the European settlement of New Zealand was the uneven settlement patterns. Illustrative of this unevenness is the structure of early government, which was based on six provinces covering large areas of land within which settlements were small and dispersed. It was only with the growth of settlements (increased migration) and the consolidation of farming and the basis and desire to establish manufacturing that centralised government emerged. The Manawatu, when compared to other regions in the North Island, underwent development and settlement under very different social and environmental conditions.

THE PROCESS OF EARLY EUROPEAN SETTLEMENT IN NEW ZEALAND.

Abel Tasman visited New Zealand in 1642, and James Cook followed in 1769, but European settlement of New Zealand did not occur before Britain had annexed Australia in the late Eighteenth century. After Australia's annexation visits to New Zealand became more regular. The earliest 'established' settlement of Europeans in New Zealand were in the north of the North Island. The Bay of Islands was a regular port of call to whalers from many nations. Previously (and still occurring at this time) sealers and whalers had lived on New Zealand's coasts, but mostly they left again when their cargo was full, or in the case of sealers, when their ships returned to pick them up (Turnbull, 1975; Smith et al, 1975). From the late 1820s various whaling stations were established in Northland and the far south. Simultaneously missionaries established themselves in New Zealand. They preached peace and offered Christianity as the alternative to the musket combat between Maori tribes (Turnbull, 1975). Combat, which in part had been provoked and furnished by the European musket trade.

As early as the 1770s the British had been interested in the way they might exploit the resources of New Zealand, even the missionaries seemed to come for more

than souls, as Smith et al's (1975) description of the Reverend Samuel Marsden of the Church Missionary Society, in the early 1800s, reveals:

[He] was a strange man with a passion for owning land as great as his passion for religion, and became known... as a self-aggrandizing land-owner as well as a particularly hard Magistrate"(Smith et al, 1975:71).

He was not alone. Missionaries "Like all white settlers... proved to be as concerned to own land as any moneyed Englishman coming to farm"(ibid:74). This desire to own land was a prominent theme in the 1830s, missionaries and businessmen alike were in a rush to acquire land. It has been suggested, their claims on land bought from the indigenous people superseded the actual land mass of the whole of the two islands; and businessmen back in London were prepared to buy it all again (Turnbull,1975:33). State control was felt necessary and after the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi in 1840, independent government was established and settlers set about making 'proper' and 'legal' use of what they believed to be 'waste lands'. Settlers were now to arrive in greater numbers, in an organised and business like fashion.

Edward Gibbon Wakefield an English businessman, was the man and entrepreneur responsible for much of the colonisation in this brief era of New Zealand's history. Wakefield and colleagues created the 'New Zealand Company', with the objective of purchasing land in New Zealand and re-selling it to prospective settlers. The New Zealand Company played a significant role in the settlement of a number of provincial settlements, for example Wellington, Nelson, New Plymouth and Wanganui.⁹

Far from being a pre-capitalist pilgrimage to an untouched, uninhabited land, colonisation was an organised and lucrative business and in the case of New Zealand involved the transposition of a capitalist system onto a settled subsistence/horticultural society. Marketing men were employed to sell the idea and accrue investment from wealthy capitalists, some of whom simply held their land-order as an investment and never intended making the journey to start a new life here. Many did come, however, and those who invested their £101 (or £100 at least in Wellington, according to Hall (1971:47) were given an acre of land in town and one hundred acres in an adjacent rural area (Turnbull,1975:40). Wakefield had no problem with 'selling' land which, because

⁹ The extent of his involvement in these settlements is debated (Turnbull,1975), but is beyond the scope of this thesis.

of its perceived expanse and barrenness, was of little 'value'. His belief was, that land would acquire value through the labour settlers would invest into it. Hall (1971) suggests that in effect, this meant that labourers would not be able to buy land for years. "This would help preserve the due balance between capital and labour so necessary to stability in a real community" (ibid:46). Most of the people aboard Wakefield's ships however, had not paid for land, or even their fare. They were permitted passage to New Zealand because they formed the 'labouring class' who would help the capitalists work their land, tend to their houses and provide other services (Turnbull,1975:40). Wakefield wanted to establish an "organic community" (Hall,1971:46). His vision, in essence, meant transplanting the best of British society and ideology to New Zealand. It was not Wakefield alone who saw New Zealand as an empty land (not only in a population sense and agricultural production but of 'civilisation' too), ripe for the transplanting of the English way of life . In 1838, when the H.M.S. Beagle visited the Bay of Islands, Charles Darwin "was surprised to find how 'civilised' conditions on the William's estate¹⁰ were, and was impressed by the transplantation of a little bit of England into the New Zealand wilderness" (Smith et al,1975:74). Certainly, all settlers brought with them their cultural ideals, values and practices.

Indeed, class distinctions were literally maintained on the boats which brought settlers to New Zealand; with the capitalist class spending the 4 to 5 months in comparative comfort, in spacious cabins and above on deck, and the labouring class spending most of the time below deck in crowded and cramped conditions. For these people, the passage posed a risk and many, especially young children died on route (Turnbull,1975)¹¹.

At this time settlements were very isolated from one another, geographically and socially. With most of New Zealand, particularly the North Island, covered with dense forest, settlement was inhibited, particularly inland. Thus, most early settlements were

¹⁰ The estate of the Rev Henry Williams, a missionary in the Bay of Islands.

¹¹ Although Hall (1971) notes the child mortality rates aboard ship compared to those ashore in the towns where these people came from shows life expectancy on board ship was better than on land at that time, and in fact the New Zealand company did have a vested interest in caring for their passengers.

coastal with contact only available by ship. For those settlements which did spring up in the interior, settlers were inevitably socially isolated.

Settlement was characterised by cultural difference and the immigrants' geographic origin; for example, in the North Island, the township of Dannevirke was predominantly Scandinavian; in the South Island the province of Otago and city of Dunedin was predominantly settled by Scots. While this was the case in many areas, there were also settlements that were characterised by cultural diversity, with immigrants from a range of differing geographical origin sharing the same locale. However, while cultural/geographic background certainly shaped settlement patterns, so too did occupation. Immigration officials recognised and conflated ethnicity and work skills; the Scandinavians for example, were recognised as good tree fellers and bush clearers, and the Scots had skills in shepherding and farm related labour. Naturally these immigrants settled in areas where these skills could be put to work.

In the earliest years whalers, whose work required coastal location, with easy access, formed close knit communities in both the far south of the South Island and north of the North Island. These communities represent too the earliest intermarriages between European settlers and New Zealand Maori. Work prospects have always attracted immigrants to New Zealand, these early years are no exception. With the discovery of gold in the 1850s and 1860s 'diggers' arrived from Australia, China and the United Kingdom and further determined that New Zealand society was to be multicultural. Having said this, it is perhaps also worth noting, that while immigrants perceived differences amongst themselves, for the tangatawhenua these differences were not so apparent. The settlers appeared to share the same practice and ideology and shared in common the fact that they were 'Not Maori' (Pakeha) and had vastly different ideas about land use.

The most overt social differences within the dominant group of settlers (those of British origin) however, were not subtle differences in cultural practice, rather it was class position prior to emigration. That is, differences within communities were made possible by the simple fact that not all immigrants shared the same access or means to acquire resources. Early social relations in New Zealand were shaped by the class system many immigrants had consciously left behind. Most of New Zealand's immigrants were the 'Respectable Poor', while a significant minority comprised the

younger sons of English gentry, for whom the opportunity to purchase land in the new colony was an attractive proposition. Transposed in this new environment, and despite the conscious rejection of the class system by the majority of immigrants, these differences did not vanish and...“There grew quickly a small group of landowners who were to dominate the early years of New Zealand's political, social and economic history" (Koopman-Boyden and Scott,1984:98).

However, this eventuality was not straight forward, nor was it a direct transposition of the classes from the boats into classes on the land. Many of those who initially arrived (and could afford to) went back, due to some disappointment with what they found and lack of work. Contrary to Wakefield's plan, much of the farming that occurred in the 1850s, in the North Island, was the small farmer subsisting on his own land with only the labour of his family (Hall,1971). In most places farmers could not afford the mixed farm style of England, nor could they afford to employ labourers. Many settlers who bought land off the New Zealand Company found it was invalidated by the Governor and often still occupied and defended by indigenous inhabitants (Koopman-Boyden & Scott,1984).

By 1844 the New Zealand Company had gone out of business (Turnbull,1975). Although there was much social and economic distress throughout the 1840s and 1850s (Koopman-Boyden & Scott,1984), the subsequent experience of the North and South Islands was very different (Turnbull, 1975). Many labourers who came to New Zealand could not get waged work, in part due to the inability of some landowners to provide waged work and because of the absence of secondary industry. Consequently, many left. Those that stayed adapted to the ideology of ‘self help’, an ideology which had emerged through necessity primarily, because of the lack of developed wage labour opportunities and because the state provided no protection or assistance for those who did not manage to help themselves. (Koopman-Boyden & Scott,1984:98). Labouring craftsmen had to learn to subsist - many did so by turning to farming - land was now being given away to anyone who wanted it (Turnbull, 1975). However, many people could do little more than subsist.

Sheep were brought to New Zealand from Australia. The wool trade with the United Kingdom became important to the burgeoning New Zealand economy. A number of runs were established in the Wairarapa and Hawkes Bay and later in

Malborough, Canterbury and Otago. Between the 1850s and 1870s pastoralism expanded, due in part to the favourable wool prices and expansion and mechanisation of textile industries globally, and in particular, in Europe (Martin,1990:7). As early as 1850 approximately a million acres of land was in pasture and two thirds of the quarter of a million sheep resided in the South Island (Martin,1990:7). Expansion and the development of pastoral runs in the South Island was rapid, the terrain and limited resistance from Maori facilitated this greatly. In the North Island, Maori resistance and the dense bush covered terrain provided less favourable conditions and the largest properties remained coastal and in the south of the North Island (Wairarapa and Hawkes Bay) with no large runs being established further north.

By the 1870s the rural economy had consolidated and three types of farming had emerged: extensive pastoralism and mixed crop-livestock farming based on wheat (both on a large scale and largely in the South Island) and, in the North Island, mixed livestock farming on smaller farms cleared from bush and fern (Martin,1990:8).

Land in Canterbury was sold in England, and land in Otago, in Scotland. Immigrants who settled in the South Island were more likely to be farm workers or potential farm owners. Although they too tried to establish small mixed farms, farmers who had tried their luck in Australia arrived, and instead of buying, leased large expanses of South Island land for sheep runs, many of these leased properties in the lowlands subsequently became freehold (Martin,1990:9). The success of the early North and South Island runs encouraged further purchasers from England (Turnbull,1975).

Because eventually most of the good land had passed into private hands, and much of this into the hands of wealthy runholders with enormous acreages, new (or aspiring) farmers had to buy the leases off others and as Turnbull (1975) suggests, this contributed to a changing perception of the rights of lease holders. Where once being a leaseholder might have been perceived to have a somewhat tenuous relation to the property and tenants were considered by some to be nothing more than squatters, now they began to think like 'owners' of the land and were eventually also perceived to be by others. It seems that "wool was still the only important export and sheep owners were the most powerful people in the country and were subsequently a powerful lobby group with respect to government policy (Turnbull, 1975: 97). The group of land owners referred to (in many accounts of early New Zealand) as the rural oligarchy or rural elite

who dominated early New Zealand, were sheep farmers predominantly in the South Island (Eldred-Grigg, 1980; Martin, 1990; Koopman-Boyden & Scott, 1984). While many of these runholders not only owned large tracts of land and were actively involved in provincial politics, many too by the 1870s became employers for a large number of waged workers. As Hall notes "The pattern was emerging of the sheep farmer as a large employer almost a patriarch, surrounded by servants and farmhands" (Hall, 1971:105).

In contrast, the dominant pattern in the North Island (with the exception of Hawkes Bay and the Wairarapa) was of the small subsistence bush farmer, who had to firstly burn the dense forest from his land, stage by stage, and grow pasture to feed his stock. Developing the land was slow and labourious, and the bush farmer as a rule had very little capital. It took many years to establish a farm (most of which were less than 100 acres (Turnbull, 1975), and subsistence was all most could derive from their land. Furthermore, many worked for wages to supplement their livelihood. Much of the inland North Island remained 'undeveloped' until the late 1880s, primarily because access to inland areas was so difficult and there were significant difficulties in 'obtaining' land from the Maori, the Maori resistance culminated in the Land Wars of the 1860s.

Who were the early settlers and why did they make the arduous journey to New Zealand? Why were they willing to start a new life here? Migration surged and waned repeatedly for many decades. Settlers first came here in numbers in the 1840s but then immigration decreased as there were little opportunities in New Zealand and great hardships for many (Koopman-Boyden & Scott, 1984). After the wool export industry was established and as long as the wool prices continued to rise, along with the discovery of gold in the South Island, migration to New Zealand increased again and reached a peak in the 1860s. But it was not until the 1880s that the number of New Zealand-born individuals overtook that of immigrants. The population of New Zealand doubled between the early 1870s and the early 1880s (ibid:100).

Thus, the flow of migration to New Zealand tended to mimic the fluctuations in economic opportunity. Periods of outward migration often exceeded immigration; particularly during the economic recessions of the 1850s and 1880s. In 1839 and 1840 the immigrants who came here were primarily from Britain. This group comprised predominantly townspeople and farm labourers. They were leaving a country that, due

to the industrial revolution, appeared to have developed many over crowded cities. They were also leaving a country in which all the land was occupied, and had been held in families for centuries, and a country in which there was next to no opportunity for a farm labourer to become a farm owner; the barriers were both economic and social. New Zealand seemed to offer many the opportunity to break out of their class limitations. It also offered work to those whose trades would be in demand. The migrant population was very young (most under 40) and predominantly male. In the year 1858, there were 76 females to every 100 males, by 1886 after concerted efforts by immigration officials, which involved the introduction of free passage for single females, the gap had closed slightly to 85 females per 100 males (Koopman-Boyden & Scott, 1984: 95).

Although all migrants brought their culture with them, many believed a new type of society could be created in New Zealand; a society based on notions of egalitarianism - despite the varying background of immigrants and inequitable access to capital and resources.

CONCEPTIONS OF LAND OF THE EARLY SETTLERS

Migrants came to New Zealand to make money or at least a livelihood out of the country. This sense of purpose was encapsulated at the time by Samuel Butler when he wrote "The fact is, people here are busy making money: that is the inducement that led them here in the first instance" (cited in Hall,1971:111). But of course the land of New Zealand was not conceived of in purely economic terms. The European settlers to New Zealand brought with them much more complex understandings and appreciations of land, as Shepard (1969) illustrates: there was an overall "association of nostalgia, morality, aesthetics and utility" (Shepard,1969:5). Firstly, the settlers, perhaps like most of us, enjoyed that which reminded them of home. Shepard gives many examples from the diaries he researched, of references to land forms and vegetation which had beauty, value and meaning because they resembled scenes from home and, or, the familiar.

Clearings were welcome as cheerful homelike reliefs from the gloomy strangeness of the bush, especially as these clearings acquired crops and hedges, domestic animals and English weeds (Shepard,1969:2).

In contrast, that which was unfamiliar, such as the strange and dense bush, was often, for that reason, considered of less value. The first thing many settlers did was set about turning the New Zealand landscape into something more 'acceptable', 'familiar'; more like 'normal', that which resembled home.

An acceptable landscape was an 'aesthetically pleasing' one. Notions of what constituted 'aesthetically pleasing' were shaped by the neoclassical 'painterly vision' (Shepard, 1969). Within this perspective the bush could be seen as 'picturesque', and the landscape too was often viewed as 'paradise' in its virgin state. Despite these appreciations, much of the New Zealand bush was destroyed by settlers, suggesting that aesthetics did not take priority, or perhaps that neoclassical aesthetics could be sacrificed for other notions of what is pleasing to the eye. Aesthetic value was shaped and measured also by a moral yardstick. Specifically, Christian morality and perceived immorality helped to shape responses to the untouched 'pristine' New Zealand landscape. Shepard (1969) cites references to the bush covered landscape which suggest that the natural landscape was 'gloomy' and 'barren', an unproductive 'wasteland' which was unacceptable because 'waste' was immoral. Thus :

The evangelist was indignant, for he knew that barrenness was a curse and that barrenness in nature was a sign of the absence of Christian man (Shepard, 1969:4).

Alongside Christian morality, many settlers were influenced by nineteenth century science and, in particular, arguments which outlined both natural and social evolution in terms of 'progress'. It was seen as inevitable, and indeed necessary, that the bush wilderness would give way to cultivated fields and domestic animals. Shepard refers to this as the "redemption of the landscape"(ibid:5). These discourses and consequent actions had implications not just for the landscape but also for the Maori. The Christian and scientific ideologies were merged as Shepard (ibid:5) observes, "The missionary knew that his converts [*the Maori people*]¹², in changing their way of life, would modify the landscape as well as their personalities" (Shepard, 1969:5).

The European settlers came to New Zealand from varying backgrounds with differing desires. All brought with them complex understandings of the process of

¹² The use of italics in this thesis indicate the input or dialogue of the author, except for their use in the bibliography.

colonisation, the ownership of land, historically and culturally specific justifications (indeed motivations) for the deforestation and the 'development' of the land. Although it is fair to say, many simply had to exploit the resources at hand to survive, this necessity was shrouded in a web of other (just as necessary) meanings and consequently most settlers were proud to be pioneers. A settler by the name of Atkinson recalls;

Awakening from the sleep of a contented mind after laborious days with a fresh strength to do [my] share in the glorious work which is set us, of subduing and replenishing the earth (cited in Hall, 1971:128).

THE DEVELOPMENT OF EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL SOCIETY

European settlers however, as I have already suggested, did not simply arrive in New Zealand and transpose their worlds here. What they encountered had a profound impact on them, and different areas of New Zealand provided different experiences.

By the 1870s, the South Island (where European settlement had begun after it had in the North) had a larger and faster growing settler population (Turnbull, 1975:86). Cheaper and more profitable sheep farming for wool had allowed large and wealthy stations to be established since the 1850s. This was achieved in the South Island with relative ease, as most of the large tracts of land taken up by runholders were not inhabited on a permanent basis by the Maori and resistance to purchase was not overt. In the North Island however (except for the Wairarapa and Hawkes Bay), sheep farming, especially on a profitable scale, was not so readily possible, and bush farmers simply subsisted. Maori resistance to land purchase was intense and the consequent Land Wars ensured that the North Island pattern of farm development was to be quite different. The interior of the North Island was difficult land to clear for pasture and until the establishment of the main rail link many of these areas remained isolated. Many farms did not support a very high standard of living until well into the twentieth century. The South Island was popular and because many men missed out on leasing land in the rush, some came to the North Island where land was almost worthless before the 1870s.

