



The “dreaded” daughter-in-law in Australian farm business succession

Lucie Newsome^{*}, Alison Sheridan, Andrew Lawson, Skye Charry, Sue Field

University of New England, Australia

ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:

Family farm business
Gender
Australia
Succession
Rural idyll
Simple commodity production
Family Law

ABSTRACT

Egalitarian gender norms and legislative rights to property may be a threat to the successful intergenerational transfer of the family farm. This article examines how the land holding generation perceives the role of daughters-in-law in reproducing the family farm. We examine the site of farm succession and intergenerational transfer. We draw on interviews with 22 farm succession professionals. Our analysis demonstrates the land holding generation see the financial reproduction of the Australian family farm as reliant on women’s off-farm work and the biological, social and cultural reproduction of the family farm is reliant on women’s role adherence to traditional gender norms. This creates tensions within family farms that the landholding generation aim to resolve through legal protections of the farm asset against a claim by the daughter-in-law and by discursively punishing role digression. Given the reliance of Australian family farms on women’s labour contributions, these actions may threaten rather than ensure the continuity of family farming.

1. Introduction

In Australia, like many western industrialised nations, farmers see the reproduction of the family farm through the generations as a key objective (Gasson and Errington, 1993). Sons are still predominantly named the successor to the family farm business (Barclay et al., 2007), and women’s position and social status on the farm is defined primarily by their relationship to men as mothers, wives or daughters (Devine, 2013). This is despite their contributions to the financial viability and social and cultural reproduction of the farm family (Suess-Reyes and Fuetsch, 2016). The farm succession and transition process is likely to be a site of struggle over the symbolic and material resources of land and business (Downey et al., 2017). In Australian family farm transition there is evidence of tensions between egalitarian and patriarchal gender systems as the value of farm land has increased (Sheridan et al., 2023).

Maintaining farm viability in Australia is difficult due to increasing competition and volatility in international markets (Cheshire and Woods, 2013), the removal of government-provided services supporting agricultural production and marketing (Nettle et al., 2018) and the disruptions caused by climate change, both in terms of dealing with events such as flooding, droughts and bush fires, as well as longer term changes in farming practices as farmers adapt to climate change (Alston et al., 2022). Rural communities, too, face reproduction challenges as populations and access to essential services decline (McManus et al., 2012).

This study seeks to understand women’s roles in the reproduction of the family farm in Australia. We focus our analysis on a phase in the farm business that is crucial to its reproduction, the farm succession and intergenerational transfer processes. To capture power dynamics across the generations the study asks “What roles do the land holding generation consider the daughter-in-law to have in the reproduction of the family farm business?” We interviewed 22 professionals who assist families through this process. Theoretically, we drew on a framework that incorporated gendered critiques of simple commodity production, feminist rural sociology and legal analysis.

We found that in contemporary Australian agriculture the daughter-in-law is valued for her role in biologically, socially and culturally reproducing the farm family and financially supporting the family farm through her off-farm work. Conversely, the daughter-in-law is also seen as a threat to the reproduction of the family farm. The data in this study demonstrates the land holding generation engage in a range of discursive and material defensive strategies (Gray, 1998) to limit the agency of the farm daughter-in-law.

Theoretically, this paper adds to the body of research highlighting differential power dynamics within households that create macroeconomic impacts (for example Elson, 1994; Cagatay et al., 1995). We contribute to practice by highlighting that farm families are often failing to adjust to a changing social, economic and legal environment. Given the increasing value of farm land in Australia (ABARES, 2023), decisions about intergenerational farm transfers have wider implications for the

^{*} Corresponding author.

E-mail address: lnewsom3@une.edu.au (L. Newsome).

distribution of family wealth (Bessière and Gollack, 2023).

This paper is structured in the following way. First it establishes a conceptual framework for understanding the farm daughter-in-law's role in farm labour dynamics in the Australian context and her rights to property under Family Law. Second, the qualitative methodology is outlined. Third, we present the three key findings to emerge from the analyses of the interviews. This paper ends with a discussion of the practical and theoretical implications of this study, which precedes an outline of areas for future research.

2. The farm daughter-in-law's role: family labour dynamics, farm succession processes and the reproduction of the family farm

The reproduction of the family farm and the role of women's labour within this process has been conceptualised in political economy through literature on simple commodity production, and its gendered critiques. We use this as a starting point and examine its relevance to contemporary Australian agriculture. Drawing on feminist social reproduction literature we identify key gendered roles in farm reproduction as financial, biological, social and culture and marry that with literature on the sociology of farm gender roles and norms. This section concludes by outlining the legal rights to farm assets for daughters-in-law and potential legal defensive strategies that may be used by the landholding generation.

Simple commodity production is a concept in political economy that points to the flexibility of labour in family farm businesses as creating an advantage over capitalist forms of production (Friedmann, 1986; Goodman and Redclift, 1985). This is despite the larger trend in late-stage capitalism for factors of production to shift to corporate control (Price and Evans, 2006). The flexibility of family labour allows for farm households to sell labour to capitalist markets when there is a surplus and to draw on greater family labour during times of shortage (Friedmann, 1978; Goodman and Redclift, 1985). Friedmann (1978) argues that during events such as intergenerational transfers of the family farm, labour shortages and surpluses are smoothed out through the flexibility of family labour.

In the contemporary Australian context of family farming there is support for the hypothesis of simple commodity production. The flexibility of family labour has been important in maintaining farm viability, particularly through periods of economic restructuring (Suess-Reyes and Fuetsch, 2016). Australian agriculture has been extensively deregulated and exposed to global markets (Woods, 2014). Farm viability depends on high productivity, achieving economies of scale (Newsome, 2020) and keeping the farm intact (Sheridan et al., 2023). Chronic drought and commodity price fluctuations have reduced net farm incomes and increased debt (McRobert et al., 2019).

Pritchard et al. (2007) argue a new category of family entrepreneur has emerged in this competitive and complex economic context, farm family entrepreneurs. Pritchard et al. (2007, p. 85) contend family farm entrepreneurs "exhibit behaviour that is more reminiscent of any entrepreneurial capitalist involved in input into an industrial chain". These farm families invest in a range of agricultural-based investments and commercial activities. Farms remain family-owned but assets such as land may be governed by corporate legal and financial structures and decoupled from the family residence (Pritchard et al., 2007). Professional advisors are increasingly used (Bassett et al., 2022) and the development of corporate and legal structures extends to farm succession and transition processes, which may be used to control family members' roles in the reproduction of the family farm and their access to land and other assets.

Gendered critiques of simple commodity production (Argent, 1999; Friedmann, 1978, 1986; Sachs, 1983; Whatmore, 1991a, 1991b) allow for an analysis of the farm household as a site that is both connected to broader commodity relations (including commodity prices, financial debt and off-farm work) (Symes, 1991), and power struggle within

family relations (Friedmann, 1986; Sachs, 1983). For Mincyte (2024) gender role ideologies and the social reproduction of the family farm are key to understanding the broader capitalist agro-food system. As Bessière and Gollack (2023; p. 13) note, the family is an economic institution, like any other – "a place where wealth is produced, circulated, controlled and assigned value". Labour and income distribution within families is influenced by the unequal social positions and social power of individuals, rather than a matter of free choice (Elson, 1994). Friedmann (1986) argues that patriarchal control of labour is key to the reproduction of the family farm. This shapes the division of labour and the passing down of the enterprise through the generations. As women's economic and social power improves within families the extent to which gendered critiques of simple commodity production remains relevant is part of the analysis of this paper.

