Farmers in England: Women Cultivating Gender and Work Identities in the Field

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Abstract

Research has shown that farming is a male-dominated occupation which is bound by patriarchal practices of succession. However, as the involvement of women in farming in England increases, it has become timely to understand the extent to which gender remains salient to their experiences. This research examines the ways that women achieve visibility and legitimation within a context that has traditionally positioned their work and gender identities as in tension.

Existing approaches tend to rely on a narrow definition of 'a farmer' which excludes women who are a spouse, farming part time, or without ownership. As a result, they fail to recognise the diversity of work which farming encompasses, and which is underpinned by gender performance. Drawing upon thematic analysis of semi-structured interviews with 22 women in Norfolk and Yorkshire who self-define as farmers, this thesis explores what it means to be a farmer today. The ethnographic elements of interviewing within farm spaces and conducting observations at agricultural shows develops an agile understanding of the entanglements of non-human animals, working rhythms and family structures that shape farming identities.

The analysis illustrates the complex ways that farming is embodied by women as they reproduce and/or resist the dominant gender paradigm that situates women's bodies as unsuitable. Despite them often viewing the presentation of their bodies for farm work as a masculine endeavour, women farmers can construct a female sensibility through the way that they do farming. In the face of an environment in which criticising the farming community could be counterproductive for forging belonging, women farmers often used identity management strategies to overcome marginalising encounters. Identity negotiation is shaped by the presence or absence of a farming background, as well as by the positions the women adopt in relation to farming masculinities and femininities.

List of Contents

List of Tables

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Author's Declaration

I declare that this thesis is a presentation of original work and I am the sole author. This work has not previously been presented for an award at this, or any other, University. All sources are acknowledged as References.

Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 Background to the study

At a farming conference I recently attended, I was given a badge with the title 'student, farming family'. It seemed that my position as a researcher was validated by my father's position as a farmer as it signified belonging and understanding within the farming fraternity. The seemingly mundane presence of the badge was telling about the familial and gender relations that tend to shape farming. Women at the event who did not have a family background in farming were referred to by their job title and farm which signified working as an employee. As a result, a hierarchy was constructed on the basis of socialisation into the particularities of farming culture and being a potential successor to farm ownership. The issues prompted by this anecdote are made relevant to the experiences of the women in my study who negotiate dominant constructions of womanhood within the family, farming and rural life in order to assert their work and gender identities.

Following the event, the marginalising representation of women within farming spaces caught the attention of the national press when female models were employed by an agricultural company at the UK's largest farm machinery show, LAMMA (Patel, 2019). The involvement of women as decoration for the equipment was criticised for reinforcing the image of women as an accessory to agriculture and assuming that farmers are heterosexual men. Throughout my research, I have spoken to many inspirational and innovative farmers who are women, yet this promotional strategy seemed to undermine their professional and technical contribution. As a result, it is topical to explore, through the eyes of women, the extent to which they feel empowered or constrained by their work and gender identities.

Having grown up on a farm, I became interested in farming's status as traditionally male-dominated and it has shaped my studies since starting university. My curiosity, and often frustration, regarding the position of women in the field stimulated the search for a more nuanced understanding of their involvement in farming land and livestock. Pursuing an area that holds personal interest affords me a unique position as I have had exposure to farming activities and rhythms from a young age, for example by attending agricultural shows and equating my school holidays with harvest. I would like to fill a

gap in knowledge and I also have a personal stake in contributing to the agricultural community of which my family are a part[1].

The significance of farming is shown by the fact that the industry comprises 72% of land use (DEFRA, 2020) and accounts for 346,000 workers in the UK (ONS, 2018). Yet the future viability of farming faces uncertainty following the impact of the vote for Britain to leave the European Union on subsidies and trade. By economic output, the main agricultural activities in England are dairying and general cropping (DEFRA, 2019). This diversity of farming types is indicative of regional landscapes which shape the knowledge and resources needed to complete the work. Many farmers seek additional sources of income generated by activities other than farm work, such as food retail or farm tourism (DEFRA, 2019) which is reflected in the sample of this study by including women farmers who hold additional roles as part of diversification.