In 1891 there was 12,500 000 acres of privately owned land in New Zealand, however, 7,000 000 of it was owned by only 584 people (Koopman-Boyden & Scott, 1984:107). Until 1879, when all men over the age of twenty one were given the vote, only land-owners (with land of a certain value) and men who paid rent (of a certain amount) could vote. Additionally, in 1889 rural votes counted more than townspeople's in general elections - a situation that lasted until 1945 (Turnbull,1975:209). So farmers, particularly wealthy sheep farmers, had considerable influence over the direction of the new nation state, and until 1877 with the passing of the Education Act which ensured free and compulsory education for all children, it was only the wealthy who could afford to educate their children. Significantly too, those farmers who struggled to survive did not pay much heed to compulsory education and school attendance, they simply could not afford to lose their children's labour. School attendance in the late and early 1880s for many children from these farming backgrounds was irregular and was shaped by the seasonal demands of the farm. No real measures were in place to enforce the Education Act until the mid 1880s. It was not unusual for teachers to note the reasons for absence from class, for example, one teacher wrote in the Manawatu at this time, "Today I received a note from Mrs Lovelock saying [her children] could not attend as she required them for pulling turnips" (Newbury School Centennial,1977).

The development of the North Island into prosperous farms before the 1870s was slow. Farmers needed help, financial assistance, a market for their produce and access to both local and global markets. Prime Minister Vogel's 'Public Works Policy' endeavoured to meet these needs and make New Zealand a prosperous farming nation. He began the construction of the main trunk line (Turnbull,1975), and bush farmers along the route worked for wages on its construction and the construction of roads to their farms. Vogel's policies, however, were not completely successful and global factors also mitigated against prosperity (for example, the collapse of the world wheat market). By the 1880s New Zealand was experiencing another recession and depression. Rural wage workers (many of whom had been attracted to migrate to New Zealand by Vogel's policies) faced unemployment and destitution. For those who did own small lots most barely managed to subsist.

However, the establishment of the railway did help the small bush farmers and it became indispensable with the advent of refrigeration in 1882, which made the export of

perishable farm produce, in particular meat, possible. Refrigeration helped pull the New Zealand economy out of the depression. From the 1890s onwards, the bush farm, for the first time, was able to produce enough for the household, domestic market and export market, with a greatly reduced risk of damaged goods due to perishability.

Deforestation of the North Island increased dramatically and farms were established in the interior, notably the King Country. The possibility of profitable small lot farming became a reality, a reality that was greatly enhanced by government policy of the time, which reflected a commitment to the small family owned and operated farm. Significant amongst these policies/powers (under the Liberal government elected in 1890) was the use of powers of purchase in order to redistribute landholdings (from 1892 onwards) and the passing of the Advances to Settlement Act of 1894. Both the powers of purchase and the Advances to Settlement Act ensured that large landholdings were broken into smaller lots and that settlers of lesser means were in a position to purchase. The Liberal government also introduced land taxes to encourage large land owners to subdivide. While the redistribution of land certainly helped potential small farmers in the South Island, it was the Advances to Settlement Act 1894 which had the most impact on farmers in the Manawatu and North Island generally. Through the provision of loans, farmers were able to engage in the newly lucrative dairy farming.

The policies of the Liberal government are particularly interesting in relation to the ideas about farming, and the ideas of farmers, at this time. The Liberals, although not strictly socialist, treated New Zealand as a single, large, state run, primary producing industry, and they encouraged the 'family' operated farm. Although, as Chapman (1975) points out, they did not present their policy in terms of these socialist ideas and as for farmers;

They looked at it from the other end of the process - the individual men going on the land and prospering individually as miniature capitalists, their principal capital being the labour of their hands, their wives hands and often their children's as well (Chapman, 1963:21).

A new character emerged in this era, and he was (the character which later became an established stereotype, was masculine), in self appraisal, not a product of technology and favourable (if socialist) economic policy, but the successful pioneer. This character saw himself as a self made man who had earned the right (through his

own and his family's sweat, toil and labour) to own his own land and reap the rewards for himself. Consequently, once their farms were established, the Liberal ideology of 'success through state support and assistance' was backgrounded in favour of an ideology which emphasised self determination. These farmers, whose success did to a large degree rest on initial state support and assistance, relinquished any support for the 'almost socialist, not quite capitalist' position of the Liberal government, and in the election of 1912 their vote supported instead Massey's motto of "every man his own landlord" (cited in Gardener,1963:29).

Meanwhile, the predominantly South Island farmers on large estates were only partially affected by the state's reassignment of land, although many were forced, either by the state or by economic necessity (due to fluctuations in wheat prices and wool prices) to sell their land and 'retire'. A slightly different farmer had been established, one whose children were more likely to be sent to private schools, than one whose children were too tired to learn and were sleeping at school because they had milked cows at dawn and would arrive home after school in time for milking. (Hall,1971; Turnbull,1975). It should be noted however, that the latter 'type of farm' which relied on the labour of children did not cease to exist, rather it coexisted alongside farms where owners could afford to pay for labour. Although New Zealanders were developing egalitarian values, what Hall (1971) calls the 'ancient regime' - or the dominance of sheep farmers in society, continued to exist. Thus, in describing the social life of early twentieth century New Zealand, Hall suggests that this persistence revealed itself as "a pervasive respectability [respectability might also be defined as denial] tended to assimilate the classes (Hall,1971:185).

While these stereotypes of the North and South Island farmers are generalisations; as sheep farmers certainly did exist in some parts of the North Island, and small diary farms did develop in the South (and not all farmers succeeded economically in either Island or situation) the very different origins, settlement patterns, pioneer experience and political treatment of these often geographically distanced groups, was indeed a division politically. For instance, as Gardener (1963) highlights:

North Island and South Island farmer, diary farmers and sheep farmers, could never find enough common ground of grievance on which to form a full-scale Country Party like the Australian one (Gardener, 1963:27).

Perhaps their only common ground was their beliefs (supported by policy) that they were the economic backbone of the country and that what went on in towns was of secondary importance, and as Gardener (*ibid*) suggests, this belief, re-reinforced by the greater prosperity of farmers, led to town / country antagonisms.

The Reform Party pandered to farmers and to their desires for individual control, freehold ownership, and personal benefit from the increasing value of their "hard earned" land, that they, as labourers, had personally succeeded in developing. The Reform Party opposed land nationalisation and so did farmers. It was anti-socialist, which was a point of agreement for farmers and businessmen (Gardener,1975:27). By the turn of the century New Zealand political discourse asserted the dichotomy of capitalist versus socialist as either/ or alternatives. This dichotomy was not just apparent in the dominant discourse of the time; rather, it was also reflective of social divisions and affiliations. To take one of many possible illustrations: it was the farmers who rode horseback into town on the side of the employers, enforcing law and order of workers during the 1913 waterside strike.

In 1919 the returned service men from World War One were given financial assistance from the Government to help them buy their own farms. This, along with the change of leases to freehold, saw another period of rapid land acquisition. Prices rose and many farms changed hands more than once (it has been suggested that about half the occupied land in New Zealand changed hands at this time (Turnbull,1975:175). Although over 4000 soldiers were helped onto farms by 1933, more than a third had failed or sold out by that year (Koopman-Boyden & Scott,1984:108). In the 1920s, many farmers had a mortgage on their land and prices were far from stable. Exports, which were mostly from the primary sector, consistently decreased as the world sunk into the Great Depression. It is estimated that more than half the farmers in New Zealand went bankrupt (Turnbull,1975:176). However, the 1920s is now recognised as a time when a national identity began to emerge, as Hall states:

The nineteen-twenties defined our view of ourselves as a society which placed unique emphasis on fair shares and equal opportunity for all" (Hall,1971:206).

People from all walks of life had suffered in the depression, and as Airey (1963) states, at this time "The small working farmer [was] more worker than capitalist"(ibid:38). The victory of the Labour party in the 1935 election brought huge changes to New Zealand, both socially and politically. Although one of the first things this government did was to control and guarantee a minimum price farmers would get for their export products (through The Primary Product Marketing Act), its policies of assistance were across the board. In 1938 the Social Security Act was passed and this signaled the beginnings of state assistance in health and further allowances for free education to all New Zealanders.

After World War Two when the soldiers returned, land sale prices were held down by the government, and in 1945, legislation ensured that the rural vote no longer carried more weight than any other.

Hence, a new era was emerging in New Zealand. While technology was making farming more intensive, secure export trade with Britain assured prosperity, and with established secondary industry, New Zealand could no longer be characterised as a 'subsisting' outpost. Furthermore, government policy no longer just favoured the primary sector. Farmers still perceived themselves as the 'backbone' of the country and perhaps rightly so at this time, but as Turnbull (1975) notes, some farmers failed to see, while others predicted, that the "increased population and changes in methods of farming were making the children of farmers more and more dependent on the towns for a chance to make a living" (ibid:210).

Post-war prosperity did not last. By the 1970s our primary market for exported farm produce: Britain, was no longer stable. Britain joined the EEC, and in effect, set her off shore farm adrift. Interest rates and land prices began to rise, and consequently acquiring land for many new young farmers became difficult, with many more established farmers with mortgages facing deeper debt. It also made the financial return from farming look inadequate (New Zealand Planning Council et al,1982).

Because costs to farmers were rising more than prices, the government introduced incentives and subsidies for farmers, including supplementary minimum forward prices (SMPs) or income supplements, export initiatives, tax concessions and cheap loans for development. These measures were not cheap for the government and were unpopular with the tax paying public. Some farmers even criticised the subsidies

and incentives (New Zealand Planning Council,1982:10). The farming industry was stagnant.

Another trend was occurring in rural New Zealand in the 1970s, and that was the diversification of land based production and use. Not only were some farmers moving away from traditional animals into new livestock such as deer, but land traditionally used for farming was being encroached upon by orchards, and even more threateningly, the forestry industry. Still other farms were being subdivided into 'unproductive', 10 acre blocks for urban commuters. In the 1970s, numbers of 10 acre blocks of land increased, as did large farms over 200 hectares, but the number of farms in the middle bracket decreased (ibid,16). The 1970s saw a change and diversification in the composition of the rural community, and many people from the 'traditional' community, that is, farming families that had been on the farm for several generations, felt that their way of life was threatened (The New Zealand Planning Council et al,1982:12).

In 1984 the fourth Labour government came into office. This government embraced New Right economic policies that encouraged the deregulation of the economy and the creation of a 'free' market. The state was no longer prepared to support any industry which could not survive on its own. Through subsidy it seemed, urban industry was burdened with propping up agriculture. This was not compatible with new right ideology, nor was it popular with urban workers. In 1986, Trevor de Cleene, Undersecretary for Finance at the time, is quoted as saying to a group of Rotarians in Palmerston North , that some farmers;

Have been deluded by policies of addiction and drunk on the heroin of subsidy... the country can not now understand why many people in the cities consider it only just that the wheel has turned (Southland Times, 25 March 1986, cited in Christie,1991:14).

Within three years the government had abolished most of the state subsidies to the farming sector (Cloke,1989:38). New Zealand's agricultural industry was now exposed fully to the force of global markets. Farming (and the New Zealand economy as a whole) entered a new phase.

Referred to as a period of 'rural crisis' (Campbell,1994), many farmers could not survive without subsidy, they were unable to meet their debt servicing commitments and

therefore lost their farms.¹³ In 1986 the government introduced some rural policy measures,¹⁴ these included a rural bank discount scheme, however, subsidies appear now to be a thing of the past.

So far I have considered national trends and developments. However, it is now necessary to consider the historical underpinnings of family farming in the Manawatu and the relation between national trends and regional specificities.

THE HISTORY OF THE MANAWATU

Bush felling is a noble work, there the effort of colonisation is more palpably displayed than perhaps in any other mode of utilizing wastelands. (Words of a pioneer quoted in Saunders, 1987:15).

The history of European settlement in the Manawatu was unique as it was one of the last settled expanses of the North Island. "In the 1870s, Palmerston North and Feilding, Sanson and Foxton were no more than clearings in the great forests of the western coast" (Turnbull, 1975:125).

Before 1870, the Manawatu was covered with dense forest. Travel through the North Island for the European was next to impossible. People travelled between the settlements of Wellington and Wanganui along the coast line and Foxton became the centre of the Manawatu with its port serving the flax and timber industry. The settlement of inland Manawatu followed the creation of the main trunk line and occurred in conjunction with saw milling. Palmerston North developed on the Papaoea clearing which the government purchased from the Rangitane, and was a creation of the Wellington Provincial Government. It served as a milling town and as a coach stop for travellers, eventually it took over from Foxton as the centre of the Manawatu.

Most of the towns and communities in the Manawatu were planned carefully in advance. For example, Feilding, established in 1874, was "Born of a desire on the part of several English gentlemen to do something for the poor of London and other overburdened cities in England" (Saunders et al, 1964:6). The creation of Feilding was achieved by corporate control and was populated by "displaced Buckinghamshire and

¹³ See Chrisite (1991) for case studies of families who had to leave their farms during this period.

¹⁴ These are outlined in "A Guide to the 1986 Rural Policy Measures" issued by the then Minister of Finance, Roger Douglas, and the Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries.

Middlesex farm labourers" (Hall,1971:129). However, Saunders (1964) goes on to say that what eventuated was very different to what was originally planned for these communities. Instead of the planned towns being occupied by the labouring class and small farmers who would provide labour for, and serve, the encompassing larger landholders,

The development of the dairy industry permitted many members of the agricultural labouring class to become proprietors. Consequently the socio-economic structure which eventuated was different from the one planned" (Saunders,1964:80).

The establishment of family farming in the Manawatu took place under advantageous conditions, after the main rail link was established, after the advent of refrigeration and during the early and prosperous years of dairying. Small farmers were also greatly aided by the Liberal government's policy, in particular the Advances to Settlers Act of 1894.

The first challenge to be met by these pioneers was to clear the dense bush. Farming families cleared their farms bit by bit. Big trees were felled one section at a time, burned up in dry weather and the land sown in grass as soon as possible. Farms during the 'breaking in' period barely provided subsistence, and many farmers supplemented their livelihood with wage labour during the time between felling and burning (Saunders,1964:154). During this time; the late nineteenth, to the early twentieth centuries, the Manawatu was characteristically covered by dense black smoke clouds; more bush was burned than was ever milled, as farmers urgently set about creating pasture they could live off.

The prosperity of New Zealand in the years of arrival was based on the illusions of the pioneering generation: pioneering is in part a state of mind. The mind an axe felling the tallest trees, creating lawns of pasture grazed by vast herds of sheep and cattle (Hall,1971:135).

An experience of pioneering life in the Manawatu is illustrated by Grace Spencer who spoke of the small farm she grew up on in the Manawatu, situated on some of the last bush covered lands to be cleared.

Grace: My parents were married on the 5th of June 1892, and my Mother had a brother who had drawn a section in a ballot and he lived in Kimbolton with their parents. ... My Mother was a music teacher. Well, she rode around the district on horse back teaching the piano and giving

music lessons, and she got away into the country and there she met Dad. And anyway they were married and then rode through what was more or less a bush track, the twenty miles to where they settled. Dad was actually the third owner of the farm and in those days if you built a farm cottage you built it by a creek - that was the water supply, and when they settled you couldn't see the road for the trees

Grace's description of the district corresponds with the more general descriptions provided of the terrain in the interior of the North Island at this time. As Grace goes on to describe, life was difficult for these early family farmers. In particular the life of farming women was very difficult, with few public amenities and access to towns not easy, both a man and women's day to day life involved a lot of labour:

Well that was an interesting beginning, and later on, I don't really know the year, he built a four roomed cottage nearer the road, couldn't be more than three or four chain from the road, and they lived there all their married life and my mother had ten babies and all were born in that house. When a baby was due to be born a neighbour would come in and Dad would ride off twenty miles to the nearest telephone to call a doctor, and I don't know, I'm quite sure my mother didn't go to hospital for any of the babies because I remember my sister June, she was born in 1909, I was born in 1904, and I remember going round to the side window and looking in and seeing mum lying there with this baby.

As Grace describes it the division of labour where the man typically laboured on the farm and the woman in the home, was very much determined by a woman's ability to nurse up to 10 children in often isolated locations, with minimal support from neighbours or community. Grace describes the living conditions in the cottage:

Well, we started with this four roomed cottage, my mother started with a camp oven - it was a big open fire place, and eventually a dover stove was put into the room that was added. Don't ask me how she coped cause I don't know, because she wasn't bought up to that kind of thing - she was brought up to teach music, and I also remember they added a big living room and a bedroom and a passage and a bathroom, up until then we had not had a bathroom, on Saturday nights one of the washing tubs - the big galvanized tubs - was brought in in front of the kitchen range and we were all bathed in that tub of water, and um... it was about, just after the first World War when we had an extra room added and it was the bathroom. And the tanks always went dry in summer, there weren't enough tanks, but we all survived! And today I have three sisters living; one's 94, one's 92, I'm 90 and my sister June is 85 - all the boys are gone.

Grace's childhood and the experiences of her parents were typical of this period in the Manawatu and elsewhere in New Zealand. I asked Grace if she could recall her grandparents and their 'history':

Grace: Yes, now my Father's parents never came to New Zealand, my Dad and his brother, Dad was 18 and his brother was 16, they got a job to bring a mob of merino sheep to New Zealand on a sailing boat, they left England in 1884, and they lost seven sheep on the way, and when they were finished with the sheep at Wanganui they were given 2 and sixpence each. It took 93 days, just over three months. Eventually he and his brother bought , and of course it was ridiculous, a 2000 acre farm, all hills. Well they stayed there for a few years till they realised there was no future in it for them, in the mean time an old uncle and aunt of mine had opened a general store, never called them shops, always called it the store, and I don't know how he got it but Dad got this 400 acre farm and he and mum married and lived there all their married lives. And my uncle who was with Dad was just buying a farm and getting engaged when he died - so that was that.

Again, Grace's description of her families' settlement and attempts to establish a farm conform to the national pattern at this time, many farmers did not succeed during this time of recession. As Grace recalls it, her parents did not make money out of farming either:

But my Father never made any money, however, I always recount that if there was a cricket match in Wellington, Dad could always find the money to go to the cricket. And my mother's people lived at Trentham. Now my Mother's parents, this was in the days - and believe me they were pretty hard days, there was nowhere for old people, they just had to live with the family, it was Mum's turn...look, she didn't even have a spare room! And my two older sisters just had to sleep where they could so that Grandma and Grandpa could have this bedroom, they would stay with us and we just had to bear it. Grandma was just a perfect little lady and Grandpa - I didn't like him at all, we just had to live with it, I don't know how she did it, there's one thing I do know, Dad was always very nice to Mum's relations and Mum would say "There's was one thing about your father, he'd always mind the baby"!