Despite changes to women's economic and social power, binary and hierarchical gender roles remain evident in farming families. Hoffmeyer (2021) argues family farming is a heterosexist institution excluding identity formation beyond the binary. The primary farmer is considered to be masculine, constructed around characteristics of autonomy, controlling nature, controlling women, physical toughness and solitude (Alston, 2012; Alston and Kent, 2008; Bryant and Garnham, 2015). In Australia, farm succession and intergenerational transfer remains patrilineal, with daughters taking over the family farm in only 10% of cases (Barclay et al., 2007). Alston (2006) and Tyler and Fairbrother (2013; p. 108) found evidence of the resilience of "traditional masculinity" in rural Australia, particularly during times of disaster such as bushfire where "firefighting, risk-taking, conquering nature, and defending family and home" – all reflective of hegemonic rural masculinity – were lauded by the fire response and emergency services. Idealised farm women are home-centred and perform a supportive role to the primary male farmer (Cosson and Gilding, 2021). In Australia rural feminine respectability is a tool of ongoing colonisation as it contrasts to the uncivilised Indigenous other (Watego, 2021). The ideal qualities of the farm daughter-in-law include loyalty, kindness and practicality and being low maintenance and uncomplicated (Little and Panelli, 2007). Little (2007) found farmers were steadfast in their belief their partner needed to understand she would be prioritised second after the farm. The farm daughter-in-law is viewed as a threat to the family farm. She may challenge the established way of doing things and make a claim on the farm asset in the case of divorce or intimate partnership break down (Gray, 1998; Pini, 2007; Price and Evans, 2006). Divorce can be a major threat to keeping the farm intact and passing it down through the generations (Forney and Sutherland, 2021). Farm daughters-in-law are likely to always be seen as an outsider (Pini, 2007) and marginalised in decision making processes (Gill, 2008; Pini, 2007). Women who do not perform appropriate femininity, such as not being sexually or socially subordinate, are likely to face an exaggerated response for their gender role deviation (Terry, 2020; Williams and Craig-Moreland, 2005). Deviation from traditional ways of doing and being is difficult for rural women, as they are more likely to be face informal social controls than urban women (Websdale, 1998).

These ideologically constructed and actively maintained gender identities allow for the extraction of women's labour with little additional costs (Argent, 1999). Women's role in reproducing the family farm can be categorised using Federici's (2004) identification of biological reproduction, labour force reproduction through the socialisation of behaviours and skills and social relations. To this we add financial reproduction of the family farm and farming communities. In Australia, the economic and environmental climate has led to an increase in women's off-farm and on-farm work to sustain the family and the farm (Alston et al., 2017). When a full range of women's on-farm, off-farm, household, and community work is captured, 49% of the total value attributed to farming communities in Australia is generated from women's work (Sheridan and Haslam McKenzie, 2009).

Despite their contribution, Australian women's contribution to the family farm is still undervalued and considered as supplementary and

secondary to the male farmer (Pini, 2007), which is reflected in government policies and programs (Newsome, forthcoming). (Idealised rural women aid in the social reproduction of the family farm through childbirth and socialisation of children, particularly sons, into the role of farmers (Cosson and Gilding, 2021). Socialisation includes instilling a belief the established ways of doing things is natural (Burton et al., 2020). Women also play a role in the cultural reproduction of the farm family by aiding the development of social capital required to be considered a farmer within the local community (Burton et al., 2008; Burton and Paragahawewa, 2011). As they age, women's agency in relation to men and other women in the family may strengthen (Rao, 2014). As women's tenure in the farm family increases, her influence and authority strengthens as she moves from daughter-in-law to matriarch.

Little and Austin's (1996) conceptualisation of the rural idyll is useful for understanding why farm succession and transition is a crucial time in the reproduction of the family farm. The rural idyll also reinforces binary and hierarchical gender roles on family farms (Little and Austin, 1996). The rural idyll positions farm life as virtuous, superior and authentic, in co-step with the land and community (Little and Austin, 1996). This creates a strong emotional attachment to the family farm (Downey et al., 2016), which shapes identity (Neumann et al., 2007), gender roles (Little and Austin, 1996), the moral worth of family members and contributes to family stability (Bahls, 1994). Keeping the farm in the family is important to preserving the rural idyll as it connects present family members to ancestors and descendants the link between family name and place (authors 2021), and carrying on the family's link to the local community (Chiswell and Loble, 2018). The farming identity, connection to land and value placed on intergenerational transfer, particularly through the patrilineal line, are strong cultural influences for farming families (Forney and Sutherland, 2021).

While having a successor and providing one's children with the occupation and identity of farming is important for rural families (Bryant and Garnham, 2015), farmers may experience handing over the farm to the next generation as a loss of independence, lifestyle, income and place attachment (Kirkpatrick, 2012) as well as a loss of identity and status within the community and family (Kennedy, 1999; Shortall, 1999). The average age of Australia farmers is 58 (ABS, 2020), suggesting intergenerational transfer is occurring later in life. In Australia the state has retreated from providing retirement security for those with significant assets and the farm is increasingly used as a source of superannuation (Barclay et al., 2007). Succession processes may require the farm to be purchased by the next generation to provide for the retirement of the older generation. Siblings other than the successor are now more likely to be provided for financially by their parents (Sheridan et al., 2023). Increasing land prices (ABARES, 2023) adds to the complexity of intergenerational transfer, to increased debt levels and to the importance of keeping the family farm intact to maintain viability. In Australia access to assets such as property is a key determinant of life outcomes (Adkins et al., 2020).

3. Challenges to gendered farm labour relations: Family Law changes

Patriarchal control of labour has been challenged by social and legal changes that reinforce the rights of the individual (Lem, 1988). Should her relationship break down with the farm son, the daughter-in-law may make a claim on the family farm (Downey et al., 2017; Haugen and Brandth, 2017). The developments in Family Law in Australia include the introduction of "no fault divorce", which replaced the previous regime that required evidence of a party's fault – e.g. adultery – to institute divorce proceedings. Under the no fault provisions, divorce is available where "the marriage has broken down irretrievably", and the parties have separated for 12 months (*Family Law Act 1975* (Cth) s 48). *De facto* relationships are now included the sphere of Family Law principles (*Family Law Act 1975* (Cth) s 4AA). Finally, the regime of

post-separation property settlements applies now to both *de jure* and *de facto* marriages (*Family Law Act 1975* (Cth) Part VIII).

Unlike other jurisdictions that recognise "community property" in marriage, Australian law does not presume assets acquired during a marriage are to be regarded as jointly owned in equal shares.¹ Instead, under the *Family Law Act 1975* (Cth), the court has extensive powers to rearrange property interests in ways it considers appropriate as long as it is satisfied it is just and equitable in the circumstances (s 79(2)).

The types of property subject to such arrangements are widely construed and include all the parties' real estate and personal property, as well as tangible and intangible property such as shares in a company (Fehlberg and Sarmas, 2018).