During the COVID-19 epidemic, farming in the UK has received renewed attention regarding its role in the maintenance of the food supply and farmers have been identified as 'key workers'. Given the travel restrictions which prevent workers entering the UK from abroad for seasonal farming activities, British people have been called upon to fill the shortfall (BBC, 2020). Within the public imaginary it has highlighted that farmers exist (contrary to the assumption that it is an antiquated profession) and have previously been relegated to a low status that has made them easy targets to criticise, such as about their contribution to climate change. Therefore, it is pertinent to consider how gender identities may be relevant for securing the 'social sustainability' of farming by the maintenance of opportunities and experiences that foster equality (Pilgeram, 2011).

1.2 Research problem

The logic of heterosexual family structures has positioned a woman's place within farming as a farmer's wife who works indoors on household tasks or as temporary farming support, rather than as overseeing the owning and running of a farm (Price and Evans, 2005, O'Hara, 1998, Shortall, 1992). Before now, women have contributed to farm businesses to the extent that warranted the identity of a farmer, yet they have been rendered invisible by gendered power structures. Farming is a socio-political context

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[1] A reflexive account about my identity as a farmer's daughter and its influence on my relationship with the research participants is given in Chapter 3.

which has traditionally disadvantaged women in terms of barriers to them *entering* the industry due to the inheritance of farms by sons, as well as barriers *within* the industry as women may experience an unwelcoming environment. Therefore, the trajectory of the current research is timely to attend to the lack of studies which consider the multiplicity of women's involvements beyond that of a 'farmer's wife'. This thesis offers a lens through which to understand the social worlds that women inhabit and the ways in which contemporary gender relations are produced and reproduced within the rural economy. It provides a fine-grained analysis of how women farmers cultivate their work and their gender identities within this.

Sociological studies have previously engaged with gender relations in farming under the rubric of male succession of the 'family farm' (e.g. Shortall, 1999, O'Hara, 1998, Whatmore, 1991b). In this patriarchal model whereby women are characterised by their status as a spouse, task allocation prevails in a dichotomous form as shown by their contribution to domestic work (Shortall, 1999). The focus on farmer's wives through the framework of the family farm has led to the assumption that a farmer is someone who owns a farm. In contrast, this thesis problematises the singular definition of farmer as owner and shows how the identity can encompass multiple positions. This aligns with the rise of 'part-time' farmers (Shortall, 2014) whose identity as a farmer may become the most salient depending on the context. Labour force statistics (e.g. ONS, 2018) do not account for this complexity and therefore may exclude certain women, such as those who are a spouse, farming part-time or without ownership of land.

The assumption that farmers can only be male is clearly inaccurate. Over the last ten years, the UK has seen a rise in women identifying as farmers and entering the field in their own right. For example, figures suggest that 17% of UK farmers are female, totalling approximately 29,000 workers (ONS, 2014), compared to only 10,000 in 2001 (ONS, 2001). I am interested in how this shift from women being positioned at the periphery to close professional involvement in decision-making, land ownership or diversification leadership affects gender relations and identities in farming work. Therefore, the research aims to contribute to the intellectual debates pertaining to gender and identity, as well as to account for a plurality of experiences in the contemporary context of farming and to reinvent the now outdated search for 'why women in farming are invisible' (Shortall, 1999).

Importantly, gender diversity should not be conflated with inclusivity. Inclusivity would suggest experiences whereby women are treated as equal to men. However, the

statistical evidence which shows an increase in women in farming sits alongside qualitative evidence which suggests that the dominant farming culture is patriarchal, with women marginalised as outsiders (Haugen and Brandth, 1994). However, the diversity of roles on farms and the impact of stereotypes on women farmers' identities has not been addressed in recent years, compared to 'women in farming' more broadly. This thesis addresses the ways that women who self-define as farmers negotiate their work and gender identities and the extent to which their experiences perpetuate farmers and farming as masculine. By speaking to women farming land and livestock who are from a variety of backgrounds about their experiences, I will examine what it means to be a farmer today.