Obligations to family, due in part, no doubt, to of a lack of state assistance as well as 'family values' in this era, determined to a large extent the 'lot' of Grace's mother. Here, she is responsible for the care of the aging 'patriarch and wife' - despite the hardship and lack of room. Grace's mother's family took a different route to New

Zealand, and here she reveals how their cultural identity became an issue aboard ship and how securing land prior to emigration was a risky enterprise:

Well, when they all (*Mother's parents*) came out, they went to Australia, and they came out from...well Mum says she just missed being a Cockney because they could hear Bow Bells, I suppose you've heard, anyone born within the hearing of Bow Bells was considered a Cockney..... and they went first to Australia but they didn't stay there long. One of Mum's brothers married in Australia, Sydney I think, and two of Mum's sisters married, but she and her younger brother came with their parents. Well she and this younger brother drew a section, you'll understand of course there was that system where you'd enter a ballot and you'd draw a section, and this section had no flat land and it just slipped away from the road like that!

Despite the fact that it was less than desirable they settled on the land, which was bush clad. Grace continues,

Grace: Yes, oh yes, and so they went there, Uncle Stan and Grandma and Grandpa and my mother. How she learnt to ride I don't know, or where she got the horse? She was an accomplished pianist and she rode all over the district. Well, when she married Dad she said her honeymoon was riding for miles in the dark to the farm!

Grace's mother was a young woman when she emigrated to New Zealand from Australia, and once married her life revolved around familial responsibilities while her husband worked the farm, for little profit,

Grace: Well, I think she was somewhere between 17 and 18 when she came from Australia, and they came from New Castle to New Zealand to this farm. Eventually I think they moved away - but this dreadful experience, here a woman with a houseful of children with her, no conveniences, no conveniences whatever, and with Grandma and Grandpa... It was her turn to have them, well of course she had them, she had to make butter and to make bread, everything was done in that kitchen and as I say she lived there, well as I say, she died when she was 73 and I think she was still living on the farm, but Dad survived her to 86. He loved to tell a little story, Mum used to say "I'm sure your Father's over weight, he must be 15 stone!" and Dad would say on the quiet, "She doesn't know but I weighted myself in Feilding and I was 17 stone"! That's quite a good story isn't it - and well, she had ten babies, that house is still there and we were all born in it, but one little boy died, he was eighteen months old, mum was in bed having another baby. She heard him coughing and she thought; "He's got pneumonia" and he did have and he died, but all the rest of us survived.

My eldest son was here the other day, we were talking about hygiene and so forth, and he said; "How often did Grandpa have a bath"? I said "never", for years there was no bath, he couldn't have a bath in a thing in front of the stove - but did it make any difference? He lived to be 86! And we had no refrigerator, we had a safe as they used to call it, and the flies could always get in the safe, it doesn't bear thinking about!

Grace went on to describe the farm and the clearing of the bush which was occurring across the Manawatu at a rapid rate throughout the 1880s and 1890s.

Grace: Well it was 400 acres, and there was 200 acres of flat land and 200 acres of hill country. Now this is what is hard to understand, it was the most beautiful bush, but it was just cut down and burnt, and I remember men who worked all winter bush felling, and then Dad would have a burn in February or late autumn when things were dried, and they'd have a burn. Onetime my sister June went with Dad, and he suddenly remembered that she had come with him, he had to get himself from somewhere to somewhere to make sure she was all right cause the wind changed and the fire went with it. I can remember those burns, and all my life I was used to big logs lying in the paddocks, and big stumps, cause it was big timber, and I go up there now and there's not a sign! They've all gone, all that beautiful timber, oh really...that's why you bought the land - to get it into grass, the better the bush the better the land, that was the point, poor land wouldn't grow good grass, it will only grow scrub.

Eventually it was all gone, although Dad did leave a few patches in little gullies where we kids used to go and play, we loved that bush. If you go up there now there's a reserve, but you don't see much bush, not till you get right up into the ranges, we would be about 5, 6 miles from the foot of the ranges, and our house is still there - it doesn't look too bad! Across the road is an old, old, old, house that hasn't been cared for, it's still standing because they put such good timber into them you see, they had only the best of the timber, different people started sawmills - dragged out the logs they could.

The family farm ran both sheep and cows and some cropping was also carried out after the land was cleared:

Grace: "...On the flat we always had a herd of cows, we milked the cows by hand until milking machines came in. I was a teenager I think when we first got our milking machine and when we first started dairy farming - there was what they called 'home separation' - no - when they first started all the milk, in big cans, was taken to the factory to be separated and your account was credited to the value of the cream and you took home your skim milk to feed to the pigs you see and that sort of thing. My mother used to get so impatient, "you know your father's

down there earning”, and she was quite right, but they had to wait their turn, and they would have their cans they had taken their milk in and they would get those cans fill of skim milk you see, what a waste of time! And no work getting done on the farm, that’s the way of the land.

Because the land was very hilly in places her parents also ran sheep:

Grace: “Yes, and then Dad bought another 300 acres of not bad, fairly hilly country, and it was mostly in grass, and it is still part of the farm, 700 acre farm. Dad never made any money, the most intriguing thing about my father. He left England when he was 18, what did he really know about farming? What did he know about farming in New Zealand? He was the most successful man with cropping and we always had a team of horses and a plough, and a disc and harrows and drill, and Mum used to complain, “Oh your father is always doing somebody else’s”. It was a fact, all the neighbours used to say “go and ask Mr Spencer”. He couldn’t say ‘no’ to anybody.

Her father’s lack of financial success is attributed to the fact that he was not a farmer when he emigrated, but most of all to his ‘nature’. Grace’s father came from the South of England and her mother was a Londoner. Because he helped others out, he did not have time to help himself. I asked Grace if the neighbours ever reciprocated, she replied:

Grace: No. That’s what used to make Mum so cross. She used to tell dad off.

Grace was not sure what her father did for a living in England and describes the emigration pattern of her father’s siblings:

Grace: Well, this is what I have never been quite sure, his mother had six sons and six daughters, and his father, well, all that Dad would say was “he wasted his substance at the Hadfield Inn!” And I believe one brother went to Canada and was never heard of again, and one brother went to South Africa.

The history of family farming in the Manawatu did not occur in a vacuum. National trends are reflected in the success and failures in farming ventures in this region from the beginnings of the 1880s. Grace’s account reveals that family farming was difficult, even when it was established after the main trunk line, after refrigeration, roadworks and after the government had established policies to support farmers of small

lots. However, her account focuses on this early period, her family's fortunes did improve once the farm was established, and here again the national trends with respect to market and state policies are reflected in the fortunes of the family farmers in the Manawatu. What emerges in both Grace's and other's accounts is that there were differences between sheep and dairy farmers, both with respect to status and wealth, the latter holding a generally lower status and over a longer time period, accruing less wealth.

Due to the relatively late development of family farming in the Manawatu and the character of the land, the Manawatu never boasted large estates and nor did the area accommodate or support farmers of substantial means. For this reason, status and wealth differences between the different farming types were not as overt as was the case in the Hawkes Bay, Wairarapa and the South Island. Remembrances of kin who emigrated with little and worked hard to gain little were recurrent amongst the participants of this study. Despite their contemporary realities, most believe that the earlier generation's 'poverty' and hard work (the latter which is continued in the present) exonerate them from any accusations of privilege that town dwellers might direct. Furthermore, their current practice and the extent of their labours on the farm are couched within a similar idiom as those of the recollections of the past. They are the descendants of pioneers and as such resemble them in character and action. Their working lives on the farm serve as proof that they have earned all that they have gained.

CONCLUSIONS

Like many contemporary nation states, New Zealand has had a colonial past, but particular conditions of settlement have forged a unique history. Due to the diversity of settlement, regional differences in the development of agriculture occurred. While a gentry formed in the South Island and limited parts of the North, most North Island farmers practiced subsistence farming at best. All, however, had come with the prospect of improving their lot, for many this meant owning land, something they were probably unable to attain in their homelands. Further to this, land was seen as more than just a way to earn a living, it was aesthetically appreciated by some, but more often seen of as

raw and wasted and in need of cultivation. While the state actively advanced the development of a prosperous agricultural industry for the nation, farmers pursued individual and familial prosperity. The character of the New Zealand family farmer began to emerge - that of a 'self made man'. While initially prosperity did not come to all, for the bulk of New Zealand's short post colonial history, the farmer has been generally prosperous, and until the mid 1980s this prosperity was protected by the state. The 'rural crisis' emerged because of the removal of state protection in the form of subsidies and the consequent exposure of the family farm to global market forces.

In the following chapter I will consider some of the central ideological themes which emerge from interviews with a number of retired Manawatu family farmers. Some of the regional differences which have informed both the material and ideological existence of contemporary New Zealand farmers will also be examined.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE PRESENT:

Contemporary Accounts Of What It Means To Be A Farmer

In A Family Farm

The aim of this chapter is to gain understanding of the subjective or emic perspective of farmers that is, what it *means* to be a farmer in the Manawatu. The information was gathered through intensive interviews with a small sample of retired farmers in the Manawatu. In order to move beyond description my analysis seeks to represent the ideology of farming as a multi faceted cultural construction.

The participants in this study are all retired farmers, at the stage in life where they have left their farms either through succeeding them to the younger generation in their family or selling them out of the family. Restricting the sample population by age cohort is significant with respect to findings; as Voyce (1994) suggests, "Most farmers are caught by a series of conflicting aims, which shift and change according to the life-stage of the family" (ibid:73). Many New Zealand researchers have been aware of the importance of these lifestyle changes on subjectivity. For example, Keating and McCrostie-Little (1994) discuss some of the expectations of two groups of farmers; those at the stage of retiring from farming and those beginning the process of taking over the farm.¹⁵ As I have previously mentioned in the introduction, the study by Harris (1980) cited in Tripples (1987) showed how the main goal of New Zealand farm labourers tended to shift from owning a farm for the under 19 farm labourer, to owning a home and educating children, for the over 40 age bracket. It thus appears that farmers of different age groups at differing stages in their lives, will be preoccupied with different concerns.

¹⁵ Keating & McCrostie-Little also compared the gendered expectations in each group.

The open ended style of interviewing I used with the participants meant that it was possible for these concerns (ideas and perspectives) to be expressed, these concerns are necessarily shaped by the life-stage of the participants. Succession, for example became a dominant theme and it is possible that this is because most of the participants had recently completed the retirement process and left the farm. Succession can be expected to be a prevalent issue for the cohort in the process of taking over or leaving a farm but may not be a pertinent issue for those farmers, in the middle of their career on the farm.

As indicated in the preface, my interest in retired farmers had already developed before this study commenced. As I wished to investigate issues of succession, family farming and farmer identity, I decided the retired cohort were probably an appropriate group to use as they had presumably been through two stages of life where issues of succession were likely to come to the fore; taking over a farm, and leaving the farm. Furthermore, they had completed a farming life-cycle which meant they would have had a full range of experiences, and could now look retrospectively over their entire life on the farm. I was concerned that if I asked farmers in the middle of their career on the farm "what makes a farmer a farmer?", they would simply refer to its current day to day activities. Retired farmers are in a position where, when asked about their identity, they have to go beyond "I am a farmer because I farm" and consider whether their identity extends beyond activity.¹⁶ Finally, I chose participants who had moved from the farm, and into town, as I hoped this transition meant they would discuss not only issues of moving off the land, but also some of their beliefs about 'country' and 'town'.

RETIREMENT EXPERIENCE

The transition off the land throws into relief some of the central themes of a 'farming identity'. Because the people I interviewed were all in a senior cohort, retirement is central to their current experience.

¹⁶ Having said this a study of the ideology of contemporary farmers would be just as interesting and allow for comparison, however, this is beyond the scope of this study.

Retirement for the participants in this study occurred for a variety of reasons. For William and Alice McPherson it was their health. William was forced to retire because of a hip replacement operation and the timing was 'right' for Alice too, as she says;

Alice: When we made the decision to sell out I really felt I had had enough and the doctor said to me: "you've been working on the farm all your life and now the work is too heavy for you, too heavy for a woman, I don't want to see you in here with all these problems again 'till you sell the farm or stop milking cows because" he said "now I think it's too much for you!". And I was getting these terrible headaches and lots of other things as well, I said to William that we'd have to get somebody in!

Health was also the reason given by Mary Watson. Mary's husband became very ill and could no longer cope. George Reid felt he had no choice as the farm he managed was being sold, and Ida Fleming struggled for several years after her husband died and was pressed by her children to finally 'pack it in',

Ida: My husband was very young when he died, you see, so we never had any plans at all, we'd only been on our own farm for about eight years when he had to give up. We hadn't even got that far, not even thinking about it, it was just that we had got onto our own farm and there we were going to stay. We'd probably still be there if, you know....but it wasn't to be. I loved farming, it was never any trouble to me, I loved it. One of the boys was going to stay but he got tired of being tied down all the time so we finished up doing it. I had four years after my husband died and the family were all gone. They didn't want me to stay up there, I lived out away from town quite a bit and so the kids decided it was better for me down here. I don't regret it - good neighbours - so long as you keep busy that's the main thing.

Jack Dunthorpe, Howard Brown, and Mavis and Fred Brown all retired because their family successors were ready for more control. Jack however, didn't realise there was the need for retirement until his wife pointed it out...

Jack: I expected to die on the farm. I had no idea at the time, because it was my wife that suggested that my son wanted to do things his way. I wanted to do it my way, certain things, and she said; "look its better to get out" so we looked around for about two years but we decided to build [a house] so we bought a section and built.

Howard and Fred and Mavis on the other hand were conscious of the need to make way for the younger generation;

Mavis: Our youngest son, he was going to move in with his girlfriend and rent a place in the district and we thought it was better for us to move out and let him stay on the farm.

I asked Howard when he and his wife decided it was time to move,

Howard: I think probably in the last two to three years I sensed my nephews, one anyway, was itching to get more control and I felt well fine, this is healthy. I wasn't like some farmers wanting to die on the farm, they get in the way of their kids, they would be far better off to get out of it and let the young people - well in our case two nephews - get on with it. I see it so often, we must have done it alright because they're pleased to see us when we go out there!

The decisions to move off the farm and into town were also diffuse, William and Alice had to sell the farm out of the family so couldn't stay on it. As Mavis has said, she and Fred wanted to make their house available to their son, but Mavis also saw it as a way to get Fred to let go of his work responsibilities...

Mavis: And another thing I felt - while we were on the farm, Fred would get up at the same time every morning and go out and milk - he didn't have to do it, like if he was going to play bowls he would still get up and go and milk and then off to bowls. There was no need for that but we couldn't tell him that, he couldn't sort of.... So that was one of the reasons why, when we talked about coming to town, I was quite happy about it, 'cause I felt he wasn't making the effort to retire. He still thought he had to be there! I thought it was better for him to be right out of it.

Jack says it was because if they built another house they would over-capitalise the property,

Jack: If I stayed on the farm we might have had to build another house, because the boys were getting married you see. So we thought there was no use building another house on the farm because it was going to over-capitalise the property. And so, we've got out of it and the distance from the house to the farm is nothing - not today.

Proximity to social services also shaped the transition. For example, Howard and his wife wanted to be close to health facilities 'before they needed them'...

Howard: More-or-less yes, we had our objectives, and the other factor of course is you look at the health situation, I know people

who retired Foxton beach, Himitungi beach, right, one partner gets ill and comes to hospital, they've got to rely on friends to drive them up to visit. And this is something we wanted, both of us, handy to facilities.

A theme which seemed quite common amongst the participants was the need to keep busy once they had left the farm; hobbies such as bowls or gardening are common. Fred and Howard were quite adamant about this need, as Mavis told me it was because,

Mavis: They saw their father retire, not far away, but he had no interest outside, except a small garden, and he would look so miserable, and I'm sure he was. He was interested in sport but he'd just watch TV (*turning to Fred*) and I think you sort of realised that you didn't want to end up like that!

Both Fred and Howard it seems made a conscious effort not to follow in their father's footsteps, and took up other hobbies while they were still on the farm. Howard was perhaps the one who most actively prepared not to become "pathetic" (as he termed it) in retirement, because he actually had another career and hobby outside of farming for his whole working life. He often spent several days a week away from the farm and was already well integrated into town life by the time he retired. I asked Howard if he had always known he would leave the farm to retire...

Howard: Yes, well when we were signing up for this house my lawyer said "well I wish you better luck than my brother-in-law, he sold his farm so he couldn't go back, he spent the first two years sitting looking out the window". Well I thought 'how pathetic!' But I was ... well in the late 1950s I took up a hobby and had quite a successful career at it, virtually reached the top of New Zealand, and of course that took me away from farmers! I used to say to people when I was showing them round back home; "I can walk into that workroom and forget all about cows". But more importantly, I had friends and still have friends in every town in New Zealand.

William was another participant with outside hobbies and a bridging career which helped smooth the transition between the farm working life and town retirement...

Alice: William would have felt the change more if he hadn't had his club to go to.

William: I did have a job off and on for about three years when we first came to town too. As far as retirement goes you've got to have

something to do I often wonder how I had time to milk a herd of cows!

George Reid continued with employment after shifting to town also, and his retirement was a process of slowly reducing work. He never really avidly took up a hobby as a replacement activity. Jack Dunthorpe however, never had time on the farm to develop his hobbies, when he retired, Jack took up gardening and house decorating to fill in his time, even to the extent of decorating for other people.

Jack: I always say I work eight days a week, well I'll tell you what, it would be more than eight days for some people. Farming you know I started at five am and even in town here I still get up at half past six, I was away doing a garden this morning, see I look after, now that I'm in town, about eight houses - gardens. I've done a lot of painting, and I can't stand doing nothing, that puts me to sleep - I shouldn't tell you. I get told off, my wife sits there where you are sitting and I might just doze off for ten minutes. I do all my own wall papering and painting, I've wall papered several houses.

GENDERED EXPERIENCE OF RETIREMENT

The women in this study, although having individually different experiences, had a different overall experience to the men. Mary never worked the farm herself, she spent her married life belonging to groups and on committees; retirement was something which happened to her husband. Mary simply slowed down progressively with her commitments, and although she had sentimental attachment to the family farm, it made only a very little difference to her day-to-day life to shift from the family farm into town. She maintained the same social group of friends and the same day-to-day activities.

Mary: We nearly murdered each other for a while. I was happy as I did my usual role in the home and continued with the committees I had belonged to throughout my married life, but my husband used to wake up in the morning and say "What am I going to do today Mary?"