As a result of the developments in *Family Law Act (1975)* (Cth) it is now possible for a spouse or partner of a farmer to have the farmer's property considered in a property settlement upon the breakdown of the relationship. That is not to say that using the courts to bring Family Law proceedings is without hurdles or gendered impediments. Indeed, based on submissions to a 2017-19 inquiry, the Australian Law Reform Commission summarised the family law system as unsafe, overly complex, expensive, slow, lacking accountability and inadequate in its enforcement of parenting orders (Australian Law Reform Commission, 2019 pp. 107–108). Bessière and Gollack (2023) make similar observations and note that no-fault divorce principles cannot be expected to achieve equality of outcomes for women when they are embedded in economic, social and legal structures that systematically discriminate against women.

In the Australian context, Graycar (1994) analyses in some detail various mechanisms that perpetuate gender inequality in the ostensibly gender-neutral system governing domestic and intimate relationships since the passing of the *Family Law Act*. She cites empirical research on the "disastrous financial consequences of divorce for women and children" (pp. 283-283), combined with lower wages and more limited access to economic resources generally. In reviewing property settlements in divorce settings reported in the case law, she notes the "failure to recognise how women's non-financial contributions assist in the acquisition of financial assets and enhance their husbands' earning potential at the same time as they diminish the women's own earning capacity" (p. 283). Other observations include the failure to account for unpaid work on farms, and the reality that the "double burden" of working outside the home and child-care mostly falls to women both within marriage and after divorce. At the time of writing, the Federal Government had announced a draft bill to address some of these concerns (Attorney-General Mark Dreyfus, 2023). Despite the provision of formal rights to agricultural property, particularly in the case of intimate partnership breakdown, access to property rights is likely to be limited by ideological and relational factors within Australian farming families.

Family businesses structures may be purposively designed to quarantine farm assets from potential claims by daughters-in-law (or sons-in-law) – *de facto* or *de jure* – in Family Law property settlements. The two approaches in this regard are (1) to circumvent the factors considered by the court under *Family Law Act 1975* (Cth), ss 75(2) and 79(4) – discussed above – and (2) to avoid having farm assets fall under the categories of "property" available for a settlement. In the first approach, this could be affected by way of binding financial agreements (s 75(2)(q)), which can have a similar effect as pre-nuptial agreements in other jurisdictions, or by deliberately excluding the spouse from ownership of assets and avoiding them making financial contributions to the purchase or maintenance of assets (s 75(2)(j)).

In the second approach, the strategy here would be to ensure the interest of the farming parents' child (i.e. spouse of the daughter-in-law) is not an interest recognised as "property" of the spouse for the purpose of Family Law settlements. For example, a beneficial interest under a discretionary trust is ordinarily not considered a property interest

¹ *Mallet v Mallet* (1984) 156 CLR 605-650.

available to the pool of assets in a Family Law settlement, unless the spouse has a requisite degree of control over the operation of the trust, either legally or as a matter of fact (Kennon v Kennon, 1997, although a recent decision has cast some doubt over aspects of the decision: Woodcock and Woodcock (No. 2) (2022) 65 Fam LR 333).

Other types of arrangements that could be employed to limit a daughter-in-law's claim on farm assets include leasing arrangements – where parents retain title to land and other farm assets and lease it to their child. In this case, the only interest the child has in a Family Law property dispute with the daughter-in-law spouse is a leasehold estate. Similarly, parents may hold a mortgage over farm property transferred to the child, with a view to recouping the loan if the property is sold or transferred to satisfy a Family Law property settlement. The parents are then at liberty to gift the proceeds back to their child once the “dust has settled” after the divorce or separation. Of course, it is not always easy to determine whether such arrangements are specifically designed to frustrate a daughter-in-law's claim on potential matrimonial property, or are genuine strategies for the older generation to retain some control over assets to secure a decent retirement.

The reproduction of the family farm, financially, biologically, socially and culturally, is reliant upon the flexibility of family labour, including women's off and off-farm work. Labour relations on farms are gendered and unequal, with women having less access to the farmer identity and the material and symbolic rewards of farming. This is naturalised through gender norms of the farmer and the farmer's wife and the rural idyll. As women's economic, social and legal power improves and the economic context of family farming becomes more complex and competitive, it is timely to examine how the farm daughter-in-law's role is perceived by the landholding generation. We choose the context of farm succession and intergenerational transfer as a site for analysis, as it is a time when the reproduction of the family farm is at risk and maybe contested.

4. Methodology

This study is part of a larger project about how gender informs decision making in farm succession and transition processes (Sheridan et al., 2023). Unlike other studies that interviewed women to understand their role in farm survival and how they are perceived by families (Pini, 2007; Price and Evans, 2006) we spoke to professionals who assist farming families through the process of intergenerational transfer. As valued and trusted advisors, these intermediaries observe key dynamics within farming families. Interviewing these professionals allowed us access to insights gained over their careers as professional advisors in the context of changing gender norms and legal rights.

Using a purposeful sampling approach, we identified a sample of professional advisers providing farm succession and transition services. We identified 10 participants and, through snowball sampling, were able to recruit 22 participants (17 women and five men) ranging in age from their 20s to over 60. See Table 1 for details of the participants.

We conducted semi-structured interviews via Zoom in 2021 with participants asked to relay their observations of the challenges and opportunities of farm succession planning in contemporary Australian agriculture and how gender shaped decision making and narratives in this space. The questions were applied flexibly, allowing scope for the interviewee to reflect on issues they saw as relevant (King and Brooks, 2016). Interviews were carried out by all authors. The interviews were digitally recorded, transcribed verbatim and transferred into software enabling qualitative text analysis (Nvivo 12).²

We used template analysis to allow for the emergence of inductive and deductive themes. Template analysis, a pragmatic form of thematic analysis using a “template style” for categorisation, balances flexibility and structure in managing textual data (see King and Brooks, 2016 for a

Table 1
Participant demographic and professional detail.

Interviewee ID Number	Sex	Age	Role	Farm background
1	F	20–30	Legal	Yes
2	F	50–60	Rural Financial Counsellor	Yes
3	F	50–60	Industry association exec/farmer	Yes
4	F	>60	Succession planner	Yes
5	F	>60	Rural Financial Counsellor	Yes
6	F	>60	Legal	No
7	F	40–50	Legal	Yes
8	F	50–60	Succession planner	Yes
9	M	50–60	Legal	No
10	F	30–40	Succession planner	Yes
11	F	30–40	Legal	Yes
12	F	>60	Succession planner	No
13	F	40–50	Legal	No
14	M	50–60	Legal	No
15	M	>60	Succession planner	Yes
16	F	40–50	Farm consultant/farmer	Yes
17	M	50–60	Legal	No
18	M	40–50	Agribusiness consultant/farmer	Yes
19	F	>60	Succession planner	No
20	F	40–50	Accountant	Yes
21	F	30–40	Accountant	Yes
22	F	30–40	Accountant	No

fuller description of template analysis). We determined it was well-suited to our research question as it allowed for our analysis of the perceptions of the sample as a whole, as well as recognising the differences between individual accounts of the farm succession and transition process, and how the participants' responses perpetuated and/or challenged gender norms.