The idea that farmers are only men is culturally embedded, as shown by the popular rhyme Old Macdonald Had a Farm. The reproduction of marginalising discourse is problematic given the scope to inform the treatment of women farmers, their view of themselves and the way that they work. By examining how gender is made salient to farming activities, this thesis will provide an insight into the way in which women situate themselves within relations of power. It is crucial to engage with the everyday lived experiences of women farmers to understand any barriers they face and the processes through which they gain recognition. Women may be empowered to enter farming as a career, but defying gender stereotypes will remain crucial in keeping women in farming and acknowledging their achievements in the sector.

1.3 Contribution of the study

I will produce new scholarship that makes an original contribution to knowledge about women, farming and rurality. On the basis that gender identities vary across time and place (Lawler, 2014), this investigation will explore how women view themselves in the rural context of farming in response to the rise in women's participation in the UK. This study provides new insights into women's involvements in farming and their processes of identity negotiation to add to existing understandings of gender as culturally constituted. To this end, the concepts of embodiment and identity will be examined in relation to women farmers' lived experiences to make sense of gender within a farming context. Drawing upon the theoretical tools of scholars such as Goffman (1969) and semi-structured interviews with twenty-two women farmers from two regions of England, this study uncovers the extent to which identities are multiple and malleable.

The methodological contribution comprises ethnographic elements, namely interviewing within the home/farm of women farmers to gain an insight into their life worlds that cannot be obtained from unfamiliar spaces. The home/farm is often embedded in farming activities and identities (Riley, 2010) so provides a lens through which to understand the texture of women farmers' experiences. Entering these spaces prompted the adoption of a multi-species sociology by interacting with non-human animals where they were present. The development of more-than-human methodologies has focused on studying human-animal interactions as the vantage point of research questions (e.g. Hamilton and Taylor, 2013), but my research incorporates non-human animals in the research encounter to establish shared meanings between the researcher and the participants. The feminist epistemology which underpins this research (discussed in Chapter 3) comprises the examination of the relationship between the participants and the researcher, as well as the situated nature of knowledge. Reflexivity as praxis is demonstrated by using participant observations at agricultural shows to develop an awareness of the researcher's positioning and to revise the research strategy accordingly.

In contrast to the approaches of business or management (e.g. Whitfield and Marshall, 2017), this research focuses on the social, rather than the economic or environmental sustainability of farming through understanding individual farmer's experiences. Therefore, it can be situated alongside existing social research which has a stake in the future of the farming workforce, such as that about mental health in farming (Alston and Kent, 2008), farm safety (Shortall, McKee and Sutherland, 2019) and farm retirement practice (Riley, 2016). It is no coincidence that existing research on these topics conclude that the privileging of normative masculinity in farming is 'toxic' for its association with toughness. This highlights the importance of viewing gender as relational given that notions of womanhood and femininities can be situated within hierarchies of power and difference that may affect the ways that women view themselves and are viewed by others.

The study of men or women as minorities in occupations which are traditionally gendered tends to be based within urban contexts. As a result, this study focuses on farming to challenge the status quo within the discipline of sociology by researching how identities are shaped by rural culture and the applicability of feminism to women's experiences of rurality. It is well-documented that women have been subject to polarisation within other occupations considered to be masculine, such as engineering

(e.g. Mcilwee and Robinson, 1992). However, the context of farming presents unique challenges to gender relations in terms of the entanglement of family life and working rhythms. Farming is historically bound by the constraints of family relations and the rural idyll has cast women on the periphery of farming as 'farmer's wives' (Hughes, 1997). Therefore, the unique offering of this research is to disrupt male-centric narratives which dominate rural life.