Most of the other women interviewed had had more involvement in work on the farm, but it seems that this was not their primary role. Rather, it was their husband's and when the couples started having families it was the woman's labour that became

domestically centred and seemed to remain so. Their help on the farm was a supportive secondary role. In retirement, Alice, Mavis and Grace impressed upon me, that when they moved from the farm to town, a major concern, source of comfort, and activity was having family such as their children and grand-children nearby.

Mavis: We think we've done the right thing going somewhere where we can go out to the family and enjoy our grandchildren and still have our friends around us.

Alice: You've got to have some interest really. I was lucky in a way too, although William had his club and although they have ladies nights too, I met a lot of nice friends through that, but when we shifted here our daughter and her husband and little child had shifted here and it wasn't long before she was pregnant again. I used to love helping out there and I still do - although they've [their daughter and her husband] been separated for two years now, having family has helped me a lot!

It seems this life-stage transition is slower for women than it is for men, as it begins for women when their children first leave home and they lose part of their role in the home. They still continue with their mother and homemaker role, but 'retirement' as such, is something which affected their husbands directly and indirectly affects them through the husband/wife relationship. Women respond by accommodating 'his' transition into retirement and thus become part of the process themselves. There appears to be no major disjuncture in their daily lives when they move to town. They remain active workers in the domestic sphere. They still cook and clean a house and spend time with family and the same friends and groups (although over time as Grace Spencer is experiencing, some of these activities decline). Her experience is a little different from the others as she has made another move since her first retirement home.

Grace: Well, when I moved from the country to the town I still had my own home, you'd be surprised how much work you can create for yourself in your own home but these days there's not much I can do here. The shower and the hand basins are cleaned every day and now-a-days decent beds, what do I do? And I find I fold my things decently and pop them away in the linen cupboard and the linen cupboards always tidy. I do a bit of hand-washing that's nothing much, actually I've been in better health since I came here, I've been bored with nothing to do! And it's just a little far to walk to the shops, the bus goes Wednesday mornings, but if I go up to the shops what do I do?... go to the post office, buy some stamps, buy some oranges...Ha! I tell people I

miss my husband more, now that I'm older, than I did when he died, because I would be happy for him to do things for me from time to time. I'm not so keen to travel now because when I get there I just have to sit there - there was a time when I'd take over the kitchen, bake bread, rock cakes.

The idea that men retire and women don't is supported by Keating and McCrostie-Little (1994) They suggest in their study; "Only one of the retiring generation women described herself as "retired". This is perhaps not surprising as 90% of the retiring generation women classified themselves as having a homemaker role and homemakers by necessity don't retire" (Keating and McCrostie-Little, 1994:29).

For the men, retirement can mark an end to day-to-day activities and they experience the need to start a new routine. However, most of the participants seemed to cope with the change by filling their lives with other activities. The least traumatic experiences were those in which the participant had bridged the change, by having outside interests while working on the farm, hence the change in routine was less severe. (This process was similar to that taken by most women). William and Alice both bridged the change this way.

Alice: When we finally decided to shift we didn't notice it a great deal - we didn't miss things a great deal, well, we missed the dogs, but not the cows in a way, because we both got to a stage where we were getting a little sick of the sight of cows and cow muck and worrying about things. And when we came over here it took us a little while to settle in but we never noticed a sort of anticlimax or anything (turns to William) did we, because we had other interests.

William: We were so busy I've always been a keen gardener, lawn, vege garden, all occupies time, you've got to do something.

For other men, being able to frequent the farm and progressively reduce their involvement (while simultaneously developing their other interests) has allowed them to bridge the gap between farm working and urban retirement.

Jack: It's convenient - it's only 10 minutes to the farm! Its very handy and since I've been living in town I've been going down and helping with rush work such as shearing, I'm a fleecero, something like that, well, I mean, I know the ropes. When the boys wanted to go away I'd just go down and look after it. Well, it's good for me too, a lot of people ask me why I don't play golf. I say "no, I'd rather hop in the car and go down and get the ute and a couple of dogs and shift the stock from this paddock, in to that, and walk around back home again

- there's your exercise". But I do play bowls, and I've done very well at that.

I asked Fred and Mavis Brown about how they found shifting to town.

Fred: It wouldn't be so easy for us if the farm wasn't there. I'm sure it wouldn't be. I like being able to go back.

Mavis: I think that's probably helped us a lot you know.

Fred: If it wasn't there we probably wouldn't be so good in town.

Mavis: (to Fred) No, well you wouldn't be. You see, he has these big plans, these goals; Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, so you know he knows he's going to do that, and he might plan to do something around here one day and then he's got it in mind tomorrow, I'll go to the farm. But otherwise he might have to get a part-time job.

FARM SUCCESSION

Four of the participants in this study passed on their farms to the next generation of their family. I shall now consider their experiences, but not being able to pass on the farm reveals as much about the importance of family farm succession in the Manawatu as succession itself.

Perhaps the most archetypal example of family farm succession is Jack Dunthorpe's family. His family has been on the same land since the 1880s, although they have bought extra land over that time. Currently, the fourth generation are the owners of the farms (Jack's sons and nephews). Jack is very proud of his family history and he reveals that the selection of a successor is not based necessarily on birth order (although he was first born). Selection of a successor rather, is based on notions of aptitude, skill, and capacity for work. It is important the farm is put into the best hands.

I asked Jack Dunthorpe about the history of his family farm;

Jack: Our family still owns the property and have owned it for the last 110 years. Part of the property, 50 acres, is now farmed not by me but by my brother's son, that's whose got it, cause he had less land than I ever had and he needed it so he's got it and he's looking after that property and the house too.

Jack is the eldest son, but it was not this status alone which determined his succession.

He describes why he believes he took over the farm,

Jack: I think it was only natural, I always had a tremendous capacity for work. And I was running my own farm or trying to run it, plus working for the family. The others didn't tack on... I shouldn't tell you this but I did more than the other two brothers put together. I seemed to have the ability to know what was required and got on with it. I didn't have to be told, people...some people, are like that! My father, I know he used to say "You two boys there, you want to do what Jack does...the two of you together are not doing what he does".

Jack was so sure the farm should be carried on, he began gifting it to his sons when they were born.

Jack: My sons have the farm, now I don't like to enter too much into what went on, but when they were born I started to put them in, in a very small way, because probate¹⁷ nearly ruined me, and I told you how my uncle helped me. So, I said I'd put the boys in the property so they'd have very little probate - nobody knew how long I was going to live, I might have been dead at 60, I might have been dead at 70, you don't know.

Jack's father died young and this shaped Jack's expectancy of life length. Speaking of his father's death Jack comments:

Jack: And worst of all he died in a high wool year, wool was 10 shillings a pound. And I had sheep worth twice as much as they are now, so.. oh well they were worth it especially when they had a bit of wool on them, but anyhow that didn't last long. They have now got all the land freehold. It's all in the family - I'm alright - I'm not worried, because we've got a car, we've got a home, roof over our heads, our superannuation, and a little bit of money earning interest -now that's all we want. And we go for trips.

It is interesting that in recollecting his father's death, Jack recalls also in detail the price of wool and the eventuality of freehold. When Jack passed his farm on to his son he also gifted the stock:

Jack: [*He inherited*] the whole lot, I just walked out of the property. I'm very lucky to have family carrying on. If I had no sons or had sons and none of them farming, I would have carried on as long as possible - sold out - and come to town.

¹⁷ Probate refers to the tax on the personal property of a deceased person. It is often called Estate Duty and all that was in a person's will and gifts made within three years of their death, were subject to this tax (IRD:1983). In 1992 estate duty was abolished.

Jack outlined the importance of having sons succeed the farm,

Jack: Oh, I think it's a good thing, as far as I'm concerned, 'cause I know they'll carry on and farm to the best of their abilities, and I know if there's anything they get stuck with, they ask me and if I can help them I'll do it. I think there's a lot of farmers who don't treat their family very well, I do really, I've been a person that sticks to home life and that sort of thing. Now if I had been a scatterbrain, if you like to call it that, I might not have got anywhere near the position I'm in today.

Because Jack's farm was such a large scale and prosperous operation he was able to compensate those who did not inherit the land. He gave money to his daughters (to help them and their husbands onto farms) and he bought another farm for his younger son (who subsequently sold it to put himself through university).

Howard, his brother Fred and Fred's wife Mavis (who has married in) are also part of a long lineage on a farm.

Howard: In 1912 my grandfather bought our farm, the farm my father farmed, of course he had a big family and in those days he and one of his brothers farmed it. They virtually got pocket money, they didn't get regular wages, anyway my dad got married in 1924, then in about 1935-36 my mother was going crook about the little old house they had. So it finished up my grandfather giving the farm to my father and his brother complete with mortgage, and so Dad built a new house which we moved into in 1937. The farm was dairy, predominantly dairy. Dad died in 1959, he sold the place to my brother and myself and we farmed it, in fact we still own it. We doubled the place as so many did in those days, we doubled the size of the farm and it's a pretty nice operation. My nephews - we have no family- but my brother has two boys and they lease the whole thing.

Despite the most financially advantageous move being to probably sell outright, it seems the importance of family farm succession overrides this concern, even for Howard who only has nephews (not close kin such as sons) on the property.

Would most farmers sell their farms when they retire?

Howard: Well, in most cases they would have family on it. I guess they would sell it eventually but usually to family. Quite candidly you know, we look at our farm now, it's a very good place, we'd be miles better off to sell the whole thing. There'd be such a queue at the door, good house, beautiful rotary shed you know...

But family comes first for Howard for a number of reasons,

Howard: I think its easier to do it that way - I think farmers' sons have an advantage because a farmer is prepared to guarantee his son more than a bank would. I think it might help that we were fairly successful financially too, but we made a lot of investments off the farm too, you know. I was able to buy a house in town without having to drag anything out of the farm, I think probably that was, you know - a lot of farmers are perhaps lucky if they buy a house in town with what they get out of the farm. So, the lease money forms the majority of our income; that will change if they perhaps consider to take over the farm themselves.

When you got the farm off your father was there ever the possibility that he might sell it to anyone else?

Howard: No, no..no..you see, as I say, for some years we had been leaving money in, we were always very grateful for how our father treated us really.

Mary Watson is one participant whose farm was not handed on to her offspring. She married a farmer, the farm had been his father's to whom she said "it was more of an investment", but her husband (and his brother) both became avid farmers. When Mary and her husband retired the farm was sold because Mary's son didn't want it. She said, "He had it drummed into him at boarding school in Wanganui that only thick people became farmers!" Mary recalled how upset her husband was that his son didn't want to take over the farm "because he felt it was such a great lifestyle". Ida Fleming had a similar experience, after her husband died, none of her children wanted the farm.

William and Alice were from a long lineage of farmers but they were not in direct lines of descent. They are part of a large group of farmers in New Zealand who were either female or not the eldest or most eligible for family inheritance of the farm property, but, despite this they went farming and bought their own farms. William and Alice's children didn't want their farm. Alice suggests that this is because they were more financially modest than some farmers;

William: We didn't expect the kids to take over the farm, we tried to give them an education that would set them up more or less for life.

Alice: They all wanted to do something else you see, we encouraged them to go and learn a trade, learn something, because they could always come back to the farm. Now the middle boy, we always knew would never come back to the farm. He was never interested and he had this bad leg, and so the doctor said to encourage him to do

something with his hands and his brain. But he was never really interested in the farm anyway, where as the other two were, but not to the point of... well as Tom (*their son*) said, "Its only a small farm and all the work's done, there's nothing for me to do on it, there's no challenge, its not really big enough for me. I don't know that I want to go back to that district anyway". The kids said "Why don't you get Dad to sell the farm Mum, because none of us want it". None of them wanted it, they were all interested in different things, so anyway we put our heads together and thought perhaps we would. Anyway I think possibly, probably, some of the bigger places where there was more money, and more richer people went into these places, I think they handed them down from son to son more than perhaps smaller farmers or more recent farmers. And I think more so in the past than now.

Grace Spencer, originally from a farm, married into a farm family. None of her children took over their farm either, but Grace describes the transfer of her natal family farm and in doing so expresses the problems, but also the value in traditional family farm succession.

Grace: Well then, of course Walter went to the war, he's my eldest brother, He came home and he wanted to get married, so the farm I think was more or less made over to him, and a house was built about a mile away and Mum and Dad lived there. Well then, what did the second son [her next brother] do? - Nothing for him - nothing for the girls, just accommodation for your first born - doesn't bear thinking. But after a number of years there was nobody to take over the farm, Walter's son had walked out after a disagreement, and Frank and my sister-in-law Margery, lived on the farm. But Margery never knew what it meant to be a farmer's wife. Loved being out in the paddocks and up on the hills and all that, but no meals ready for the men when they came in and that sort of thing - that doesn't work out.

Who has the farm now?

Grace: It was sold out of the family - very sad, you see there weren't any grandsons and Walter had fallen out with his son! The house is all shut up now and everything, but as I say it doesn't look neglected! Which pleases me, the fellow who lives five miles down the road owns it. By the look of it, it looks to me like he makes quite a good job of farming it.

Finally, George Reid was the only person I spoke to who hadn't actually owned the farm he ran, although it was in the family, as it was his cousin's farm (His cousin's husband couldn't manage it himself due to a physical disability). It seems George would have liked to pass on the farm had he owned it, even though he also was not part

of a direct line of descent in his own right. I asked George if any of his children went farming:

George: No, David (*George's son*) wasn't interested anyway, only Stan, (*his son-in-law*) he would have, he would have loved it too, he tried to find the finance to buy that place, so he and June (*another of George's daughters*) could have ended up farmers! I'd have liked to have seen it carried on. I probably should have bought the farm. I think myself that it could have been worth quite a bit to have bought, and Stan could have taken it over, 'cause David wasn't interested. It's surprising how many boys aren't interested in taking over the family farm. David didn't have anything to do with the farm. He went to work virtually straight after school. David had no passion for farming at all!

Participants who were part of a long patriline of farm descent were the most adamant that such succession was important and should continue. However, among those who did not pass on their farms, such succession was not unfamiliar to them. All had been part of farm families, even if they were not succession beneficiaries themselves. Examining empirically the situation of my participants, it can be seen that 20% inherited their farms but did not pass them on to family, only 40% inherited their farms and were partaking in family farm succession at the time of their retirement, and another 40% neither inherited their farms nor passed them on, meaning they had not participated in family farm succession at any stage of their lives. However, because my sample is not statistically significant; it is difficult to generalize about this diversity. It would be interesting to know how dominant succession is amongst New Zealand family farmers. However, this sort of analysis of course overlooks the fact that just because family farm succession does not occur in all instances of farm turnover, this does not necessarily challenge the ideal. As George's example suggests, the belief in such a system may be the reason some farmers actually purchase, and value purchasing, their farms. Hatch states:

As a rule the reason a farm family increases its holdings is not to climb the agricultural ladder or the ladder of wealth, but to accommodate the children. A farmer who purchases additional farmland almost invariably has at least two children who want the farm, and the home place is not sufficient to their future needs (Hatch, 1993: 103).

Family farm succession is then not something that just occurs in the South Island, but is prevalent in the North Island too, at least in the Manawatu. It is not the act of receiving or passing on the farm, however, which counts here, what is important is that family farm succession is an 'ideal' amongst farmers. An ideal kept alive by the act but when this is not possible, kept alive by their belief in it and the recognition that others do achieve the ideal. The aspiration of farm succession means that the importance of the farm extends beyond the individual, or one life span. The farmers themselves in this world view, become a link in a long familial chain in which the land (the family farm) is the enduring generational and tangible component.

Family farm succession also has very practical and tangible consequences for the patriline, most significantly in terms of family capital; a flow which is very necessary today, as George told me;

George: I wonder sometimes, people going into farming these days, you've got to start with money, hundreds of thousands in stock alone - and that's not a very big herd. He's got a noose around his neck for a very long time, unless he's got someone to help him from the word go. You see they're paying up to \$1100 for a dairy cow now, a head! You get 100 cows together and that's a lot of money tied up. Gifting it to the children, that's about the only way they can pass it on too, they've got to dodge the tax, big cost in giving it; gift duties!

In searching for the reason for the continuance of family farm; succession, economics and cultural values cannot be separated out, for, as I will discuss later an economic farm is *more* than a profit generator, it is a *cultural value*.

FARMING AND IDENTITY: *THE IDEOLOGY OF FARMING*

THE MASCULINITY OF FARMING

The first thing which struck me in the process of conducting this research was that farming, at least for this cohort, is a masculine activity. As I have previously mentioned, some of the women in the couples I rang did not feel that they should participate. If I had not been given the names of a few widows who agreed to speak

about their, and their husband's experiences, I would have had a predominantly male sample.

Division of labour on the farm and gendered expectations were revealed when I asked participants to tell me about their lives on the farm. For example, Mary worked in the home, brought up the children and looked after her husband. She engaged in some tasks such as rear motherless lambs and feed calves, but generally the farm was her husband's arena. And as Alice reveals:

Alice: We worked along together, we had to because we didn't have room in the house for a hand. The kids, when they were little, they would help me feed the calves and when they were bigger they'd go and help their father down the farm. When we first got married and we were managing the sheep farm up there, we helped the shearers, but then I had a baby. When we set off we had to be careful with our money - and we were careful, it was hard work. We were managing the sheep farm for two years of our married life and then we shifted back the other way, share-milking for seven years. I used to do what I could to help Will, but when I had three little children it was a bit difficult because I had no electric range - only a wood range to cook on and it was an old house, barely fit to raise a family in. But we coped and then we bought our own farm, which had a much nicer home, but even in those days we were kept busy.

Although Alice worked on the farm, she explains this by saying they had no room for a hand, this suggests she was the substitute for a farmhand. She 'helped' William, implying the responsibility for farm work was all his, and when she started having children Alice reduced her work on the farm and concentrated on her domestic work. The situation was similar for Fred and Mavis; Mavis in the supporting role as reserve labour only.

Fred: We mostly milked seven days a week, when we first started milking we were up at 3.30, 4am in the morning. In about 1955 we built a more modern shed; a herring bone shed, so it was quicker then. And then about ten years ago we built the rotary shed, which was a lot quicker again.

(To Mavis) Did you get up at four in the morning as well?

Mavis: No, definitely not! At various times - there were three of them when Fred's father was there, though he used to say he was the boy around the place 'cause he took all the orders! But after we were married, if his parents were away or when Howard (*Fred's brother*)

was sick, I'd go and help then. Once we had the children I didn't do much on the farm.

It seems also that my sample is not an extreme case, other research has shown that:

The business of farming is conceived as inherently masculine and this is so even though women's labour is extremely important on many properties... the labour she provides is conceived of as supportive, not primary, and in an important sense she is viewed as subordinate to her husband in the operation of the business (Hatch, 1993: 11).