Nelson and Constantinidis (2017) observed that the gender lens of family business succession researchers is largely unacknowledged. We recognised that our data reflect the lived experiences of interviewees and interviewees (Charmaz and Belgrave, 2019), and as researchers, the gender lens we applied reflects a feminist orientation that no doubt shaped the choice of research question, reading of the interview data and philosophical positioning (Nelson and Constantinidis, 2017). All interviewees bar one live in rural areas, three come from farming families and one has been part of a farm succession planning process as a farm daughter. Initially the researchers met to discuss the impressions from the data and how it related to existing literature. Twenty-seven categories were initially identified from the data. Some were reflected in literature relating to intergenerational farm succession and gender (Sheridan et al., 2021) while others were generated from the data (King and Brooks, 2016). The frequency with which the role of the daughter-in-law was raised in the interviews was noted by all interviewees. The role of this “outsider” clearly warranted a deeper dive.

To ensure all researchers had a common understanding of the coding, an initial coding template was developed. The first two authors coded the full set of interviews and identified seven further categories. These categories were clustered into six overarching themes that described the observed phenomena, both distinctive and recurrent (Brooks and King, 2014). Gender informed multiple themes. For the purposes of this paper, we drilled down into the themes relating to the social construction of gender in rural areas, intergenerational power dynamics, gendered discourse and relationality to identify three sub-themes relating to how the incumbent generation in the family farm business construct the daughter-in-law's role in the farm business and succession process and how this impacts the farm transition process. The three sub-themes are women's contributions to the family farm; power struggles; and defensive strategies. Each researcher was consulted following the write up of the sub-themes as a mechanism to check the interpretation of the data

² Ethics approval to conduct the interviews was granted by the university.

did not reflect the positionality of the lead researchers.

The methodology of this study is limited in that the information is filtered through the backgrounds, experiences and attitudes of the professionals interviewed. While a benefit of interviewing professional advisors is they may be less biased than their clients, Trauger et al. (2010) argue agricultural advisors, both men and women, perceived “real farmers” to be men. Furthermore, the relationships the participants spoke about were largely white, heterosexual, cis-gendered and married couplings that do not capture the diversity in Australian farming.

5. Findings

Our analysis draws from the professional advisers’ accounts of how their clients - the older, land holding generation - understand the daughter-in-law’s role in the family labour dynamics and the broader succession processes. Three themes emerged from the analysis: the daughter in law was perceived to have a role in biologically reproducing the farm family and in smoothing income fluctuations through her off-farm work; she may threaten established, unequal intergenerational labour relations; and a risk to the reproduction of the family farm, necessitating discursive and material defensive strategies. We address each of these in turn.

The daughter-in-law’s role in family labour dynamics: biological and financial reproduction of the family farm

Interviewees of both sexes reflected that succession was likely to be patrilineal and made comments that reflected the farm daughter-in-law was likely to be seen by the landholding generation in relation to her capacity to maintain farming as the dominant family occupation. Patrilineal transfer remains the default in Australian farm families (interviewee 8 & 9). As interviewee 8 commented “It is still patriarchal, but it’s seen to be right”. Women’s roles on farms were associated with the biological, social and cultural reproduction of the family farm. She is responsible for the biological and social reproduction of the family farm by reproducing the farm labour force, the family’s connection to farm and farming and to build on the work of older generations. This extends to the socialisation of children, particularly sons, into the role of farmers and the rural idyll, including the established way of doing things as natural (Burton et al., 2020; Cosson and Gilding, 2021). Interviewee 6 relayed a typical conversation with clients seeking assistance with farm succession planning. When asked how they saw their new daughter-in-law “the client would say, ‘Well, it’s great because she’s gonna bring in the next generation of farmers. Her job is to be a breeder for this dynasty.’ And that was it”.

In addition to her unwaged role in biological and social reproduction of the family farm, she is valued for waged labour off-farm. Clients of the participants recognised the importance of the daughter-in-law’s off-farm income to the family business. Interviewee 6 said clients would say “Her job is to bring in off-farm income, so in lean years, we’ve got some other income”. As farming is characterised by financial and climatic volatility, drawing on family labour during times of cash-flow crisis, such as women’s off-farm work, is key to maintaining farm viability. Argent (1999) and Downey and Clune (2023) also found farmers seek to marry professional women in order to improve their financial security by accessing off-farm income. Access to flexible family labour is seen as a key advantage of family farm businesses relative to farms that are not family owned and operated (Price and Evans, 2006).

Culturally, women’s work extended to supporting rural communities and preserving the rural idyll through their off-farm employment. Federici (2004) identifies the provision of social and cultural needs, such as community connections, through women’s unpaid work as key to social reproduction. Populations in rural communities have declined, and with it health and education services (McManus et al., 2012). Interviewee 1 commented that fathers will tell their sons to look for a wife who is a nurse or a teacher as “the farmers are grooming their children to think

about the town, and to bring in someone who’s gonna be of value to the town, so the local network and their little systems can continue as they are”. This reflects the agrarian sentiment that farming is the economic and social lifeblood of society (Forney and Sutherland, 2021). Interestingly, interviewees did not relay that their clients saw their daughters-in-law as providing unwaged community service labour as part of the cultural reproduction of the family farm. Thirty-seven percent of women in Australian rural communities perform volunteer work, compared to 23 per cent of women in urban areas (Binks et al., 2018). Women’s unpaid volunteer work fills the gaps in service provision in rural areas, work that is supported and recognised by government initiatives (Newsome, forthcoming). Also missing from the data is references to the daughter-in-law’s financial reproduction of the family farm through their on-farm work. Women’s contribution to farms remains a cultural blind spot in Australia (Newsome, forthcoming), despite their historic and ongoing contribution, particularly during times of economic restructuring (Suess-Reyes and Fuetsch, 2016).

The daughter-in-law as a threat to established unequal intergenerational labour relations

Farm viability is often dependent on the underpayment of family labour and the socialisation of the farm successor into the management of the business and the rural idyll (Friedmann, 1978). Socialisation includes building the social capital required to be considered a farmer within the local community (Burton et al., 2008; Burton and Paragahawewa, 2011). Prior to the transfer of the land title, the younger generation is often in a space of uncertainty waiting for leadership roles, business ownership and land ownership to materialise (Downey and Clune, 2023). Interviewee 13 described the relationship between the generations during this time as a “power hustle”. As interviewee 19 reflected: “land is power, and patriarchal societies have always pursued land ownership because of the power that comes with it”. Property has been found to be a key determinant of life outcomes in Australia (Adkins et al., 2020), and to improve class position for farmers in New Zealand (Pomeroy, 2024). The oldest man tends to be the key decision maker in family farms and to retain this role well into old age (Riley, 2016). He may not have taken over control of the land and business until he was in his 50s and may therefore be content to repeat the pattern (Downey and Clune, 2023). For the younger generation, farm business succession can be a waiting game. Interviewee 16 reported situations where the older generation were “basically holding them for ransom” and there are situations of “you will do what I say or else.” Interviewee 13 said the younger generation understand that “this is what my future looks like, provided I toe the line, and only do what Mum and Dad want me to do”. Lem (1988) found the continued commitment of the heir to the family farm business gives meaning to the father’s life’s work and they may use a range of manipulation tactics to ensure this continues. Echoing research from Bryant and Garnham (2015), interviewee 19 identified that the older generation may delay passing on property due to a fear of losing identity and status.