The family tends to be conceptualised as blood or marital relations within the literature on the sociology of farming (e.g. Shortall, 1999), given the predominance of lineal succession practices. However, I argue that to understand the experiences of women farmers, it is necessary to explore what kinship means to women farmers today. For example, Charles (2014) highlights that pets can be part of one's social network and may be understood as kin across the species barrier due to the 'connectedness' that embodies a relationship with them. In application to the current project, the diversity of women farmers' trajectories suggest that affiliations may be forged through additional or alternative means to the traditional conceptualisation of the family. Scholarship must be extended beyond the preoccupation with the family farm to avoid studying a system which relies on male ancestry and neglects to understand the individual experiences of women farmers within their diverse contexts.

This thesis addresses a gap in the still-marginal sociology of the rural, with emphasis on the extent to which feminist categories of analysis developed for use within the urban context are insufficient. Starting from the assumption that family structures are patriarchal is counterproductive, given the patterns of belonging they afford in farming. An understanding of kinship developed from the data and highlights the challenges overcome by women without succumbing to a deficit model that does not accurately represent how women farmers understand their everyday lives in relation to (in)equality. The relationship between identity negotiation and kinship is that allegiances with others can facilitate the economic and symbolic resources in order to be recognised as a farmer. Therefore, this thesis engages beyond and including family farming to consider a broader conceptualisation of a 'farmer' compared to existing studies, whilst examining the ways in which these identities can remain shaped in relation to kinship.

Throughout this thesis I use this term 'women farmers' to distinguish between interactions with men farmers. However, the aim is that in the future a farmer identity will not be conceived as referring to a man by default so such qualification, which reproduces the idea that women are secondary in farming, will not be necessary. To

contribute to this commitment, in the thesis title I have not prefaced 'farmers' because they are indeed who I spoke to, but I have highlighted that specifically I spoke to women as one subset of this group. In Chapter 3 I outline the rationale for referring to the participants as women and the criteria for selecting women farmers, namely their self-definition, to address the limitations posed by narrow categorisation that may not align with the ways in which women see their lives.

1.4 Argument of the study

This thesis argues that the gender and work identities of women farmers tend to be viewed in contention by others, but not themselves. When women are not recognised as farmers, for example by being ignored or patronised by some men in business interactions, it creates inequality in status. Therefore, women make extra effort compared to men to be taken seriously and use alternative means for working around activities that require physical strength. This creates inequality in working hours as these ways of farming take longer but tend to be understood by women as a catalyst for ingenuity. Similarly, visibility as a woman in farming is not necessary viewed as inequality by the participants because it may result in receiving support, inspiring women or being good for business. However, the invisibility as a farmer or visibility as a woman conferred by others continues to reproduce the notion that the default farming identity is attributable to a man. As a result, women farmers draw on individual strategies in order to overcome a positioning as inferior to men.

This thesis shows that identification with identity categories can be static, whilst their presentation may be malleable, depending on the nature of interactions. The negotiation of identity by women farmers involves sameness and difference to men being reinforced at different moments. For example, a masculine presentation of the dressed body may result in being taken seriously as a farmer, yet a sense of self as a woman may not be undermined as this aspect can be more easily communicated off-farm. Therefore, women farmers use hair and dress practices to communicate a farmer identity and to avoid judgements of incompetence based on the visibility of their gender.

Secondly, women farmers draw upon a 'female sensibility' by using their bodies and minds differently to men. These ways of doing farming are deemed to be equal, if not superior, to established practices as they exercise skills suited to the contemporary demands of farming business. This research indicates that emotion work, in which women feel they are naturally skilled, is deemed important for working with farm

colleagues and animals. Therefore, the ways in which women farmers perform gender resists inequalities on an individual basis and demonstrates agency in identity construction. Simultaneously, a binary gender system is reproduced overall by assimilation to masculine culture through bodily appearance, as well as by viewing their farming ability as naturally different to mens'.