Why is it that women of this cohort, farming with their husbands, are seldom, if ever it seems, considered actual 'farmers' in their own right and instead assume the role of farmhand/helper outside and homemaker inside? It is possible that things are slightly different for younger cohorts of working farm women who have 'earned' the title of farmer, perhaps by working full-time on the farm and showing the right attributes. It has been suggested "a woman must prove herself, a man need not, to deserve the title 'farmer'" (Keating and Little, 1991: 29). Also, most of the participants were nearing or in their last decade on the farm, when the Matrimonial Property Act was introduced in 1976. Before this Act, and thus for the majority of my participants, had their marriages dissolved the women would have been unlikely to get any share in the farm. It was assumed that it was the husband's business as he was the 'farmer'. Is it also possible that the title of 'The Farmer' can only be applied to one person? The equal partnership of brothers Fred and Howard who both considered themselves 'farmers', neither being the 'hand', suggests that this is not the reason. Is it because a "farmer" is a full-time position, unattainable if one is carrying out domestic duties simultaneously? This is one possibility or justification for the situation, but a more fundamental reason is because the ideological construction of the "farmer" is inherently masculine. The traditional gendered division of labour which exists more broadly across New Zealand society is very much a part of the farming life style. All the attributes of a farmer are inextricably linked with hegemonic masculinity in New Zealand. Here Jack Dunthorpe talks to me about his life as a farmer;

Jack: I was born and bred on the land, and when I left school my father asked me would I be interested in taking on the cropping, that was growing potatoes and supervising the grass seeding and that kind of thing - which I jumped at - and I think that's what made me! I have had the fortunate experience of being able to work men - have the gift-

and got on very well with them, it's helped me right through. As a teenager, not much bigger, that's what I was at that time, I was not much more than 18 or 19 then, and I was working men twice my age, and got on very well. I enjoyed farming there's no doubt about that! I've been my own boss just about my whole life, I never had any trouble getting out of bed because I always used to get up and milk 2 or 3 cows by hand (milk and cream for the house) when I first left school, and carried on for years *while I was raising my own kids*.

You enjoyed the hard work?

Jack: Yes - I just seemed to be made that way - as I said before I had a tremendous capacity to work and was always up with the work that had to be done, such as dagging, shearing, fencing, ploughing and cropping - I just kept going. I'm lucky to be a jack-of-all-trades. When I left school I biked 6 or 7 miles to take engineering and drainlaying and all that sort of thing. See, before Massey [University] had a machine to dig for tunnel draining we did it all by hand! And I've learnt that trade. When I was a kid we used to, in the winter time, do a lot of that sort of thing, what we called the off time of the year, which is now; June or July, 'cause as soon as you get to August/September you're flat out lambing. Plumbing was another thing I did. See, on a farm I think it's a good thing to be able to do all you possibly can - well, we had to, because I don't think there was the number of people to come out and do it more or less on the spot. But that's alright. I was lucky to have taken on plumbing, and that was only 2 or 3 years and then my younger brother took it over, 'cause I taught him, and he was better at it than I was!

Several themes about New Zealand hegemonic masculinity and the New Zealand concept of 'farmer' emerge here, one is domination and control; Jack says that he had that gift of "being able to work men". Another is strength, in this case Jack's capacity for hard work, and finally, being a "Jack-of-all-trades" able to fix your own problems, and being multi-skilled and not needing help with anything¹⁸. Masculinity, then, is an important part of being a farmer.

¹⁸ Being a Jack-of-all-trades is very much a farmer's calling, see appendix 1 for Richard Christie's description of the Jack-of-all-trades farmer.

FARMING AS ACTIVITY

The identity of a farmer is also linked to 'action' or performing the associated tasks. I asked Fred if he still considers himself a farmer.

Fred: I still go out there and do a bit of work - so, I guess I'm a farmer, I'll never change!

Fred gauges his identity here by the 'activity' of farming; he is still a farmer because he still 'does' farming. Jack also associates being a farmer with activity.

Jack: Yes, well I do consider myself a farmer, a 'jack of all trades', I'm pretty slow now!

And George implies also that being a farmer is the activity of farming.

Do you still consider yourself a farmer?

George: Yes, a retired farmer. But the way farming is done today, all the new techniques and so on, ah, you couldn't go back to it - its totally different.

Almost all the farmers I talked to described for me in detail their lives on the farm and what they did; the activity of farming and the skills involved. The identity of farming, then, it seems is a verb, like any profession the description of a farmer is a response to "What do you do?" This aspect of the identity of 'farmer' implies that a farmer is a person who does things, particularly to land and stock; it is the labourer dimension of being a farmer. This is an important facet of being a farmer, being capable of the hard work, and doing 'labour' is a source of pride. As Hatch (1992) noted of rural New Zealanders, "Manual labour is as important as the pursuit of wealth for a man's sense of moral worth" (Hatch, 1992: 187). Part of being a farmer is being a worker. Historically, as we have seen, Manawatu farmers broke in the land and made something out of nothing; prosperity out of hardship. Pride in such a pioneering spirit and value of the work ethic is still evident in the ideology of farming today. When I asked participants about their family histories most expressed a pride in the hardship that had been experienced and the hard work that saw them through.

Alice: My parents were pioneer settlers out at (name of place) and Dad went out there after the First World War then he and Mum got married, and all they had was a horse and gig, they would go to town

by horse and gig. Then they had we kids - we didn't get as much as a lot of children, by any means, because our parents went through a very bad slump, and things were very hard - a time when farmers were driven off their farms because of the slump. But Dad worked very hard and he used to go out rabbiting and sell the rabbit skins and my grandparents were very good. Grandma used to sew and knit for us, it was a great help. But they were tight days we never got very much - I don't think I ever got a birthday present 'til I was 13 or 14. We never knew what it was like to have birthday parties, we were lucky if we saw an orange in six months. Dad worked very hard on his farm because there was nothing on it at all and he had to build his own house.

It is perhaps the moral value attached to labour that unites retired farmers in the Manawatu as a class. As I mentioned earlier, Ida's expression of class differentiation was the exception; the feeling that prevailed was more one of egalitarianism. Despite the differences in wealth or 'success' on the farm, I found that when I asked: what makes a good farmer?; answers reflected the ability of activity on the farm, not the result or wealth derived from it. For example, I asked George: what makes a good farmer?

George: It's attention to detail a lot, knowing your stock, you can see a sick cow, you don't need to walk out in the paddock and you'll spot it, you know straight away and can get on to it.

Thus, it seems that farming, although a profession, is different to other business pursuits. Farming ability is more important to a farmer's status than land size or wealth (Hatch,1993). That the concept of the farmer as someone who does things to the land, implies the land is somewhat of a tool. A good farmer then, can and does, do the most to the land: perhaps transforms it as pioneer farmers did. Action brings satisfaction. Land (which may initially be considered wasteland or in need of improvement) is made 'good' or 'better' and thus *important* by the action of the farmer upon it. Aestheticism rests upon reflection or the results of action, hence land accrues value and meaning through the labour acted upon it. Although land may have potential value (due to the ability of farmers to work it and process it) it does not have intrinsic value. Meaning and value is worked into it.

George: You have to work hard 'cause it's a job that will go downhill if you're not careful, if you haven't got a care about it. If you don't watch what you're doing with cattle you know, it'll go backwards, the quality will go down very quickly. You have to build it up too.

It is important also to note that New Zealand farming takes place within, and has been historically part of the capitalist mode of production and that therefore part of the ideology of farming is linked closely to the idea or ethic of hard work and producing a profit or return at the end of the day. Incorporated into what is important for a 'good' farm then is that it be an economic unit. Here, financial viability, and creating and sustaining that viability is part of the moral value system.

FARMING AS PASSION - *THE LOVE OF IT!*

Being a farmer is much more than being a hard worker or labourer of the land, or running a healthy business; there are many other facets to the ideological construct of 'farmer'. Why do these participants in retirement still consider themselves farmers? In their justifications for their continued identity as farmers other aspects of the ideology of farmer were expressed. Here, I asked Jack what makes a farmer a farmer and he reasserted the notion that 'doing equals being'; both farming and gardening are incorporated into this conception. He also suggested that being a farmer cannot be reduced behaviouristically to the activity of farming alone.

Jack: Just the love of it, I think so, just the love of farming and the ability to work and see your improvements in stock breeding and that sort of thing. You could just about call me a gardener now, you couldn't have called me a gardener down home - only because of the time factor. I still have farming in my heart - I never forget it, I'm still a farmer! I think farming, because it's born and bred, not only the farming but everything that goes with it, and I think that's important, such as what I told you about drain laying, paperhanging, painting. I painted all the houses and buildings on the property - several times!

How is farming different to other professions?

Jack: With farming hours don't come into it as far as I'm concerned. You set a job and do it until it's done and when it is then you've had enough for today, but I can't say much about it really - the life style - I think it's your make up,... well I've just been born and bred to it and just loved every minute of it.

In telling me what makes a farmer a farmer, George makes the distinction between just acting like a farmer and actually being one.

George: I think you've got to want to farm and have a love for the land and stock. I've always felt that way myself. I've always had that feeling for the land and stock, otherwise you'd be like Murphy [*who bought the farm George managed*] wasting time - he wasn't a farmer. He never loved it, he was only there for what he could make out of it, instead of making money out of it, he got a guts of it too [*In the end Murphy had to sell the farm, as he had too much debt*].

So being a farmer is more than just doing the work a farmer does, you have to have a "feeling for it" or a "love of it"; rather than just being a job it's an intellectual and emotional state of mind. That is not to say that Manawatu farmers are 'emotional' as this is not really a characteristic valued by the ideological construction of the 'farmer', but 'real' farmers do have feeling and passion for what they do, and take pride in their work. This state of mind or internalization of the ideology of farming is not something which ceases to exist upon retirement, because it is not entirely dependent on the activity of farming. It is intertwined in the farmer's identity and sense of self, and therefore cannot be discarded. I asked George if he missed the farm once he had left.

George: Yes, in a way I did, you never seem to lose.... I don't know if it's the way of life, but the attraction to farming, and the stock and all that sort of thing, I still have that feeling about it.

Several of the participants expressed how deep this personal sense of oneself as a farmer is, through the idiom of 'nature & culture'; the concept that being a farmer is 'born and bred'. Mavis talks here about one of her sons who took over the farm;

Mavis: The eldest, he was a natural farmer right from a little fellow. I don't know you must be born to it I think - cause we always thought our oldest would be a farmer right from a little fellow. "I'll go with you Dad, to get the cows in", even when he was at highschool his friends would ring up, I remember hearing a conversation one morning, a friend rang up to see what he was doing, he said;" Oh I don't know I'll probably be feeding out with Dad". He must have asked him if he wanted to go with them cause he said "Oh no, I'll want to work" or something, but that's what he wanted to do. Perhaps we were lucky. They're either born to it and they enjoy it, or they're not interested at all!

As I have previously mentioned, Jack thought it was "only natural" that he would take over the farm because of his "tremendous capacity for work". Jack told me several

times he was “born and bred” a farmer. Following Jack’s lead, and what George himself had already told me, I asked George if he agreed with their assessment:

George: A farmer has a love for the land and stock. Yes, I think it is born and bred, I knew as a young lad that I was [*a farmer*].

Even Howard, who had had an off farm career all his working life and was perhaps the most integrated into urban society, saw being brought up on the farm and having that ‘feeling’ or identity bred into you as important.

And what makes a farmer a farmer?

Howard: I think those first few years you know, what do they reckon; “give me a child of seven and I’ll show you his life”, I think there’s a bit of that in it.

THE FARMER AND THE LAND

Farming then (being ‘born and bred’ into a farmer) is a cultural identity as much as it is a practical profession. So, where now does the farm (that is, the land) fit into the construction of what it means to be a farmer? What is the relationship between the ‘farmer’ and the land? I asked George how he would describe his relationship to the land;

George: More sentimental than anything, that’s what makes it different to other jobs.

Do you think farmers are more attached to their environment, to the land, than other people?

George: Oh yes, I think so. I think the majority of older farmers in particular, I think they are very attached to their land and what they do on the farm. And animals too, it’s surprising particularly when you get in to some of those farmers with pedigree stuff - they live for that!

‘Sentimental’ is perhaps the best way to describe the common relationship a farmer has to his farm (the stock and the land); this is how George described it to me. Two other fluid and dynamic factors which inform specific farm-farmer relations however be considered.

The first, I have already discussed at length and that is the concept of family farm succession. As I have argued, a particular piece of land will become more important if it has been passed along the family line. However, this is not to say that first generation farmers will not develop a similar emotional investment in their farm if they believe their son is going to carry it on. Nevertheless, not *all* the land farmers may have is instilled with this value. Jack, whose family are traditionally sheep farmers, at one stage bought a dairy farm (although he got a share milker to run the place). He sold it years later, but told me there was never any thought of selling the original family farm, although he did buy surrounding land which did become incorporated into the original land. The dairy farm had a lower subjective value, firstly, because it was not the original family land, but also Jack was a sheep farmer and, like his father, he had a share milker on the property to milk the cows and he never lived on this land. It was solely an investment for him.

The second factor that is part of the ideological construction of 'farmer' and needs to be discussed here, is the notion of ownership, and how ownership informs a farmer's relationship to land.

THE IMPORTANCE OF OWNERSHIP

Farming in New Zealand grew out of (often state supported) private enterprise. It developed and exists within a capitalist economy which values individual ownership. In "The Way of The Farmer" (1977) Chambers, a farmer himself, suggests that "farmer contentment and food surpluses are the result of the satisfied farmer who is secure in the ownership of his land" (Chambers,1977:11). His argument is that it is a farmer's ultimate goal and right, to own his own land, and "denied that elation which is experienced when a farmer's work load is rewarded with strengthening of land equity, a farmer's production drive withers" (ibid). Although Chambers' argument is romantic and moralistic, it is of use here because Chambers' expresses a subjective perspective, one common to farmers, that is the importance of owning your own land¹⁹.

¹⁹ Chambers' text must be seen in the political context of the 1970s in which it was written. It is a reaction to the threat of rising land prices and inflation. I use his work here only as an example of the subjective perspective of a farmer because the argument he constructs to articulate his perspective is not academic and is based on false premises, loose logic and moralistic philosophising, relying on the work

The importance of ownership and being the proprietor, and thus self employed, was something also expressed by many of my participants. I asked Howard, for instance, what he enjoyed best about farming;

Howard: I'd have a more firmer opinion about that today than I probably would have then. Probably because sometimes you envy... the grass is greener on the other side of the fence. When I see what people have been through, you know quite talented people, men and women who haven't got a job one day when they get to work - this uncertainty - but at least we were in command and made our own decisions! I think that would be it ...self-employed!

From this it could be concluded that ownership is an important goal valued in the ideological construction of farming and, as I suggested earlier, something which obviously informs the relationship a farmer has to his land. One might expect that the farmer who owns the land he works will allow himself to become more attached and invest more sentiment into the farm, than a farmer who does not own his land. This is the conclusion Chambers would have us come to, when he asserts "production incentive is obtained by ownership" (Chambers,1977:32). He claims, "if his end goal is ownership of land and you deny him this you stifle a farmer's driving force" (ibid:25). Chambers also gives an analogy from an urban setting to illustrate the difference between the way those who own and those who do not, treat their land. "Urban man beautifies his land...he is continually maintaining the appearance of his home. Compare his love for his section with that of the tenant who tends to let the weeds grow" (ibid:18).

We could conclude then, that ownership is a prerequisite to really caring for the land. Several things however, suggest that the issue of ownership and relationship to the land is far more complex. Take George for instance, the only participant in this research who never actually 'owned' the farm he worked. Instead he managed his cousin's farm, because her husband was unable to do the work due to a physical disability.

George: I started my working life as a farm labourer. I didn't know much else! It probably shouldn't go on record but I didn't get on very well with my Dad and he kicked me out when I was 15 years old and I never went back.

of a sociobiologist and fragments of Chinese poetry. It may be of interest to the reader to note that Chambers also argues that urban people are in a spiritual vacuum and strike to relieve boredom and that Polynesian people are 'non-goal' orientated and men are naturally territorial by instinct.

Were you the oldest?

George: Nope, I was the third boy, there were six in the family. After I left home I went and worked as a farm hand. Then I went on to manage Lucy and John's farm.

Did you ever feel that you should have owned the cattle yourself?

George: Oh yes, I did! What I should have done is bought them, it would have given me a good income.

And more control?

George: As far as being in control was concerned I don't think it would have made much difference - I was virtually in control anyway, if there was any big money I had to get their permission, I'd just see their solicitor and he'd say yes or no. There was no question of how I ran the place it was just left to me.

When I asked George Reid how he knew it was time to leave the farm he laughed and said,

George: Oh, I didn't know anything about it!

Julie: (George's daughter who was present for part of one interview) He didn't want to, he left under protest really!

George: They (the owners who were George's cousin and her husband) decided to sell the farm out there and I thought, 'well it's not much good.' They wanted me to take it on different terms altogether and I thought I was a bit too old to start a new life, so they decided to sell it! Oh, I could have bought it, they didn't actually offer to sell it to me, but I could have bought it. It was too late in life, I should have bought it earlier. But it didn't eventuate, I wasn't keen enough to stick my neck out - use somebody else's money - that's what you had to do.

After George had told me he thought older farmers in particular are very attached to their farms, I asked if this was the case regardless of whether or not they owned the farm.

George: Well, it did make a big difference but... a lot of people who don't necessarily own it, get attached to the place where they live... I treated it [the farm he worked] as my own.

Although George never actually owned his farm, he loved it and deeply cared for the land and animals. After he left the farm he missed it, saying he never seemed to lose the feeling he had for farming; the stock and the land. George was bitter about having to leave the farm; he had spent nearly his whole working life on it. However, although he was related to the owners, because he was not in a direct line for patrilineal inheritance, he received nothing. The owners' only daughter and her husband were not interested in farming, so it was sold out of the family altogether. George felt, they sold it out from under him.

It appears then, that while the *relationship* of the farmer to the land is not so much affected by the legal status of ownership (but by a broader, more over-riding concern about control and perceived authority and right), ownership, or some form of control over the land which offers equivalent security, is important. George felt, until the very end of his time on the farm, that he had this control so he treated the farm like it was his own. Despite his feelings however, in the end, the owners sold it. George felt, until the very end of his time on the farm, that he had this control so he treated the farm like it was his own. Despite his feelings however, in the end, the owners sold it. This is, more accurately, the final relevant facet of the ideological construction of the farmer (and could be seen as a manifestation of the concerns of the masculine and capitalist aspects of the construction).