Even though it may be contrary to their economic interests, the younger generation may make the decision to stay working on the farm and wait for the transfer process to protect the chances of family farm survival (see also Meier and Schier, 2016). The calculation of the value of the enterprise and the wages of the family are muddled by familial obligation and emotional ties (Friedmann, 1986). Income variability can lead to the younger generation accepting being paid a nominal wage due to a commitment to the importance of reproducing the family farm, a sense of duty or an expectation they will be financially rewarded when the farm is transferred to them (Kennedy, 1999). As agricultural land prices increase (ABARES, 2023), waiting for access to property rights is likely to be more financially rewarding than leaving the family farm for other employment, even if the pay is minimal on the family farm relative to opportunities in the broader labour market. Additionally, the strong attachment to land and the farmer identity makes it hard to stop farming

even when situations, such as delayed intergenerational farm transfer, become difficult (Riley, 2016). Unequal provision by parents to their children can be contested under Family Law.

Two male interviewees (9 and 15) reported that daughters-in-law often attempt to prompt the start of farm succession processes to improve the financial security for her husband and her family:

“... generally the daughter-in-law seems to be the one who wants to get some sort of security, whereas the son is happy to work on the family farm, and just get paid a minimal amount of money on the promise that they’ll get the farm in the future. And it used to be that farm succession planning was done through someone’s will. And that was quite common. But particularly the spouses these days want to get some sort of security for them and their children so that, yeah, they have that security, they know that they’re getting something for all their hard work, and their spouse’s hard work.” (interviewee 9)

Attempts to initiate farm succession discussions are likely to be met with exclusion from knowledge about the farm business and from family meetings (interviewee 7). Access to spaces for negotiation, disagreement and conflict in which agency over property rights may be exercised may be constrained. Interviewee 7 (a female legal practitioner) said the actions of daughters-in-law who do so were perceived as “bolshiness” and “pushiness”. Behaviour that is perceived in this way was seen as a digression from the ideal qualities of the farm daughter-in-law identified by Little and Panelli (2007) of kindness and being uncomplicated and low maintenance. It disrupts the gender role of subordinate and supportive farm wife. Deviations from gender roles are often met with an exaggerated reaction in rural communities (Williams and Craig-Moreland 2005). Gender role deviation challenges the rural idyll which positions rural families and rural communities as harmonious and wholesome (Little and Austin, 1996). The current study supports findings from Downey and Clune (2023) and Forney and Sutherland (2021) that the daughter-in-law is perceived as causing conflict within the family by challenging existing labour relations.

The daughter-in-law as a threat to farm continuity: defences by the land holding generation

Consistent with research from Gray (1998), Pini (2007) and Price and Evans (2006), both male and female interviewees stated that the daughter-in-law is perceived as a threat to the family farm as she may make a claim on the family’s assets in the case of divorce, due to the rights set out in the *Family Law Act 1975* (Cth). Divorce and making a claim on the family farm is a divergence from gender norms of farm women actively reproducing the family farm socially through their care responsibilities and financially through their flexible on and off-farm labour. Interviewees reported the daughter-in-law was perceived as “dangerous” (interviewee 6), “the most feared animal on the farm” (interviewee 19), a “baddie” (interviewee 8), a “threat” (interviewee 16) and “a risk” (interviewee 16). Reflecting findings of Haugen and Brandth (2017), partners of the farm son are deemed as opportunistic and seeking to access the wealth of the family farm. Interviewee 1 described how: “the key thinking always is, ‘Protect the farm, protect the family asset. We don’t want it divided and going to external people under any circumstances’”. In this case, the daughter-in-law is categorised as “outside” the family. Interviewee 12 said: “Farming families are a bit like the mafia. You can only come in. ‘Cos if you go out, you ain’t lookin’ good”. The outsider status identified by Pini (2007) is enduring.

The farm daughter-in-law was seen as a potential threat to farm reproduction due to her potential to deviate from a socially subordinate role. While Australian farms are heavily reliant on women’s off-farm work (Sheridan and Haslam McKenzie, 2009), the interview data shows the daughter-in-law’s off-farm work identity was also seen as a threat to the family farm business. Interviewee 12 said “the urban myth is, ‘Well, they never stay, these girls, they want to have a career.’” This quote reflects there may be limited career opportunities in rural areas

and pursuing one’s career may mean leaving the rural area. In Australia economic and population decline has led to the removal of services such as health and education in rural communities (McManus et al., 2012), which may challenge the continuation of the rural idyll (Keating, 2008) and women’s buy-in to the rural patriarchal bargain (Terry, 2020).

The farm daughter-in-law was seen as a prospective threat to farm reproduction due to her potential to deviate from a sexually subordinate role. The respectable rural woman is defined by sexual and physical characteristics (Little, 2003). A key defensive mechanism was the construction of the daughter-in-law as sexualised and dangerous. Potentially this reflected her sexual powers relative to a naïve farm son (see also Little, 2003). For example, interviewee 15 commented:

“So, if the father-in-law has started with the premise that, ‘I’ve gotta hang on to everything, because I’m going to be in control until I die, because I don’t want some floozy coming along and taking half the farm.’ If that’s his starting point, the young woman that comes into the situation, she’s not starting from scratch, she’s got one hell of a handicap. Because she has gotta prove that she’s not that floozy who’s out to pinch half the farm.”

Little (2003) identifies a difference in rural communities between the rural feminine ideal, who is practical, has an agricultural understanding and is down to earth, compared to stereotypically sexy or attractive women. The latter is likely to reflect the “floozy” identified in the quote above, a woman who does not have the essential qualities to be a farm wife and who contravenes her role as mother and helper. This study supports Haugen and Brandth’s (2017) finding that partners of the farm son are deemed as opportunistic and seeking to access the wealth of the family farm. Marrying and/or divorcing a non-respectable woman may prevent a farmer from accessing the social capital required to be a farmer in the context of his local community (Burton et al., 2008; Burton and Paragahawewa, 2011).

Interviewee 1 spoke of the older, land title-holding generation being cautious regarding allowing the daughter-in-law access to financial information about the family farm and to forums of decision making in case it gave her leverage to make a claim on the property in the future. Interviewee 11 reflected that any defensive strategy to limit the daughter-in-law’s claim on the family business were likely to be ineffective:

“You go to talks and people say, ‘Oh, I’m worried about my son and his wife, and she’s gonna want to take him for everything.’ Or ‘How do I protect the farm from the daughters-in-law?’ And the simple fact is you can’t, really. The Family Law system has really cracked that one wide open.”

Instruments to protect the farm asset from de facto or de jure partners in the case of intimate partnership breakdown include discretionary trusts, binding financial agreements or mortgages over assets transferred to the child. However, as interviewee 11 points out, Family Law changes have reduced the ability to protect assets from de jure or de facto partners. Under the *Family Law Act 1975* (Cth), power rests with the court to rearrange property interests in ways considered just and equitable (s 79(2)), which includes parties’ financial contributions to property, non-financial contributions to the family and household and their earning capacity (ss 75(2), 79(4)).