1.5 Research questions

A series of research questions were formulated and are as follows:

1.   How is gender made salient to farming activities?

The intention of this research is firstly to understand whether farming is experienced as male-dominated as it is historically situated. It investigates the extent that gender is made relevant to the working lives of women farmers.

2.   How is farming embodied by women?

Secondly, given the emphasis on the importance of physical strength (coded as masculine) for farmers, this study seeks to understand the role of the body, both materially and symbolically, in identity practices.

3.   How do women farmers negotiate their identities?

Thirdly, this thesis will examine how women identify themselves and the processes through which identity may be constructed to achieve certain goals. As a result, the research questions frame women as agents who may be empowered or constrained in diverse ways.

These questions allow the research problem which emerged from the literature review (Chapter 2) to be empirically examined. Drawing upon the concepts of gender, identities and embodiment, this thesis aims to challenge the narrow conceptualisation of what it means to be a farmer in England today. In order to answer these three questions, I conducted semi-structured interviewing with twenty-two participants. During the face to face discussions with individual women farmers, they described issues of importance to their everyday lives in their own words. As discussed in detail in Chapter 3, these data were then analysed thematically in order to determine patterns within participants' articulations of their experiences, as well as any differences between them to highlight the often complex and contradictory nature of identity construction.

1.6 Overview of the thesis

In this chapter I have placed the study in context by providing background information about the importance of, and my interest in, the identities of women farmers. I outlined the significance of the research problem and justification for this research by situating it within the landscape of related work. I introduced the concepts of gender, identity and embodiment and indicated how the findings in this thesis will shed light on them to make a contribution to the field of rural sociology. The remaining chapters are organised as follows:

Chapter Two reviews the existing research and outlines the theoretical framework that emerged from this by addressing the concepts embedded in the research questions, such as gender, identities and embodiment. Relevant literature that examines women in farming is assessed, both in terms of qualitative studies which detail their experiences and those which focus on representations of rural femininities. Drawing together the issues of gender and identity in the context of farming, the chapter will address the importance of embodiment of work with machinery and/or animals. Finally, the chapter looks at how sociological studies have approached rurality to take into account the situated nature of gender and identities.

Chapter Three is concerned with the research methodology. It begins by laying out the feminist framing of the research design which leads on to a reflexive account of the researcher's position and its bearing on the data. The strategy for the recruitment of participants, namely women farmers, is explained before detailing the means of data collection which comprises of semi-structured interviews. This is followed by the rationale for the ethnographic elements embedded within these interactions which were complemented by observations at agricultural shows as orientating activities for the researcher to develop reflexivity. Lastly, it outlines the approach taken to thematic analysis and addresses ethical considerations as iterative processes developed throughout the course of the research.

Chapter Four is the first of three chapters which analyse the research data. It documents the ways in which women farmers make sense of their work and the bearing this has on their gender identities. The first section shows how gender is made salient to farming as the participant's identities as a woman and farmer are constructed as visible and invisible respectively in interactions with men. Following this, I examine how the awareness that some people perceived women as unequal to men farmers led

participants to produce strategies to overcome perceived prejudices. Finally, it addresses the participant's understandings of (in)equality within the industry in relation to wider notions of progress.

Chapter Five focuses on the embodiment of work and gender identities as the body is used as a tool for farm work and identity construction. It outlines how in/visibility as woman/farmer is revealed in the way that women view their bodies and how their bodies are viewed by others. I examine the hair, dress and body practices that are used to legitimate an identity as a farmer which are often deemed masculine endeavours. Following this, the chapter discusses the ways in which a feminine sensibility is embodied through a differentiated work practice to men.