There are other instances, conducive to emotional and physical investment in land, which do not involve 'ownership'. Even Chambers, in a seemingly contradictory twist, points to tenant farmers in England who farm well (and one assumes with little weeds) because they feel very secure and feel it is their farm (Chambers, 1977:38). The most poignant example however, is closer to home. Following is a discussion of the conclusions of Dominy's (1993) research considering the relationship tenants on high country leased farms have with their land, and comparing their situation to that in the Manawatu.

THE SITUATION OF SOUTH ISLAND HIGH COUNTRY PEOPLE

Dominy's (1993) research discusses the relationship that South Island high country people have to land. Dominy argues that in contemporary New Zealand, the unique landscape of New Zealand is a symbol of national identity for Pakeha.

Certain images such as uninterrupted expanses of tussock grasslands and the ruggedness of alpine landscape stand as icons of nationhood (Dominy, 1993:565).

She suggests that, as in the colonial fashion of Wakefield, in the last few decades "paradise has stood again to be regained in New Zealand" (ibid). New Zealanders are looking to their landscape because "once again Antipodean pastoralism, like the notion of the reinvention of culture in anthropology, is in fashion" (ibid).

Dominy argues that because of Ngati Tahu land claims, the downturn in farming and pressure from environmentalists and recreationalists, high country people have been attempting to overtly assert and understand their cultural authenticity (Dominy, 1993:570). Their use of the landscape as a symbol of identity is more than developing a sense of belonging and a national identity, it is a reaction to these threats to their legitimacy in occupying and working the land; something Dominy refers to as "politicisation and commoditisation of culture" (ibid). Dominy comments that high country people are aware that they are different to other Pakeha. This certainly seems the case as reference to land, and relationship to it, is very different in the Manawatu. In "Lives were always, here': The Inhabited Landscape of The New Zealand High Country" Dominy examines what she terms,

... the encounter with the land by drawing upon aspects of a narrative history - related by a senior generation farming couple on one high country station - as a way of exploring the use of an idiom and experience of locality as metaphor for thinking about cultural distinctiveness in their construction of identity" (Dominy, 1993:571).

It appears that the participants who talked to both Dominy and I are in a similar cohort. And Dominy says her concern was to read from the history she was told, how these people construct themselves by locating their place in the world (ibid). Dominy found that high country people have both a material and spiritual affinity to place.

Material affinity is expressed in the value runholders place on their sense of ownership in the land they farm and inhabit. It is also

expressed in the value placed on long term security of tenure. Spiritual affinity is a cultural concept in which the connectedness to land and identity are inseparable. It is expressed in kinship and inheritance patterns as well as in ways of thinking about place (Dominy,1990:13-14).

She suggests elsewhere (Dominy,1993) that a 'sectional explosion'²⁰ is occurring and high country people are 'reinventing' (not necessarily unauthentically) their culture and asserting their identity. They assert their cultural uniqueness and their identity by recounting their history in the High Country landscape (Dominy,1993:580). Dominy notes that different generations see their relationship to land differently; while older generations see their role as transforming the land, the younger generations have a more conservationist concern. Such differences suggest the relationship to land of younger generation Manawatu farmers may be equally as different to that of the participants of my research and therefore needs to be investigated separately. Obviously, many similarities exist between high country farmers and those in the Manawatu, such as the concern over a sense of ownership or long term security. I have found however, that the relationship to land, and the identity of farmers is different. While the importance of kinship and inheritance patterns has been impressed upon me by my participants, there has been no 'sectional explosion' for them. They were not concerned to distinguish themselves as having a unique cultural identity or way of life. Information from the interviews I conducted with retired Manawatu farmers suggests that they believed themselves to have special attributes, a certain temperament, and as I've noted; a passion for what they do; but a conscious notion of cultural distinctiveness was not revealed to me. They are perhaps the Pakehas Dominy talks about who "... typically do not elaborate their lives in symbolic terms nor in the past have they been self-consciously exploring their cultural identity and ways of preserving their heritage" (Dominy, 1993:580).

Perhaps the reason Manawatu farmers have not developed this type of affinity to land is because their security on the land is not perceived to be under the same threat as that of the South Island High Country farmers. The leasehold of the High Country farmers and their right to the land and therefore their way of life on it, is under threat

²⁰ Sectional explosion is a term used by Clifford Geertz for "when people make 'ordinary and unremarkable aspects of their behaviour eloquent statements of their identity'"(Dominy,1993:580).

(as noted earlier), not just from Maori land claims, but conservationists, recreationalists, and developers. High Country people are reacting to these threats, having to self-consciously look at their way of life and legitimise their existence on the land. In this process they are reinventing tradition, elaborating, bringing to the fore and making remarkable that which makes them unique. Their reconstruction of identity has idealised, enhanced, and even changed, certain discursive practices such as their relationship to land, and dismissed others, such as stereotypical colonialist discourse (Dominy, 1993).

In the Manawatu, such a threat does not appear to exist, at least in the eyes of my participants who nearly all owned their land outright, so were completely secure in their control over their land. There has not even been a history of overt contested land rights in the Manawatu as this was settled after the Land Wars were over. When I asked participants if they saw any threats to farming, only indirect threats were mentioned. These threats were things they saw on the horizon, but nothing which challenged their identity or authority over the land, or affected their day to day lives. Here is an example of a comment made to this effect by Fred:

Fred: I suppose we won't be taken over by Asians will we? The government seem to think its a good idea, I s'pose they know what they are doing...

Mavis: Yes, but I don't know if they do.

Even the increase of activities such as forestry and horticulture which has been seen as a threat to traditional farming and values in some communities (Rural Change, 1982:12), is of little concern in the Manawatu. As George points out there is not a lot of forestry around here;

George: Ten acre blocks are a dead loss, and forestry needs to stick to the right land!

What's the right land?

George: Land that's unstable, in some hard country that costs a lot to produce, forestry cuts that out. Big money in forestry today, not a hang of a lot of forestry round here though.

I asked Howard (a dairy farmer) if he saw forestry as a positive change.

Howard: Oh yes, I think it's vital! Yeah, I think there's a lot of sheep country that shouldn't be in pasture, you know, I think you only have to drive through the country to see the slipping and I think there's a lot of experts in the world to tell you how to protect the rain forests, we did it 100 years ago. Tree growing can compliment a farm; shelter, micro-climate effects, we had a lot on our farm. No, I think it's highly complementary and you know, I think how boring if New Zealand was all flat pasture all the way.

I asked Fred and Mavis about forestry.

Fred: Forestry is good, there's a lot of land that should never have been taken out of bush really. But it has been, the way the world is burning up timber, we'll never get the native bush back the way it was here...

Mavis: But as long as we plant trees, you know a lot around Gisborne and places like that where it's eroding.

Fred: It's a positive, essential change.

Most other concerns were directed into the future and will be discussed in the next chapter. My participants never experienced a direct threat to their way of life on the farm or the legitimacy of their right to the land they owned and the way they used the land (it should be noted however, this sample excludes those who lost their farms after the 1984 reforms). Mavis, however, aired a concern which brings this discussion back to the value of family succession in the ideology of farming.

Mavis: Sort of worries me a bit, that whatever is selling at the time everybody goes into, that worries me that they're all going into dairying... That worries me, that people jump on the band wagon all the time. *(To Fred)* Your family have been dairy farmers for how many generations? Three, four now? And the same with sheep and cattle people, then there's the people in the middle who jump from one to the other - that scares me a bit.

CONCLUSIONS

There is great diversity among farmers in New Zealand, the example of High Country farmers studied by Dominy (1993) illustrates that not all farmers are alike. Even within a geographical location such as the Manawatu, wealth, gender, as well as farm size and stock type, and probably generational differences too, differentiate

farming people. The main aim here though has been to draw together the common threads of meaning expressed by the retired farmers I interviewed. When I began this research I perhaps was one of those 'outsiders' who assumed "rural Pakeha ideology...to be primarily materialistic, individualistic and homogeneous" (Dominy,1993:580). My assumptions have been challenged through the research participants' stories.

I took up the story of the participants' lives with their experiences of retirement and found considerations such as pressure from oncoming generations or health prompted most to leave their farms. Some believed they would never leave the farm, others were conscious not to be like those people. In sum, the retirement process for these farmers is more than shifting house or leaving work but retiring from the farm is a significant transition where the continuance of one's sense of self as a farmer is challenged and must be moulded to accommodate a new lifestyle.

Several themes emerged, one being the gendered experience and the other the importance of bridging the difference in day to day activities by 'keeping busy', illustrating my first inclination that the ideological concept of 'farmer' continues beyond life on the farm and the land. Retired farmers are still farmers because they identify with the concept of farmer which exists above and beyond the land. I investigated this further by exploring the meaning of 'farmer' and discussing different facets which construct the identity of 'farmer'. I found that farmer is a fluid and dynamic concept with certain aspects having more importance to different farmers. Further to this, I have argued that in general, farming is masculine, it is an activity and profession, but it is also a personal identity. To be a 'farmer' one must feel oneself to be a 'farmer', and have a passion and love for the way of the farmer. Land, then, is important and necessary for farming, in which case it serves as a tool or canvas for the *activity* of the farmer, but land is not entirely necessary for the *identity* of 'farmer'.

Control, which may or may not be initiated by ownership, has a role to play here because it allows specific land to become important, to move beyond a tool and be incorporated into more personal identity, enabling the farmer to instil meaning in the land. This occurs because the ideology of farming promotes family farm succession and the subjective and material accumulation of a patriline's activity and transformation of the land. However, while ownership is not necessary for this relationship to develop, a

sense of control is and, except in rare circumstances, legal ownership is the only form of legitimate control which gives a farmer enough security to invest meaning into the farm. Ownership ensures succession.

In sum, the ideology of 'farmer', for these retired farmers in the Manawatu, hinges on the value of farm succession. Furthermore, meaning and personal value is invested in land which was previously, and simultaneously still is, a tool to be utilised for capitalist production. The relationship to land then, for these farmers and their successors, is not a stationary or concrete variable. Rather, it is fluid and dynamic and exists in a contested field always in flux between the dialectic interplay of the ideals inherent to the ideology of farmer and the sense of control over a piece of land.

In the following chapter I will expand on some of the implications of the findings of this ethnographic data and the historical underpinnings. I will readdress the questions and central issues raised by the literature on family farming.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE FUTURE:

Reply to the Literature, and Implications for the future of Farming in the Manawatu

To write about the *future* of family farming is obviously the next step in the temporal progression this text takes. Analysis into the future of farming is not a new topic - as has been illustrated in Chapter Two, rigorous debate precedes me. Many of these analyses, however, are ahistoric. This study has attempted to show that 'family farming' is an historically specific phenomenon and as such, any discussion about the future must be based on an understanding of the past.

My interest in the future of the family farm was not a reaction to observing broader economic or political changes, nor was it derived from perceiving the existence of the family farm as an anomaly. Rather, my aim in this research has been to understand what it means to be a farmer in the Manawatu. After interviewing the participants, it became clear that identity is not a fixed or static construct any more than family farming as practice is. Both the identity of the farmer and the practice must be understood as historically contingent, and thus must be contextualised with respect to historical processes.

This chapter addresses the central issues raised in relation to the literature on the future of the family farm, and considers the transforming ideology of farming in the Manawatu, as revealed by the participants in this study.

THE 'FAMILY' IN THE FAMILY FARM

I suggested in the review of the literature that both sociologists and anthropologists who have written about the family farm, particularly those who have been concerned about the future of the family farm, have based their concerns on a number of assumptions. The concern expressed about a possible demise, or extinction of family farming, I have likened to early anthropologist's attempts to salvage 'vanishing cultures' during and in the wake of colonisation. The quest to save the farmer, is analogous to the quest to save the 'Noble Savage' and thus it is possible to conceptualise this practice as the quest to salvage (preserve) the 'Noble Farmer'. This quest has occurred as a consequence of family farming being placed conceptually in opposition corporate farming. The corporate world conversely is thus, not 'noble'. It is beyond the scope of this study to enter into a debate about the inherent 'goodness' or 'badness' of capitalist industry, but it is within scope to consider critically the assumption that farmers and their families work within an equitable system of production. This requires an examination of why the family farm is often assumed to be more noble or equitable than a corporate farm. and what this study reveals about the 'family' in the family farm.

Collier et al (1982) discuss how 'The Family' has been ideologically constructed in Western society. Although they discuss the 'American' family in particular, I would suggest there are similarities here, because the construct of family is so similar to that of the participants in this study. Collier et al argue that The Family has been constructed by Western thinkers as a universal institution for nurturance, and that in market economies 'the family' has been placed in opposition to 'the market'.

The Symbolic opposition between The Family and market relations renders our strong attachment to The Family understandable, but also discloses the particularity of our construct of The Family. We can hardly be speaking of a universal notion of The Family shared by people everywhere and for all time because people everywhere and for all time have not participated in market relations out of which they have constructed a contrastive notion of the family (Collier et al,1982:35).

While Collier et al (1982) are concerned with illustrating that The Family should not be theorised in a functionalist way, and do not mention farmers, their paper supports my

suggestion that theorists can perhaps uncritically pose the 'family' in opposition to the 'corporation' or the 'market' and thus the family becomes distinct and somehow outside of the dominant system of production in Western societies. As Collier et al (1982) argue, the construction of what The Family actually represents, rather than being independent of market economies, has developed out of market economies.

The Family is seen as representing not only the antithesis of the market relations of capitalism; it is also sacralized in our minds as the last stronghold against the state, as the symbolic refuge from the intrusions of a public domain that constantly threatens our sense of privacy and self-determination (Collier et al,1982:36).

While it should be acknowledged that 'family' organised farming *is* different to non-family organised farming, such as the corporate farm, it is ahistorical and presumptive to place a universal notion of what constitutes the family and hence the family farm, in *opposition* to non-family farming. (The kind of dichotomy described by Salamon & Davis-Brown (1986) is an example of this). New Zealand 'family farming' is not external to the market economy, or more broadly the capitalist mode of production. Rather, it was created out of capitalist venture. Evidence from the case study of the Manawatu will now be considered, to substantiate this assertion.

Chapter Two considered how family farming in New Zealand was created after colonial annexation and European expansion. Farmers in New Zealand have never been 'peasants'; there is no pre-capitalist history of family farming in New Zealand²¹. Family farming here has never been feudal, or communal, or tribal, or 'primitive'. It was established in the wake of capitalist expansion, and quickly became part of the infrastructure upon which New Zealand's market economy grew. While, indeed, there was subsistence existence for some of the earlier bush farmers, both in the Manawatu and throughout New Zealand, this material fact does not alter that their aspirations and values were ideologically similar to the more prosperous 'gentry' who farmed the large estates (runs) in early New Zealand. Both groups embraced capitalism, entrepreneurialism and individualism. Far from being in opposition to the state (capitalist), 'family' farmers practically controlled the state, and only in the last few decades have begun to lose their voice in this respect. After all, as has been outlined, rural people's

²¹ While the Maori were in some regions horticulturists, after colonial settlement they were largely dispossessed of their lands. They had no history of animal husbandry or a tradition of 'peasant' farming.

votes in general elections counted more than urban people's until almost the middle of this century. Furthermore, until 1984 the state (paternalistically) protected and supported the 'family' farmer.

In Chapter Two Grace's account of her family history was considered, and in Chapter Three other participants recalled their family histories. When I asked participants to tell me about their family history they would usually recount a patriline, which was also a line of farm inheritance and succession. As non-succeeding family members moved out of farming they and their kin tended to be forgotten. Grace, for example, mentions two of her uncles; one went to Canada and the other to South Africa and was never heard from again. It was usually those who stayed in farming who were normally recalled. History was also romanticised, for example the 'pioneering spirit' was attributed to those who precede in the patriline. These histories tended to exclude help from the state, for example, the wiping of some farm debts in the 1930s which enabled farmers to stay on their farms. Instead they highlighted the determination, strengths and abilities which individuals and their families possessed. In each generation, the next farm owner reinvents this history, or makes his mark, by further improving or expanding the farm. Thus he too, becomes a figure in the patriline. For someone like George, who probably worked as hard as any other farmer, his status in the family history is diminished by the fact that he was not continuing or able to start a patriline. Farming will no longer be pertinent to his continuing family history as his family farm has ceased to exist. The directness of these lines is what is important here. As Grace pointed out, there is nothing, or considerably less to inherit, for those who are not heir to the family property. The label 'family' farm obscures the actual hierarchical and very linear control of the farm. The ideological construct of 'family' suggests communalism and thus disguises the inequity which lies at the heart of succession.

This is not only the case with succession, it appears that once the term 'family' is applied, to describe the organization of production, researchers become blind to the inequality which often characterises the organization of labour (production) on the farm.

Furthermore, the fear that 'capital's' penetration of farming (that is corporate takeover and control) will create wage labourers out of owner/workers, and thus bring with this the exploitation experienced by the proletariat, is problematic. As we have

seen, the only owner/worker on the farm is usually the eldest male who gained ownership primarily because of birth order. In fact, other family members often work on the farm, not only with few (if any) ownership rights, they often are not recompensed for their labour through wages. It is interesting, at this point, to remind the reader that it is only since 1976 that women (wives) have had a potential claim on the land, and this is only if they divorce. Non-succeeding children have no rights in this regard, and thus seldom is the farm equity divided up evenly between children. As Voyce (1994) notes, in Australia, although a daughter's contribution to farm labour is no longer invisible, there is still "some coincidence between law as a system of patriarchal ideology and land owning ideologies of farmers" (Voyce,1994:79). The law, by and large, still supports single heir inheritance. The heir is nearly always male (usually a son) as one participant reveals, a daughter's husband can take control if there are no sons, therefore keeping intact (patriarchal) 'family' farms, so long as this does not mean other dependents are left completely destitute.

It has been suggested that in the latest 'rural crisis' hiring wage labourers was one of the first forms of retrenchment so that farms could survive (Fairweather,1992). This was only possible because farmers could rely on the free labour of their wives and children. In Chapter Two it was noted that school inspectors at the turn of the century reported children sleeping in class because they had been up all morning milking. There is no evidence to suggest that such child labour has stopped and in a 'crisis' we might expect it to increase. Research has also revealed that pluralactivity (where a farm family member works off the farm) occurs in 69% of farms in the Manawatu, with twice as many women working off the farm as men (Britton et al,1992). So, contemporary family farmers have responded by reintroducing 'wives' to wage labour more often than sons (heirs) or 'male heads of farms'. Instead of protecting the 'family' from wage labour, this in practice exposes women to wage labour more frequently than men. Add to this, that women generally experience greater exploitation in the paid labour market than men, and indeed, it is possible to see the true meaning of continued patriarchal control on the farm and off the farm.