While many of the interviewees reported their clients believed it was in the best interest of the family farm business to marginalise the daughter-in-law, the interviewees themselves, in their professional roles as farm business advisors saw this as a constraint to the business. Interviewee 8 believed the marginalisation of the daughters-in-law was to the detriment of the family farm business. Interviewee 1 reflected on the managerial and entrepreneurial potential of farm daughters-in-law:

“A lot of these girls have sacrificed a lot and ... are whip-smart and actually could contribute enormously to these businesses being more

successful if they'd [the older generation] just put fear aside, be clear about what they're frightened of, deal with it, and move on."

As Interviewee 15 explained:

"I'm absolutely convinced that most dreaded daughters-in-law are created by the family into which they marry. They didn't start off like that. They started off as willing ... to help, wanting to be part of the deal, wanting to use their skills, and they get painted into a corner where they become the dreaded daughter-in-law."

Trauger et al. (2010) argues this positioning of women's bodies within binary discourses of the farmer and the farmer's wife limits women's options about identity formation, which may be of detriment to the farm business. Pritchard et al (2007) Pritchard et al (2007), Bassett et al., 2022 and author (2020) identify family farming as increasingly entrepreneurial, professional, market and technology oriented, capitalised and knowledge seeking as they seek to reproduce the family farm in a highly competitive sector. Failing to utilise the skill set of the daughter-in-law and using financial and interpersonal resources to quarantine her from the business is likely to be inefficient, expensive and prohibit the reproduction of the family farm.

The reflections of interviewees on how their clients perceive the role of the farm daughter-in-law when the son is the likely successor reveal a tension between relying on her for farm reproduction and seeing her as a threat to farm reproduction. She is valued for her off-farm work in maintaining the viability of the family farm during commodity price and climatic fluctuations and her role in biologically and socially producing the next generation of family farms and providing social capital for her partner or husband. She is also seen as a potential threat to the financial, biological, social and cultural reproduction of the family farm due to the potential for her to digress from the gender role that maintains the rural idyll and her access to improved economic and legal power that may support her ability to leave the farming family, or encourage her spouse to do so. Digression from this role is seen as a threat to patriarchal family farm labour relations and the continuity of the family farm and are likely to be met with discursive and material defensive strategies.

6. Discussion

While Pritchard et al (2007) argue deregulation has served to "radically destabilise family farming as a social and economic formation", we find support for theory of simple commodity production which asserts that family labour will aid in farming staying in family hands, particularly during the economic restructuring of late stage capitalism. Interviewees pointed to the specific role of women's off-farm work, which Argent (1999) argued can be extracted for the benefit of the farm for little additional cost. We also find support for Friedmann (1986), Symes (1991) and Sachs' (1983) argument that power dynamics within family farms are linked to broader commodity relations. Farm viability in Australia has been impacted by deregulation and commodity price and climatic fluctuations (McRobert et al., 2019), which have necessitated a reliance on the flexibility of family labour, including women's off-farm work.

The investigation of perceptions of the role of the farm daughter-in-law in the reproduction of family farm supports Friedmann's (1986) argument that the family farm can be understood as mutually reinforcing relationships between family and property. We also find support for Elson's (1994) argument that labour and income distribution within families is shaped by unequal social positions and social power of individuals. This was not confined to gendered social positions but also generational social positions, as the farm son also lacked power in the farm succession process. The binary roles of farmer and farmer's wife underpin the rural idyll and creates stability for farming families (Little and Austin, 1996), and role digression by daughters-in-law was met with exaggerated response (Terry, 2020). The landholding generation expressed fear of daughter-in-law role digression as including leaving

the rural area to pursue a career, using her sexual and social power to make a claim on the farm asset and weakening their partner's access to the social capital of being a farmer by not performing appropriate rural respectable femininity. The landholding generation used discursive defensive mechanisms to promote role adherence of the daughter-in-law as the supportive farmer's wife and to punish digression from this role. This included devaluing her roles in biologically, socially and culturally reproducing the family farm as natural and subordinate roles, separate from "real" farming work and ignoring her on-farm work. Devaluing her on-farm work also helps to delegitimise a claim on the farm business and limits her access to rewards for this work. It included scorn for women who were not sexually subordinate and narratives painting women and their desire to pursue a career as a risk to the reproduction of the family farm. These discursive defensive mechanisms reinforce binary gender roles, particularly the primary farmer characterised as being able to control women (Alston, 2012; Bryant and Garnham, 2015). As Forney and Sutherland (2021) argue, the whole family is under pressure to maintain the rural idyll and access to the key resource of farm land.

The land holding generation used defensive strategies such as legal instruments and precluding the daughter-in-law from accessing information and marginalising her from the farm business. While changes to the *Family Law Act 1975* (Cth) gives power to the court to rearrange property interests to meet objectives of justice and equity (s 79(2)), muting the power of defensive strategies to limit the daughter-in-law's access to farm assets, Graycar (1994) points to instances where the Family Law system has failed to provide financial security for women.

As the rural idyll is destabilised, as gender norms change and legal rights to property shift, the discursive and material defensive mechanisms to isolate and devalue the role of the daughter-in-law in reproducing the family farm may be counterproductive. In attempting to preserve the status quo of gender relations, family farm businesses are failing to prepare for a changing business and social environment.

6.1. Limitations

That the sample was dominated by women, most of whom had come from a farming background, may reflect the personal interest these women have in questions of how women are framed in succession. Their views may not reflect the wider farm advisory sector, where men still dominate. We recognise their clients are likely to be the most financially secure in the farming community, so their views may not be reflective of all farming families. The dominance of the legal/accounting backgrounds of the sample means much of their attention on who gets the structuring assets – the farm – considers how you compensate those who don't. When the division is based on land versus monetary compensation, this economic division more centred on ownership or non-ownership of land has wealth equity outcomes (Adkins et al., 2020). Differential ownership of land/property is a primary source of inequality in Australia which warrants further attention (Marsh and Stilwell, 2023).

Further, reflections from interviewees in this study have assumed whiteness, cisgender status, heterosexuality, citizenship status and able bodies. Exploring statuses beyond these categories is important to better understand the dynamics of masculine hegemony in Australian agriculture and the role of the family farm in the ongoing process of colonisation. For example, despite the women who were referred to in this study being disadvantaged, they are still likely to draw privilege from their statuses of whiteness, heterosexuality, and emphasised femininity. Extending intersectional analysis with regard to property rights would also enable a greater understanding of the co-constitution of colonisation and patriarchal gender orders.

7. Conclusion

This study demonstrates the dynamics of legitimation and contestation of patriarchal labour relations within a site of power struggle,

farm succession processes. Farm assets remain important vectors of power, wealth, social prestige, and identity in rural settings. These become particularly visible through the analyses of how daughters-in-law are framed by the incumbent generation.

Whatmore (1991a) argued how unequal gender roles persist, change, are accepted and contested is key to understanding the continuation of family farming. We find the flexibility and gendering of family labour remains key to maintaining farming in family hands. This is shaped by broader commodity relations and shifting power dynamics at a household level.

Funding

University of New England Foundation Grant.

Declarations of interest

None.