Chapter Six is the final analysis chapter and explores the extent to which participants draw upon narratives of tradition in order to navigate their identities as farmers. It addresses the ways in which family history and/or gender are aspects of identity which contribute to alienating moments for women farmers. Lastly, a generational shift in attitudes is noted by the participants as they refer to changes to the way in which women in farming have been perceived throughout their lifetime and its impact on their work.

The Conclusion highlights the ways in which each of the research questions were answered. It outlines the key findings and their contribution to the originality of the thesis, such as the application of rural feminism and in-situ methods. The significance of the findings and their implications for the academic field, as well as policy and practice are addressed with some suggestions for future research. In order to distinguish the originality of my approach to understanding the experiences and identities of women farmers in England, the next chapter reviews existing work from which it departs.

Chapter 2 Literature review

The purpose of this chapter is to convey the current sociological work which informs the study aims, as well as the theoretical and empirical gaps that the thesis addresses. In order to do so, this chapter draws upon research literature on four interrelated themes: women in farming; gender and identity; embodiment; and rurality. As Whatmore (1991a) recognises, a farmer being a masculine role is a western notion, so the empirical studies referred to in this chapter focus on the global north west in the 20th and 21st centuries. The first section examines the social structures and perceptions of identities which have led to consideration of farming as a gendered occupation. For example, patriarchal patterns of ownership and role allocation within family farming. In recent years, this has led to attention to the construction of femininities and masculinities as part of the process of navigating a farmer identity. This chapter shows how my research builds on this work to highlight the complex relationship between gender identities and work cultures.

The second section is concerned with theoretical approaches to the social construction of gender and of identities and accounts for approaches taken to the analysis of women farmers' everyday work experiences. The literature on embodiment helps to situate a nuanced account of the ways in which identity and farming are done by women as active processes. The body and mind are brought to the fore in these discussions as the gendered basis for the dichotomies which code machinery work as masculine and animal work as feminine. Finally, in the third section, positioning the study within rural sociology accounts for the specificities of farming in terms of connections to place and embodied labour, such as human-animal interactions and working with machinery. The culture of farming, constructed through history, family and biography, informs the reflexive moment of 'what makes a good farmer?' which is key to women's interpretation of success in this field.

The social sciences literature has argued that women on farms have historically been subordinated through patriarchal structures and discourses which create assumptions about who a farmer is, what they look like, and what type of work they do. Following this, it is argued in this literature review that gender differences are actively produced in material and symbolic ways, such as through unequal participation and coding of farm work. Drawing on the work of Young (1990, p.55), this study examines identities in relation to dimensions of inequalities which can be conceptualised as "distributive" in the form of marginal resources, or non-distributive in terms of a marginal status, for

example shaped as by women's interactions with others who render them invisible as farmers. Informed by approaches to the social construction of gender, this study explores the extent that women farmers negotiate their identities to achieve success in their work and a positive sense of self. Bringing the areas of gender, identity and rurality together will illuminate the ways that these negotiations may contribute to the resistance and/or perpetuation of farming as a culture in which women are outsiders.

2.1 Women in farming

Women have always played a significant role in farming in the UK. For example, in the early 1900s, they were often responsible for the skilled work of dairying (Bourke, 1990) and poultry keeping (Sayer, 2013). However, their peripheral status compared to men was shown by the fact that they tended not to own or control resources (Shortall, 1999). This led scholars such as Sachs (1983) and Alston (1995) to highlight the patriarchal structures apparent in farming, such as succession down the male line, and to conceptualise the lack of recognition of women as invisibility, especially following mechanization after the Second World War whereby women were relegated to the status of assistants. Brandth (2002a) refers to this process as 'masculinization' because men were deemed more suited to the rationality demanded by industrial farming practices (Haugen, 1998, Sayer, 2013).