Family farming, in New Zealand at least, is different to non-family industry, but it is not void of capitalism, nor is it outside of capitalist production. Rather, in New Zealand it has been the primary form of capitalist production and thus it is one of the

major bearers of capitalist ideology. We should therefore not be surprised to learn that the inequality which exists in the corporate world, exists in microcosm down on the farm.

However, unlike Goodman & Redclift (1985), I do not dismiss that there is *no* such a thing as the family farmer, because I do not reduce my tools of analysis to one variable, which in their case is the presence of wage labour. I also reject the argument that ideology is a cunning ploy invented to disguise capitalist relations of production. While it may often have such a function, in the case of these farmers, I doubt that they consciously engage in such a conspiracy. Rather, identity is far more complex than this analysis suggests. Capitalistic values are part of the ideology of farming, but so too is the construct of the 'family', which for the participants in this study stands in opposition to the public domain. It is the combination of these ideologies which generates the complexity of the 'farmers' identity.

Anthropological literature which fails to critically analyse the 'noble' farmer is perhaps guilty of repatriated romanticism. The literature from the New Rural Sociology of Agriculture (which has had a very different history to social anthropology) has conceived of family farming in this way because of the limitations of the theoretical tools that have been used in the political economy approach. In taking their fundamental unit of reference back to economic structure the sociologists do not conceive of capitalism as a fundamentally socially created system. Their approach fails to consider that it is only in abstract theoretical form that capitalism can appear rational and predictable.

Capitalism, and the values it represents, are reproduced by people who simultaneously live in family organisations. From this perspective the whole idea that family farming is threatened by capital is an economically reductionist abstraction. As can be seen through an historical analysis of the social construct and ideology of the farmer, family farming in New Zealand was born of capitalist pursuit. Moreover, far from being 'capitalists' in a purely economic sense, a broader understanding of history, subjectivity, identity and the reproduction of ideology, reveals that family farming is not the last bastion of rural tradition, nor has it ever been. It is a complex and fluid cultural phenomenon and it is naive to think that corporate initiatives, ideology and practice stand in opposition to familial ideology 'down on the farm'. The 'corporation'

and, prior to this, the 'firm' in the history of New Zealand frequently relied on familial ideology to motivate workers, inform the structure of the operation, and to shape employment practices and provisions for employees. In short, patriarchal, paternalistic, familial ideology has always played a central role in the organisation of capitalist (non-agrarian) production in New Zealand (Lovelock,1993). In separating out conceptually the 'family' from 'corporate' or capitalist endeavour, researchers have subsequently ignored the relation between the family and capitalist endeavour. Familial ideology informs both spheres.

THE FUTURE OF FAMILY FARMING IN THE MANAWATU - *The Emic Perspective.*

All cultural phenomena are in constant flux. Changes in the government's economic policy, advances in technology, and social changes in New Zealand as a whole have all historically had an impact on farming families. Thus the ideology of farming has flexed, developed and pushed back in the continuing process of existence. What the future holds for family farming is being negotiated here and now. I return now to what the participants say about the future.

In Chapter Three I touched on perceived 'threats' to security of farm control and asked my participants if they perceived any 'threats' to their previous way of life. No one questioned the continuing existence of family farms. This could perhaps be because they had all made it through the economic difficulties of the 1980s; they had 'survived' and in most cases successfully succeeded the farm onto the next generation. In Chapter Three it was argued that diversification, such as forestry, was generally perceived to be a positive thing and that this could be because it is not occurring on a large enough scale in the Manawatu to qualify as a threat (as it is elsewhere, for example, the East Coast of the North Island). The only concern seemed to be, that too many newcomers may 'jump in' on a form of agriculture (such as dairying) when it is enjoying a prosperous phase and 'ruin it' for those who have been in dairy-farming for generations.

Discussion with participants about the future tended to turn away from themselves, to broader economic and market concerns facing farming in general. This

may be because their personal careers in farming were at an end, but also perhaps because as Rogers (1987) suggests, issues for agriculture (such as what the future may hold) are largely understood by scholars, policy makers *and* farmers "in terms strongly colored by the parameters inherent in economic analysis"(ibid:87). There was probably also a bit of (to borrow a phrase from psychology) the 'experimenter effect' occurring. That is participants discussed what they thought I wanted to hear when I asked them how they envisaged the future of farming.

George: One thing I wouldn't like to see is too many jokers just going in there to spend their money, get rid of their money. I think the owner/farmer that's the answer, that's the way to do it. Mind you, its getting less and less of that all the time. I know people who used to own a big farm and that's been bought over by Japanese - controlled by them; they're never going to farm it. In for just what they can make out of it. Ten acre blocks are a dead loss - they're a tax dodge or hobby farm, probably working in town, farm showing a loss!

Howard: Well, I think farming is still very very important, you know I still think it's the biggest export earner we've got yet. And it is pleasing to see some of the manufacturing industries starting to improve their performance but no, there's just no question about it. But of course I've been involved in the dairy company, the dairy business is really worth millions of dollars a year, you know.

Do you think its importance has changed?

Howard: I think it's changing, I wouldn't say it's changed a lot yet but... yeah it is changing, forestry for instance, I see a huge potential there. You know it seems to me that...well we planted a few trees over the years, and with what they are worth now, goodness gracious me, you just imagine 100 acres of that sort of thing - what it's got to be worth!

And what do you envisage as the future for farming?

Howard: I think further processing, this is what the dairy board is doing, but of course other countries want to employ their own people to do that sort of thing, cause they've got economic problems too. In the 1970s this big whey plant was started at [name of place], and that was something which just went down the drain prior to that. Millions and millions of dollars worth of high quality product. So that's the sort of progress I would see or hope anyway, the same goes for meat, God knows if the meat industry will ever get its act together! But I think there's a place for manufacturing too. A lot of the more efficient manufacturing (sic) are those that have been allied to farming -

Skellerup and people like that. We went to the States in 1979. You go out on these farms there and they're all wearing tags made in Palmerston North! Farming in the United States was Pathetic, pathetic! One farm in particular, I was there in 1951, and this farm was in New York State, they milked 44 cows in those days, today they're milking about 300. But they've got seven big tractors on that farm - it's awfully expensive - they just don't think ahead, they think the herring bone shed is the greatest thing since sliced bread, they've got all sorts of computations of these herring bone sheds. Well, I said "we gave those up years ago". Well by-and-large rotary sheds are the thing to use now, they couldn't understand the concept that two people could milk 300 cows in an hour, just a piece of cake, and the cows loved it too. But you know... I think it comes back to subsidy, I'm sure of that, anyway they're subsidised.

So, for Howard, subsidies can impede efficient farming practice, yet for Ida, farming is still the 'backbone' of the country, ("They've made a mess of it" suggests the state is 'they'):

Ida: Well, I think without farming they wouldn't have a New Zealand, I mean they've made a mess of it now, but it is still the backbone of New Zealand. It doesn't matter what you do as long as you're working the land, I mean that's the background of New Zealand. You wouldn't have land agents, anything like that if there wasn't the land. I think they've got to realise land is more important than anything else. It's changed completely now, well it was always a business, but it's a different world so I don't know, but you're reliant on the farm and your reliant on the weather, it doesn't matter what you're farming, but prices go up so everybody puts on more stock, the dairy prices go up so they put on more cows and they over do it and the prices come down, but that's life!

Jack Dunthorpe was very adamant that...

Jack: Wool is number one as far as New Zealand is concerned, you go back a while, I'm not talking now, we made carpets, we make all sorts of things for export. Prior to that it was, well the whole income came from grass, when there was butter, cheese, meat etc, and that just about summed New Zealand up as a whole and it's still big. Now just what the figures are today, I'm not sure, I do know we've got a lot of export. Compared with the dairy produce and meat, wool is still number one, I'll call it number one!

For Jack, the future hinges on the markets, in particular Asia:

Jack: Well, we're producing a lot of food we should be exporting to Singapore, Hong Kong, Taiwan, those places there. I shouldn't say Taiwan because they're very wealthy. China for instance, they haven't

got the money to pay for it to start with, and Russia... because we export a lot to Russia and they're pretty hesitant at paying for anything! But you can't blame them, there's another thing about the Russians; they've got community farming, there are 30 of us, we go out and work a 400 acre farm, and look here, we're sort of dilly dallying around, it's not our farm, and we're fooling around and when the crops are ready to thresh, they say "right we'll thresh that one today, that tomorrow", but that crop might be ready and this crop might be ready! So they thresh that, they're not organised, they don't know where to start, they can do the threshing then they don't know where to put the grain! They can tip it out on the ground and wait for the lorries when they can get it. All that sort of thing, right from planting time to harvest. That's what's wrong with the Russians! Oh look, it'd make you cry! I've seen films of it, oh! You take us for instance, we're geared from the word go! And when the firms come out and say, "right your moisture is down to so and so", in comes the milk and you've got your truck there and it's gone in one day! Even if you work 'til 11 o'clock at night, if there's a breeze.

Jack explains that communal (socialist) farming does not work; and he contrasts this with farming in New Zealand. This is interesting considering (as was revealed in Chapter Two) early farmers, and even those of Jack's generation who experienced farming during the period of subsidies; accepted socialist principles to get established (and be maintained), and then embraced capitalist ideology once successful. When positioning New Zealand farming in relation to the world, Jack reveals a commonly held belief:

Jack: Oh absolutely, oh I think we just about lead the world! Efficiency that's a better word. I've seen transport dairy; taking the milking shed to the cows! They set it up in the corner of one paddock and bring those cows over and then the next lot. You see in Denmark they milk about three times a day. I don't know if they still do it or not, but I know when my father was there he couldn't understand it. There's no place that can produce food as cheap as we can. In some places cows are hardly let out of the shed, they might get two or three hours a day while they clean out the stalls and that sort of thing. We're lucky, we don't know how lucky we are; the climate, the land, a lot of people, hard cases and that, they think the whole country owes them a living and that's not right. They've got trouble overseas too - oh, and the French, you see they hate us! They take their tractors into town because we are supplying dairy produce cheaper than they can. And look here, I've been to some shops in England, London, New Zealand meat - I looked at some of the chops (and Paris) I'd be feeding it to the dogs! That's what it looked like to me! 'Cause we're so fussy - I'm so fussy about meat, kill nothing but the best - we've got the best of the

beef and best of the lamb. Now you see people say "Oh lamb" but I say "You can give me Hogget" - it must be grass feed. I'll never forget these chops - I felt absolutely terrible, to say "These New Zealand chops?" he said "yes" I never let on! They were a disgrace! They were lamb chops, one mouthful - gone! And I don't know how much they were worth, very expensive!

This paragraph reveals a contradiction; Jack says we are the best in the world, yet the chops were a disgrace? In another interview Jack compared farming today to how it was when he was young:

Jack: You realise we had plenty of labour in those days, today we've done away with the hand labour and now we've got a lot of unemployed. And you take it from me, we will never be fully employed again, never as long as you live there will be that much labour available because we've got computers. We used to have eight, nine, ten men who'd come down and help with the harvesting, what do we do now, we've got about two!

This is not so much the fault of computers, as it is the consequence of mechanisation. Fred and Mavis Brown had similar ideas when I asked how important they thought farming was to New Zealand:

Fred: It's quite important...

Mavis: Yes, I think it's been one of the main stays of our income - it has been, it still is I think...

Fred: It still is.

Do you think its importance is changing or has changed?

Mavis: Yes, I think it's changing in that dairying, sheep and beef were the main ones, but we've diversified into horticulture and all sorts of things, but it's all still agriculture.

Fred: Well, they've painted a rosy picture now that GATTs been settled, and the population is increasing, there must be somebody making...

Mavis: You've got to just keep ahead of developing markets... we need people with the know how to sell. We can't sit back and think someone's going to do it for us! Just producing it and getting the tanker to pick it up from the gate is not the end of it, it's not really. There are a lot of Asians coming here too, and they're even in Palmerston North, and they're coming here and bringing their families

and then they go back to Hong Kong or wherever, and I wonder if they bring them here to get educated?

It seems for Mavis that it is easy to accept the need to sell and establish new markets. However, to trade with non-traditional trading partners, in particular Asians, means she must address her racist attitudes toward Asians. Here Fred and Mavis attempt to justify their prejudice:

Fred: If they like the lifestyle they'll come back, a lot of Asians do. They're pretty good citizens too, the Chinese are always hard workers.

Mavis: And we have always had Chinese here too.

Fred: I don't know if they pay all their taxes...

Mavis: That's what annoys me.

George was the only person to suggest that there was a trend towards there being *less and less of the owner/farmer* and *more "jokers in to spend their money"* and hobby farmers. It is interesting that, he too, was the only non-owner/operator. George's comments can perhaps best be understood by the fact that the farm he worked his whole life on (that belonged to his cousin) was sold out of the family (and as he was forced out of the farm, did not inherit a farm and received no family assistance to buy one). He was debt shy and by the time his cousin wanted to sell the farm he felt he was too old to start anew. The farm was sold and became a development plant for an engineering firm; the family home converted into offices. As this is a unique experience among my participants we can conclude that it is perhaps rare. George's upset about what has become of the farm suggests that perhaps, if he had owned it and none of his children had wanted it, he may have tried to sell the farm to another farmer.

The other participants, on the whole, acknowledged that agriculture was no longer the 'backbone' of the country it once was. They perceived a changing tide in agriculture signalled by the removal of subsidies, diversification, product development, and the emphasis placed on marketing. All of them considered these as positive signs of 'progress' and perhaps even necessary if New Zealand is to continue to 'lead the world'. This ideology of market progress is framed by a concern about non-traditional markets, for example Asia, where participants reveal their racist concerns; and in doing

so, renew the 'fear' of the "yellow peril". In all, it appears the participants do not perceive a threat to their way of life, at least not from capital or corporations.

THE CHANGING IDEOLOGY OF THE FAMILY FARMER

The structure of agriculture in New Zealand has, without doubt, been transforming since it was first created. Chapter Two outlined many of these changes, sometimes slow development, sometimes fast, initiated by crises or jumps in technology, such as the advent of refrigeration last century or the policy changes of the Fourth Labour Government in the 1980s. If the structure of agriculture is malleable, then it seems likely that the ideology of farming will be too.

The ideology of farming is the result of interplay between structural changes and the agency of people. However, how this manifests is contingent on historical processes, but as the participants reveal, their actions do not always conform to structural change. For example those participants who acknowledge the need to establish markets in Asia, yet who know that to fully embrace and realise this objective they must reassess their racist assumptions. They are reluctant to make such a reassessment and this potentially impedes a 'full embrace' with non-traditional markets. Agency does not solely hinge on 'reaction' to structural change. Such a reductionist account would promise the impossible: a prediction for the future. Cultural change is never so simple, because people are dynamic and diverse. Agency is never revealed as uniformed action, people draw on complementary, and at times, opposing beliefs and values to legitimate their actions. No social group is homogenous even when there is evidence of shared goals and practice. However, it is possible to suggest likely responses in the future, *suggest* that is, rather than *determine*.

FARMING AS ACTIVITY

New Zealand farming ideology is constantly in flux. In Chapter two I discussed how diverse European settlement was and how, consequently, farmers found themselves in very different social and material situations. In the Manawatu, the ideology of farming emerged from the subsistence experience of workers, many of

whom, had the settlement of the area gone to plan, would have found themselves as labourers on other people's estates. They and their families worked hard to make a living. They were pioneers; forging for themselves a new way of life. It helped of course that the Liberal government supported their efforts, however, this support did not undermine the growth of perception of farmers as self-made men: the entrepreneurial, individualistic farmer - the fore-father of the 'Jack-of-all-trades' we encountered in the previous chapter. If the farmer continues to be the key labourer it seems it is possible that this conception of farming as activity will continue. The ideological construction of farming as activity developed out of the pioneering spirit, and activity leads to progress.²²

The notion that 'progress' is 'inherently good' can also be linked to the conditions of early farming in New Zealand and the Manawatu. Recall how early settlers (as children of the enlightenment) saw evolution as necessary and progressive. Much of Western society still embraces this ethos, including it seems, many farmers in the Manawatu. 'Development' has been a strong theme throughout the history of New Zealand farming. From the development of bush farms, to progressively quicker milking sheds (the herringbone, now the rotary) farmers have been preoccupied with increasing efficiency and production. Farmers themselves only see this trajectory continuing and generally place a positive value on such change. (The exception being Jack who noted unemployment).

THE CONTINUING MASCULINITY OF FARMING

As argued in Chapter Three, there exists a gendered division of labour on the farm. Most of the female participants I interviewed did work on the farm, but this was only as a 'helper' or in a supportive role. The woman usually assumed responsibility for the domestic labour on the farm; cooking meals and raising the children, for example. The question here is, 'will farming continue to be, and be perceived to be, a masculine activity?'

²² Activity can also be read as *doing*. The act of doing, making an impact, is intimately connected to masculine identity in New Zealand society (Smith, 1990; Lovelock, 1993).

As I mentioned in Chapter Three, my participants spent the majority of their lives on the farm before the Matrimonial Property Act of 1976 which entitled women (wives), on divorce, fair share of the estate. Before this time it was assumed in law that the man (husband) was the 'farmer' and that in the case of divorce he would get to keep this asset, which he had, in many instances probably inherited. However, since 1976 a whole new generation of farming couples have entered farming and it is possible nowadays that the farming couple consider themselves to be engaged in an equal partnership. Keating and McCrostie-Little (1994) note however:

It appears that while women are looking forward to being partners with their husbands in marketing and financial management, men are not expecting their wives to be any more involved than their mothers have been. [and] expectations concerning ownership are not symmetrical among younger women and men. While receiving [the farm through succession,] women expect to own significantly greater proportions of their farms than did their mother-in-laws, their husbands do not expect to own less. Ownership may well become a contentious issue for this generation of couples whose expectations concerning business involvement do not appear to be congruent (ibid:44).

On the basis of this research it seems that the legal and financial domination of men with the family farm unit may continue yet. However women at the individual farm level may now, and in the future, be more inclined to challenge the privileged position men hold, or, at least it seems possible that younger generation's experience will differ significantly from that of the participants in this study, and furthermore that within this experience there will be the potential for change. This may already be occurring with the increase of pluralactivity, or family members working outside the farm. If it is predominantly women who are now working off the farm, this may have some impact on the gendered division of labour on the farm, and a desire on the part of women to share equal financial reward. However, it is possible that we may see a replication of what has happened in the last few decades in the urban sector; many women simply increasing their work load and carrying a 'double burden'. Further discussion on this issue, however, is out of the scope of this thesis.