CRediT authorship contribution statement

Lucie Newsome: Conceptualization, Data curation, Formal analysis, Funding acquisition, Investigation, Methodology, Project administration, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing. **Alison Sheridan:** Conceptualization, Data curation, Formal analysis, Funding acquisition, Investigation, Methodology, Writing – review & editing. **Andrew Lawson:** Conceptualization, Data curation, Funding acquisition, Methodology, Project administration, Writing – review & editing. **Skye Charry:** Conceptualization, Data curation, Formal analysis, Funding acquisition, Methodology. **Sue Field:** Conceptualization, Data curation, Investigation.

Data availability

The data that has been used is confidential.

Acknowledgements

The authors acknowledge the research assistance of Dr Ellyse Fenton and the feedback of two anonymous reviewers.

References

- ABARES (Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics), 2023. ABARES Farmland Price Index. <https://www.agriculture.gov.au/abares/data/farmland-price-index>.
- ABS (Australian Bureau of Statistics), 2020. Agricultural Commodities, Australia.
- Adkins, L., Cooper, M., Konings, M., 2020. The Asset Economy. Polity Press.
- Alston, M., 2006. 'I'd like to just walk out of here': Australian women's experience of drought. *Sociol. Rural.* 46, 154–170.
- Alston, M., 2012. Rural male suicide in Australia. *Soc. Sci. Med.* 74, 515–522.
- Alston, M., Clarke, J., Whittenbury, K., 2017. Gender relations, livelihood strategies, water policies and structural adjustment in the Australian dairy industry. *Sociol. Rural.* 57, 752–768.
- Alston, M., Clarke, J., Whittenbury, K., 2022. Contemporary feminist analysis of Australian farm women in the context of climate changes. In: Fletcher, A., Reed, M. (Eds.), *Gender and the Social Dimensions of Climate Change*. Routledge, London.
- Alston, M., Kent, J., 2008. Education for isolated children: Challenging gendered and structural assumptions. *Aust. J. Soc. Issues* 43.
- Argent, N., 1999. Inside the black box: Dimensions of gender, generation and scale in the Australian rural restructuring process. *J. Rural Stud.* 15, 1.
- Attorney-General Mark Dreyfus, 2023. Consultation on draft Family Law Amendment Bill 2023. Australian Government media release.
- Australian Law Reform Commission, 2019. Family Law for the future – an inquiry into the Family Law system – final report for the Australian Government, pp. 1–574.
- Bahls, S.C., 1994. Judicial approaches to resolving dissension among owners of the family farm. *Nebr. Law Rev.* 73, 14.
- Barclay, E., Foskey, R., Reeve, I., Barton, A.C.T., 2007. Farm Succession and Inheritance: Comparing Australian and International Trends. Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation.
- Bassett, K., Newsome, L., Sheridan, A., Azeem, M.M., 2022. Characterizing the changing profile of employment in Australian agriculture. *J. Rural Stud.* 89, 316–327.
- Bessière, C., Gollack, S., 2023. The Gender of Capital. How Families Perpetuate Wealth Inequality. Harvard University Press, Cambridge.
- Binks, B., Stenekes, N., Kruger, H., Kancans, R., 2018. Snapshot of Australia's Agricultural Workforce. Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Water Resources.
- Brooks, J., King, N., 2014. Doing template analysis: Evaluating an end of life care service. Sage Research Methods Cases.
- Bryant, L., Garnham, B., 2015. The fallen hero: Masculinity, shame and farmer suicide in Australia. *Gen. Place Cult.* 22, 67–82.
- Burton, R.J., Forney, J., Stock, P., Sutherland, L.-A., 2020. The good farmer: Culture and identity in food and agriculture. Routledge.
- Burton, R.J., Kuczera, C., Schwarz, G., 2008. Exploring farmers' cultural resistance to voluntary agri-environmental schemes. *Sociol. Rural.* 48, 16–37.
- Burton, R.J., Paragahawewa, U.H., 2011. Creating culturally sustainable agri-environmental schemes. *J. Rural Stud.* 27, 95–104.
- Cagatay, N., Elson, D., Grown, C., 1995. Introduction to special issue on gender, adjustment and macroeconomics. *World Dev.* 11, 1827–1836.
- Charmaz, K., Belgrave, L.L., 2019. Thinking about data with grounded theory. *Qual. Inq.* 25, 743–753.
- Cheshire, L., Woods, M., 2013. Globally engaged farmers as transnational actors: Navigating the landscape of agri-food globalization. *Geoforum* 44, 232–242.
- Chiswell, H.M., Loble, M., 2018. 'It's definitely a good time to be a farmer': Understanding the changing dynamics of successor creation in late modern society. *Rural Sociol.* 83, 630–653.
- Cosson, B., Gilding, M., 2021. 'Over my dead body': Wives' influence in family business succession. *Fam. Bus. Rev.* 34, 385–403.
- Devine, J., 2013. On Behalf of the Family Farm: Iowa Women's Activism since 1945. University of Iowa Press, Iowa City.
- Downey, H., Clune, T., 2023. Constructions of gender in contemporary Australian family farming: A rural financial counsellor perspective. *J. Rural Stud.* 102, 103086.
- Downey, H., Threlkeld, G., Warburton, J., 2016. How do older Australian farming couples construct generativity across the life course?: A narrative exploration. *J. Aging Stud.* 38, 57–69.
- Downey, H., Threlkeld, G., Warburton, J., 2017. What is the role of place identity in older farming couples' retirement considerations? *J. Rural Stud.* 50, 1–11.
- Elson, D., 1994. Micro, meso, macro: Gender and economic analysis in the context of policy reform. In: Bakker, I. (Ed.), *The Strategic Silence: Gender and Economic Policy*. Zed Books, London.
- Federici, S., 2004. Caliban and the Witch. Autonomedia, Brooklyn.
- Fehlberg, B., Sarmas, L., 2018. Australian family property law: 'Just and equitable' outcomes? *Aust. J. Fam. Law* 32, 81–107.
- Forney, J., Sutherland, L.-A., 2021. Identities on the family farm: agrarianism, materiality and the good farmer. In: James, H.S.J. (Ed.), *Handbook on the Human Impact of Agriculture*. Edward Elgar, Cheltenham, pp. 65–84.
- Friedmann, H., 1978. Simple commodity production and wage labour in the American plains. *J. Peasant Stud.* 6, 71–100.
- Friedmann, H., 1986. Patriarchal commodity production. *Soc. Anal.* 47–55.
- Gasson, R., Errington, A., 1993. The Farm Family Business. CAB International, Wallingford, Oxon.
- Gill, F., 2008. Moving to the 'big' house: Power and accommodation in inter-generational farming families. *Rural Soc.* 18, 83–94.
- Goodman, D., Redclift, M., 1985. Capitalism, petty commodity production and the farm enterprise. *Sociol. Rural.* 25, 231–247.
- Gray, J., 1998. Family farms in the Scottish borders: A practical definition by hill sheep farmers. *J. Rural Stud.* 14, 341–356.
- Graycar, R., 1994. Gendered assumptions in family law decision-making. *Fed. Law Rev.* 22, 278–299.
- Haugen, M., Brandth, B., 2017. Gender identities and divorce among farmers in Norway. In: Bock, B., Shortall, S. (Eds.), *Gender and Rural Globalization: International Perspectives on Gender and Rural Development*. CABI, Boston, pp. 185–197.
- Hoffmeyer, M., 2021. 'Out' on the farm: Queer farmers maneuvering heterosexism and visibility. *Rural Sociol.* 86, 752–776.
- Keating, N.C., 2008. Rural Ageing: A Good Place to Grow Old? Policy Press.
- Kennedy, L., 1999. Farm succession in modern Ireland: Elements of a theory of inheritance. In: Davis, J. (Ed.), *Rural Change in Ireland*. Institute of Irish Studies, Belfast.
- Kennon v Kennon, 1997. *FamCA* 27 [1997] FLC 92-757.
- King, N., Brooks, J.M., 2016. Template Analysis for Business and Management Students. Sage.
- Kirkpatrick, J., 2012. Retired farmer- An elusive concept. In: Loble, M., Baker, J.R., Whitehead, I. (Eds.), *Keeping it in the Family: International Perspectives on Succession and Retirement on Family Farms*. Routledge, pp. 165–178.
- Lem, W., 1988. Household production and reproduction in rural languedoc: Social relations of petty commodity production in murviel-lès-béziers. *J. Peasant Stud.* 15, 500–529.
- Little, J., 2003. Riding the rural love train: Heterosexuality and the rural community. *Sociol. Rural.* 43, 401–417.
- Little, J., 2007. Constructing nature in the performance of rural heterosexualities. *Environ. Plann. Soc. Space* 25, 851–866.
- Little, J., Austin, P., 1996. Women and the rural idyll. *J. Rural Stud.* 12, 101–111.
- Little, J., Panelli, R., 2007. 'Outback' romance? A reading of nature and heterosexuality in rural Australia. *Sociol. Rural.* 47, 173 (Author abstract).
- Marsh, F., Stilwell, F., 2023. Housing affordability, inequality and the asset economy: A study of Queensland regions. *Journal of Australian Political Economy* 91, 83–106.
- McManus, P., Wamsley, J., Argent, N., Baum, S., Bourke, L., Martin, J., Pritchard, B., Sorensen, T., 2012. Rural community and rural resilience: What is important to farmers in keeping their country towns alive? *J. Rural Stud.* 28, 20–29.