The processes which have reproduced a farmer identity as masculine have also played out across space. For example, post-World War Two farming practices such as turkey-keeping - traditionally performed by women and thus located close to the farmhouse where they could be combined with domestic duties – have, with the industrialisation of farming, moved away from that domestic space. Women, assumed to be tied by childcare to that domestic space, thereby became excluded from the productive work they had previously engaged with closer to home (Prendergast, 2011, Sayer, 2013). The dichotomous understandings of productive/reproductive labour and farm/home spaces continue to shape the experiences of women farmers today. For example, the construction of the farmyard as a man's domain manifests in its design, such as by having gates without wheels, based on the assumption of a masculine physique which reproduces the idea that women are out of place in productive farm spaces (Shortall, 2019). Shortall (2019) found that women farming in Scotland view normative practices such as carrying heavy objects as posing a risk to their safety, but necessary to do their work and to construct a farmer identity.

The gendered identities of a farmer and farmer's wife are maintained by socialisation through farming organisations, such as Young Farmer's Clubs. Edwards (2017) found that in the 1950s separate activities for women educated them into the role of a farmer's wife. However, this consisted of encouragement in developing both agricultural and domestic skills through activities such as machine milking and cake decoration. Practical knowledge of physical work was intended to contribute to the operation of the farm business, but under the guise of a farmer's wife, women were attributed the status of helper. This highlights how farming culture has harnessed a particular version of femininity which has valorised competency in reproductive *and* productive work, according to Edwards (2017). It is recognised that historically women were positioned as inferior in relation to their husband as boss and breadwinner of the farm, despite them being in charge of some aspects of farm work, such as the administrative duties or animal production (Shortall, 2017).

As a pioneer of rural sociology, Newby (1978, 1979) sought to explore the lived experiences of farming communities by highlighting the power relations inherent to farm labour and kinship. Unlike in the rural feminist literature that followed, such as by Whatmore (1991a) and Shortall (1999), he drew attention to the politics of farm ownership and control as indicative of social class, rather than in combination with gender. Since a farmer identity is conflated by Newby with property ownership, which is susceptible to patrilineal inheritance, this has marginalised the lived experiences of those farmers who are workers, tenants and/or women. Newby (1979) studied the relationship between farm workers and owners but did not consider the interrelationship between class and gender, as Bryant and Pini (2009) acknowledge.

The early studies which emerged to examine gender in agriculture aimed to understand patriarchal farming practices. For example, Shortall's (1999) rationale builds on Sachs's (1983) argument that women in farming have been invisible. Their conceptualisation of invisibility suggests that the involvement of women in farming has been obscured by the discourse of a farmer's wife which undervalues their work as peripheral. O'Hara (1998, p.82) refers to "farm wives' official invisibility" in statistics as the farmer identity may be interpreted as owners/men so women's work on the farm was relegated to reproductive status. Similarly, Alston (1998, p.32) is critical of official policy reports in Australia which maintain 'farm women's' invisibility by using the quantitative survey method which tend to endorse identification with closed categories, such as 'farmer' and 'farm worker'.

Women's invisibility in official statistics may not just be the product of the assumption that farmers are men, but the result of the multiplicity of identities which women adopt in the face of that assumption. My participants responded to a call for women farmers, yet it was common throughout the interviews for them to identify in additional ways, such as a manager or shepherdess, both of which may arguably occupy a liminal position between farmer and farm worker because the meaning of these categories are contingent across individual contexts. If it is assumed that a farmer is a man/owner, women farmers, especially those who are tenants or employees, may relegate themselves to the 'farm worker' category. Similarly, someone who views themselves as a farmer's wife or who farms part-time may not feel affiliated with either terms so their contribution may be hidden by official quantitative measures.

To address this limitation, my study explores how visibility and invisibility are constructed and enacted in women farmers' everyday lives. I did not set out with the aim of exposing inequalities between men and women such as in land ownership or income, as this may not have been relevant to the participants, but to examine the ways in which gender may be made salient to their work by themselves and others. The experiences of women farmers offer an insight into how identities are contingent on interactional circumstances and are shaped by family farm discourse which frame 'woman' and 'farmer' as opposing positions. Following the inadequacy of narrow categorisation, in the methodology chapter I explain the rationale for a qualitative approach which explores the multiple, messy and contradictory character of gender and work identities as experienced by women farmers.