It is necessary to consider more fully the masculine ideology of farming itself and whether it will continue. Even if more women are able to 'prove' themselves as farmers (where men do not have to (Keating & Little,1991:29)), will these women have

to assume the masculine qualities of a 'farmer', such as perseverance, strength, control, being a 'Jack-of-all-trades'? Or will it be possible to be simultaneously 'feminine' and a 'farmer'? For this to occur a major transformation would have to occur in the ideology of the farmer, while small incursions will be made by women farmers, and broader social change will continue, it seems more likely that woman farmers will be slotted into the existing ideological construction of farming. That is, they will be considered as individual exceptions, and as such, allowed some space to be perceived the same as other women. At this stage all we have to base such assumptions on is the entry of women into paid employment, in particular positions of relative seniority and the 'act like a man', 'dress like a man' ideology, which asserted that this would assist entry into a male dominated domain. However, further research needs to be conducted in this area.

FARMING AS PASSION

Many of my participants talked about farming as a passion; a love of farming that is "born and bred" into you. There are many crucial factors which appear to contribute to this aspect of the ideology of farming, which if altered may make farming more similar to many other jobs which are little more than an income. Firstly, all of the participants were brought up on farms which undoubtedly contributes to the idea that being a farmer is "born and bred" into you. If family farming does diminish and farming takes more commonly the form of a 'corporate' venture, we may not see the worker living on the farm and bringing up their families on the farm (as this may be unprofitable). Therefore, farming may become more of a 'nine to five' job (or more accurately for dairy, 'five to five'), rather than a 'way of life'. However, it seems unlikely that the family farm will give way to 'corporate farming', and likely that farm families will continue to live on the farm. As Fairweather (1992) suggests, agriculture's exposure to global market forces in the last decade in New Zealand may have actually strengthened family labour relations. If this is so, we might expect a heightened sense of farming as a valuable way of life, in the face of economic threat, similar to the heightened sense of affiliation to land that Dominy (1993) found among High Country farmers in the South Island; when their right to their leasehold land came under threat.

Farmers may be more likely to conceive of farming as something to pass onto their children; a way of life and a passion to breed into them. The participants in this study suggest that the subjective value of family farming is often of greater value than just economic value. Thus, if presented with a more profitable option which also entailed relinquishing the possibility of succession, they would, it seems, reject the potential profit option.

REPLY TO QUESTIONS ABOUT THE FUTURE OF FAMILY FARMING - *Rural Sociology.*

There are several ways to look at the perspectives of the participants and their attitude that 'development' and 'progress' is positive. Lawrence (1990) suggests that Australian farmers also support what he terms the trajectory of modern farming. He argues;

They support a political party and a farmers' organisation that are proponents of 'new right' philosophy and policies. They have become willing victims of an economic strategy that strengthens agribusiness at the same time as it reduces their own independence. They have become champions of free enterprise in spite of the erosion of their own freedoms by the very process they support. Few, it seems, understand the nature or implications of the global restructuring of agriculture (Lawrence, 1990:123)²³

Is this the case for farmers in New Zealand, or at least those in the Manawatu? Farming here has usually managed to benefit from economic change, even those who survived through the late 1980s now see the changes as positive (those who did not remain viable perhaps would not have the same opinion, but then they are probably no longer 'farmers'). This is not that 'survivalist' theorists are correct - 'farming', pre- 'rural crisis', has not, I believe, 'survived'. 'Survival' in this literature implies that family

²³ Within a political economy perspective Lawrence can be seen as a subsumptionist theorist, as he sees the transformation in Australian agriculture (actively encouraged by policy makers and the government) as resulting in the removal of farmers and the dissolution of rural communities in the face of corporate penetration. "The trend away from the ownership and control of farming activities by family-farm operators is nothing less than approval for the further subsumption of Australian farming in the interest of transnational agribusiness" (Lawrence, 1990:119). Sargent (1985) is another Australian writer who describes how agribusiness is subsuming agriculture. Both these authors suggest that it is the embracing of neo-classic or orthodox economic theory by Australian policy makers which is allowing this subsumption to occur.

farming, as a practice, is immutable, and evidence of survival is its continued existence in unmodified form. It appears that while (as my data illustrates and the more recent agricultural economist literature and rural sociology literature suggests) 'family farming' has not given way directly to corporate farming, 'family farming' has been changing, (indeed, it always has been). Farmers have been not so much 'willing victims' but 'active agents' in this process. The question is how have structure and ideology changed? Rural sociologists have tackled the former, suggesting such things as the formal or indirect subsumption of agriculture. My emphasis here has been on the latter, because this is the least considered in the literature and most recently proposed for consideration. It is an area in which anthropology has perhaps a great deal to offer.

The literature reviewed in Chapter One suggested many possibilities for the future of family farming, such as its demise and the eventual replacement by corporate control. The most recent literature, across disciplines, suggests that this is not occurring (at least not yet, or on a very big scale). Fairweather (1992) confirmed this for New Zealand. My research confirms that in the Manawatu family farming is continuing to be practiced, with many of my participants having family take over their farms in the last decade. Only one saw his farm sold to a company, and then it was not used for farming. As I have outlined, many theorists have proposed reasons for why capital and capitalist relations have not pervaded all of agricultural production. For example, Mann (1990) suggests family farms are surviving because capital has yet to be able to subsume into its logic certain things about the organic nature of agriculture. While this kind of explanation may have some basis, and corporate organisations may not see certain types of farming as profitable ventures, this teleological argument does not explain why 'family farming' still exists. In this thesis I have replied to questions by rural analysts by attempting not to replicate their early assumption of the family farm as *anomaly*, but by conducting ethnographic research into subjective world views, following more recent suggestions for research in the literature. Therefore, in discussing the future of family farming, my discussion does not attempt to give a comprehensive and ultimate explanation for its existence, but rather to highlight some of the subjective dimensions of what it means to be a farmer and to operate the family farm. In doing this we can see what motivates farmers to pursue the continuance of family farming within the process of agricultural development. Hence, these factors may not necessarily ensure and thus

explain, the persistence of family farming, only the way farmers as agents of their destiny may think and subsequently tend to act.

REPLY TO QUESTIONS ABOUT THE FUTURE OF FAMILY FARMING - *Agricultural Economics*

As outlined in Chapter One, agricultural economists have put forward schemes such as equity sharing to help farmers through difficult economic times. However because they paid little attention to what it means to be a farmer a farmer engaged in family farming, it is unlikely these schemes will be eagerly embraced. The discussion about farm ownership in Chapter Three suggests how future schemes might be designed to compliment existing value systems. Suggestions, such as the use of equity farming, cannot be simply utilised by farmers, because for many it will bring into conflict the goals and values inherent to farming. Certainly, the financial viability of the farm is a concern, but when the suggested solution comes into direct conflict with another primary concern, ie: private ownership and succession, a paradox is created which is mediated at the farm level. This is only ever fleetingly referred to by economists.

I have argued that ownership as a legal status is not the crucial determinant for farmers, although it is often claimed to be. It is without doubt a dominant ideal and goal for New Zealand farmers, but the real issue is control to the extent where farmers can anticipate that family succession can occur. Equity sharing in the future for family farms is therefore not out of the question. Farmers, however, are likely to be reluctant to take up such schemes if they threaten 'control' of the farm or future succession. Any scheme which undermines succession brings into conflict the goals of farmers and may also undermine the whole 'raison d'etre' of farming. Schemes which share equity would need, for example, to leave the farmer with the controlling share, or offer leases long enough to allow several generations of succession to be possible. Farmers, of course, have in the past tended to receive financial help from other family members; hence family partnerships and trusts have always been an acceptable option, but this is because the economic links are also familial.

CONCLUSIONS

This chapter has presented the participant's thoughts about the future and found that they are generally optimistic and embracing of 'development' and change. This support is reflective of the relation between the family and capitalist production. The future of family farming has been addressed here through a consideration of how the participants perceive the future and how their perceptions are shaped by their self-identification as farmers. While the structure of farming and the ideological construction of farming is constantly changing, there is no reason to believe that family farming is disappearing. On the contrary, the changing economic climate in the last decade may serve to strengthen the practice family farming.

CONCLUSION

This dissertation has considered a number of themes which emerged from the literature on family farming (globally) and corresponding themes which emerged (locally) from the interviews with a small cohort of retired Manawatu farmers. The dissertation has explored the experience and identity of the farmer and the meaning of family farming in the Manawatu and has considered the implications for the future of family farming.

It has been argued that the agricultural economics literature generally fails to consider what it means to be a farmer engaged in family farming (or more broadly speaking, fails to investigate the subjective dimensions of the practice of family farming). Consequently, projections about the future of family farming which are based on accounts which fail to consider subjectivity, do not allow for an accurate assessment of how farmers on family farms are likely to respond to change.

Literature which falls under the broad umbrella of 'the sociology of agriculture' is written predominantly within a political economy perspective. While recently there have been suggestions that attention should be paid to the subjective dimensions of family farming, the absence of such research has resulted in structural accounts which are premised on an assumption that the 'family' stands in opposition to 'capitalism'. This dichotomous relation - family/capitalism is not only inaccurate (recreates ideological construct into theoretical construct) but the application of such concepts - and the implications that this has for framing research questions and making projections about the future of family farming are, extremely problematic. More generally, the failure of sociologists, anthropologists and agricultural economists to critically evaluate their conceptions of what constitutes the 'family' and necessarily the 'family-farm' has led to the perpetuation of ideological constructs (common sense notions) and

inadvertently this body of research (through uncritically adopting these notions) obscures and fails to address inequity which exists within the family - down on the farm.

The tendency to romanticise (through an uncritical acceptance of what constitutes the family, the farmer and their practice) also has unfortunate consequences. The assumption that the 'family' farm represents what is 'traditional' practice and therefore as 'traditional' it is worthy of saving/preserving, is analogous to the work of early anthropologists, who during and in the wake of colonialism, sought to represent the 'other' in order to salvage/or preserve 'traditional' ways of life. The salvage paradigm as it later became known, and the romantic tendency to view the other as Noble Savage; seems to have reinvented itself - now that anthropology has come home. This reinvention reveals itself in the form of researcher, in search of the Noble Farmer, who needs to be saved and preserved.

This study has attempted to critically evaluate and thus not duplicate such tendencies. Firstly, the study takes one region and a small cohort of retired farmers in the Manawatu in order to consider what it means to be a farmer, and what family farming means to the participants. The focus on subjectivity was determined by the absence of such research in New Zealand. The subjective accounts of the participants have been contextualised with respect to previous research and through a consideration of the historical underpinnings of family farming, nationally and locally.

This study suggests that family farming is and has been constantly changing since the time of settlement. Attempts to preserve or save are based on a flawed assumption that there is some - 'thing' - concrete and immutable, that needs to be carried forward into the future. Furthermore, the historical analysis reveals that farmers of family farms are not outside of the capitalist system, rather they have been central to the establishment of capitalism and continuance of capitalism in New Zealand society. It is therefore inappropriate to conceive of New Zealand family farmers as 'peasants' or as a social group that somehow exists outside of capitalist social relations. While socialist principles definitely informed state policy, farmers once established fully embraced capitalist notions of self-reliance.

This study has revealed that to be a farmer - for this cohort - is intimately connected to being a man in New Zealand society. It could be suggested that challenges

to this way of life could be taken as challenges to masculine identity. Patriarchal organisation on the family farm and in particular the practice of patriline inheritance reveals the centrality of gendered inequality, 'natural' - birth order - inequalities, and more generally the central role succession plays in the 'farmers' identity and that of *his* family.

The ideological construct of family as all nurturing is embraced by the participants in this study, however, some do acknowledge how inequitable succession is. The practice of succession, the division of labour on the farm, the issue of who gets paid for their labour, the position of children with respect to work on the farm, all reveal clearly, that nurturing families may be, but they are most certainly not havens from inequality (or the corporate world). Inequities arise with respect to access to resources, inheritance, birth order, and gender. However, I have argued that it is still possible to argue, that despite the fact that familial ideology informs the organisation/structure and practice in the corporate world; it is still possible to conceptualise the family farm as distinct. In short, employers do not love their employees. The degree of emotional/subjective attachment to fellow workers is not replicated in the corporate world, largely because most organisations are not inhabited by KIN.

Furthermore, this study reveals clearly that the value of farm ownership is not solely based on an economic rationale, rather retaining ownership is also about retaining one's identity and family history. If family farms are under threat - then this study suggests that family farmers will respond to the threat and or adapt, so the central values in their life can be maintained through practice.

Finally, this study has revealed that the cultural construction of farming (farmer) consists of understanding that farming is an activity which is masculine; that a sense of ownership or control allows for a belief (and practice of) in family farm succession and the consequent conception of the family farm as entity (which has existed prior to the life of any individual farmer) is strongly linked to intergenerational loyalties. Indeed too, the identification as farmer hinges on these intergenerational links and a knowledge of prior succession down the patriline.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

This study relied on a small cohort of retired farmers in the Manawatu, whose experiences and possibly understanding of farming may differ from other regions and younger generations of farmers. Further anthropological research into the subjective perspectives of different age cohorts and those residing in other regions would contribute significantly to our understanding of farming practice in New Zealand today. In particular, future research might consider more closely the role of gender in shaping farming identity and practice, and perhaps too, follow-up on those who do not inherit the family farm - where do they go - and how do they recollect their family history?

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APPENDIX 1

JACK OF ALL TRADES

Chapter One from Richard Christie, 1991

Leaving The Land: A Case Study of Farmers Who Left The Land Between 1987-1989.

Farmers have long been admired by the non farming fraternity for their practical skills and abilities in a wide range of tasks. Going a few years back the ingredients for a good farmer were judged by how many of the practical skills outlined below were fulfilled by the individual.

The successful farmer was deemed to be a good stock manager, possessing an ability called stockmanship. He or she had an eye for judging stock, was a good lambing shepherd, had good veterinary type skills and had a knowledge of all stock types. Learning how to handle new classes of livestock such as deer was a distinct advantage. Pasture management skills were required. (Agronomy degrees were advantageous). Being an experienced dagger, crutcher, shearer and woolclasser was beneficial. Fencing, welding and an "A" grade mechanic's ticket helped. The successful farmer was also a qualified engineer involved in roading (farm tracks) and drainage or irrigation schemes, depending on their district. Building and some elementary plumbing skills were always a plus.

Dog handling, motorcross riding agility, truck driving, tractor operation, and helicopter piloting (depending on your farm type and level of affluence) were deemed necessary abilities.

To ensure all tasks were completed on time, the farmer had to be a fit character with supernormal strength, and lift weights suitably heavy to qualify for the Commonwealth games. He or she had to keep up with all the new technology around and have a management system suitably flexible to adapt to an unpredictable climate.

Today these skills are just as necessary but recently the field of expertise for our modern day farmer is widening. The 1986 successful farmer is also a taxation specialist and a foreign exchange forecaster. His or her role as a secretary-clerk-bookkeeper-accountant is growing, making a Bachelor of Commerce degree useful. The farmer is also a financial expert (specializing in arranging loans). They need to be policeman-like (sic) in defending their properties from marauding mushroom pickers, goat rustlers and weed growers.

The successful farmer is a skilled political analyst (predicting the government's next move). A Bachelor of Arts, majoring in political science, gives him or her a distinct advantage. As well as being a political analyst, farmers are becoming political activists.

Because this is a new area to many, it is rumoured that Tim Shadbolt is embarking on a nationwide tour, running seminars to teach the technique involved.

Market forecasting is a similar skill to foreign exchange forecasting and keeps the modern day farmer up with the play to help him know what to produce.

Further farmer jobs involve personnel management, although to a lesser extent recently. But counselling depressed salesmen who drop in is a vital role.

Above all, today's farmer is a philosopher, (as taught by the school of life) so that he is successfully able to fulfill the Oxford Dictionary definition by having calm endurance of misfortune.

Today's farmer is a highly skilled and versatile person. This is particularly so, considering companies may employ one person for each of the specialist tasks mentioned above.

If one of the above ingredients is missing and the farmer loses his or her "competent farmer" status, at least they have all the other trades behind them, which should make some of them the most sought after people in the work force.

APPENDIX 2

LIST OF INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

The following is a list of questions I compiled over my initial and 'test run' interviews. Many of the topics were covered in free flow conversations without any need to use the specific questions. Questions have been divided into sections which covered different themes.

SECTION A

- What do you know about your parents/ancestors?
- How did they come to New Zealand?
- Where did they land?
- Did they farm? - Type? -Where? - What became of the farm?

SECTION B

- Tell me about growing up - Where? - Memories?
- How did you get into farming and why?
- Tell me about your life farming? - day-to-day routine?
- Tell me about the farms you have farmed? - Size? - Type?
- Describe the farm to me
- Did you enjoy farming? - Tell me about the pleasures? - What you didn't like?
- What were your goals farming?
- Was there ever anything else you would have liked to have done?
- Tell me about the farming community as you experienced it?
- Were all your friends farmers?

SECTION C

- Did you always know you would leave the farm and retire to an urban area?
- Did you plan over the years for the move?
- What were your expectations about moving and retiring?
- Why did you retire when you did?
- Did you want to shift?
- How did you find shifting into town?
- Was it difficult to leave the farm?
- Do you miss the farm? - What in particular?
- How did you feel selling/passing on the farm?
- Do you keep in touch with the rural community?

SECTION D

- Did your children grow up on the farm?
- Do they farm now? - Did they want to ? - How do you feel about that?
- Are any of your contemporaries (farmers) still living on their farms, or working them ?
- Would you say your experience of farming and retiring to town is typical?

SECTION E

- How important is farming to New Zealand?
- Do you think its importance has changed?
- What do you think of diversification such as forestry and 10 acre blocks?
- What do you envisage for the future for New Zealand Farming?
- What would you like to see happen?
- Is there a place in the future for the small scale family farmer?

SECTION F

- Do you still consider yourself a farmer?
- What makes a farmer a 'farmer'?
- What makes a 'good' farmer?
- How is farming different to other professions? Would you recommend it?
- What is good farm land?
- How would you describe your relationship to your land?

AFTERWORD

from
COMMENT FROM THE HILL TOP

*An Irish Message From The UN: But Beware -
Some Advise Doesn't Contribute Much.*

By Geoff Prickett

The New Zealand Farmer, Nov 2 1994: Vol.116 No.44

“Country people throughout the world, and certainly here in New Zealand, are in danger of being turned into the subject matter for a whole new industry - the rural development industry. There's an increasing tendency among consultants, counsellors, academics and all-sorts to dip their heads into the rural development trough. Too often they theorize and patronise with only the slightest understanding and the vaguest personal experience of country life. Sometimes it seems like rural people are becoming a bit like a *lost tribe*, there to be studied and analysed”. (italics my emphasis)