- McRobert, K., Admassu, S., Fox, T., Heath, R., 2019. Change in the Air: Defining the Need for an Australian Agricultural Climate Change Strategy. Australian Farm Institute, Eveleigh.
- Meier, O., Schier, G., 2016. The early succession stage of a family firm: Exploring the role of agency rationales and stewardship attitudes. *Fam. Bus. Rev.* 29, 256–277.
- Mincyte, D., 2024. Rethinking food regime as gender regime: Agrarian change and the politics of social reproduction. *The Journal of Peasant Studies* 51, 18–36.
- Nelson, T., Constantinidis, C., 2017. Sex and gender in family business succession research: A review and forward agenda from a social construction perspective. *Fam. Bus. Rev.* 30, 219–241.
- Nettle, R., Crawford, A., Brightling, P., 2018. How private-sector farm advisors change their practices: An Australian case study. *J. Rural Stud.* 58, 20–27.
- Neumann, P.D., Krogman, N.T., Krahn, H.J., Thomas, B.R., 2007. My grandfather would roll over in his grave: Family farming and tree plantations on farmland. *Rural Sociol.* 72, 111–135.
- Newsome, L., **Forthcoming**. Identifying the Gender Order Within Neoliberal Australian Agricultural Policy. *Feminist Economics*.
- Newsome, L., 2020. Beyond ‘get big or get out’: Female farmers’ responses to the cost-price squeeze of Australian agriculture. *J. Rural Stud* 79, 57–64.
- Pini, B., 2007. Always an outlaw: Daughters-in-law on Australian family farms. *Wom. Stud. Int. Forum* 30, 40–47.
- Pomeroy, A., 2024. Rethinking class, capitalism and exploitation from the perspective of family farming in Aotearoa/New Zealand. *Sociol. Rural.* 64, 22–40.
- Price, L., Evans, N., 2006. From ‘as good as gold’ to ‘gold diggers’: Farming women and the survival of British family farming. *Sociol. Rural.* 46, 280–298.
- Pritchard, B., Burch, D., Lawrence, G., 2007. Neither ‘family’ nor ‘corporate’ farming: Australian tomato growers as farm family entrepreneurs. *J. Rural Stud.* 23, 75–87.
- Rao, N., 2014. Caste, kinship, and life course: Rethinking women’s work and agency in rural South India. *Fem. Econ.* 20, 78–102.
- Riley, M., 2016. Still being the ‘good farmer’: (Non-)retirement and the preservation of farming identities in older age. *Sociol. Rural.* 56, 96–115.
- Sachs, C., 1983. *The Invisible Farmers: Women in Agricultural Production*. Rowman and Allanheld, New Jersey.
- Sheridan, A., Haslam McKenzie, F., 2009. *Revisiting Missed Opportunities RIRDC*. Barton, ACT.
- Sheridan, A., Newsome, L., Howard, T., Lawson, A., Saunders, S., 2021. Intergenerational farm succession: How does gender fit? *Land Use Policy* 109, 105612.
- Sheridan, A., Newsome, L., Lawson, A., Charry, S., Field, S., 2023. Changing scripts: Gender, family farm succession and increasing farm values in Australia. *J. Rural Stud* 100, 103024.
- Shortall, S., 1999. *Women and Farming: Property and Power*. Martins Press, New York.
- Suess-Reyes, J., Fuetsch, E., 2016. The future of family farming: A literature review on innovative, sustainable and succession-oriented strategies. *J. Rural Stud.* 47, 117–140.
- Symes, D., 1991. Changing gender roles in productionist and post-productionist capitalist agriculture. *J. Rural Stud.* 7, 85–90.
- Terry, A.N., 2020. The architecture of rural life: The dangers of dense collective efficacy for at-risk girls. *Rural Sociol.* 85, 780–805.
- Trauger, A., Sachs, C., Barbercheck, M., Kiernan, N.E., Brasier, K., Schwartzberg, A., 2010. The object of extension: agricultural education and authentic farmers in Pennsylvania. *Sociol. Rural.* 50, 85–103.
- Tyler, M., Fairbrother, P., 2013. Bushfires are “men’s business”: The importance of gender and rural hegemonic masculinity. *J. Rural Stud.* 30, 110–119.
- Watego, C., 2021. *Another Day in the Colony*. Univ. of Queensland Press, Brisbane.
- Websdale, N., 1998. *Rural Women Battering and the Justice System: an Ethnography*. Sage, Thousand Oaks, CA.
- Whatmore, S., 1991a. *Farming Women: Gender, Work and Family Enterprise*. Macmillan, Basingstoke.
- Whatmore, S., 1991b. Life cycle or patriarchy? Gender divisions in family farming. *J. Rural Stud.* 7, 71–76.
- Williams, L.S., Craig-Moreland, D., 2005. *Bad Girls and Rural Pathways: Construction of Girls’ Deviance and Local Social Control*. Presentation, American Society of Criminology, Toronto, Canada.
- Woods, M., 2014. Family farming in the global countryside. *Anthropol. Noteb.* 20, 31–48.