In addition to symbolic forms, the invisibility of women manifests in material terms through farm property ownership. For example, the research of Shortall (1999) focuses on gendered power relations which are reproduced within the structures of family farming, namely the control of customary practices by men which may be expressed by the unequal transfer of farm knowledge and ownership respectively. Contrary to Sachs (1983), Shortall (1999) does not focus on women farming in their own right but bases her analysis on the presumption that women tend not to be farm owners or managers and therefore enter farming through marriage. By drawing attention to the family farm, Shortall (1999) overlooks alternative routes into farming, such as through an agricultural education, which fall outside the confines of the family and shape the nuanced landscape of gender and work identities.

I argue that discussions must be extended beyond women who have entered farming through a spouse. As Bjorkhaug and Blekesaune (2007, p.3/4) recognise in the Norwegian context, "rather than describing women's actual work status, the concept 'farm women' might refer to women's marital status (married to or cohabiting with a farmer), and place of residence (a farm)." O'Hara (1998, p.158) suggests that Irish farm women may be defined as "farm helper," "farm homemaker," "farmwives working for the family farm," and "farm women in paid work", which illustrates a continuum of subordination. This is not to say that an identity as a 'farm woman' straightforwardly excludes participation in farm work, but it acknowledges a specific set of gender and family relations in which the individual is situated. Therefore, it is timely to understand what it means to be a woman farmer today without starting from the assumption that the family farm is the dominant configuration and to avoid obscuring the diversity of circumstances, such as those who do not own land.

This study considers the diverse trajectories of women farmers, including those who have no family history in farming, to explore the nuances of negotiating traditional expectations. In similar terms to my research, Whatmore (1991a) challenges the multiple roles of women in farming which are often rendered invisible by official statistics. However, differences in our approaches reside in her aim to reconstruct Marxian theory by taking into account the family in production processes and economic activity outside the corporate world. A focus on 'family farming' and what it means for women to be identified as 'farmer's wives', seems outdated given the rise of women entering farming through rental or part-time opportunities which strive against restrictive patterns of inheritance (Shortall, 2014).

Shortall (2017, p.187) maintains that "to understand gender relations on the farm, the household is the most useful unit of analysis". However, I argue that it is timely to also examine the negotiation of identities at an individual level from the perspective of women farmers, rather than focusing on the collective relations within a business or family first and foremost. Speaking to women farmers reveals whether gender and work identities remain tied to kinship as Shortall (2017) claims. If this is the case, such as study makes it possible to uniquely explore to what extent the patriarchal legacy transcends family farming contexts, for example for women farmers who are employed, tenants or do not have a family or relationship in farming.

The identities of a farmer as owner and a farmer's wife as helper have been culturally embedded in farming through intergenerational family transfer whereby a farm is

passed from father to son (Keller, 2014, p. 75). As a result of this gendered ideology, a man and a woman working together on a farm are rarely considered to be two farmers (Sachs, Barbercheck and Brasier, 2016). This emphasises that identities in the field of farming may be bound by family, such as heterosexual marriage in the case of 'farmer's wives'. These structures are apparent upon divorce as Haugen, Brandth and Follo (2015) found that, for couples living and working together on farms in Norway, it is common for the woman to leave the farm due to ownership being in their partner's name. This begs the question of whether traditional obligations to identities, such as family ties, prevail in farming contrary to theories of individualisation (Giddens, 1991, Bauman, 2000). Individuals may not be freed from the constraints of family since work and home tend to be entangled in farm life (Haugen, Brandth and Follo, 2015).

Luhrs (2016) found that the cultural expectation for farms to be inherited by sons affects knowledge transfer because fathers' visions of their daughters' futures meant that they were excluded from outdoor farm work in which their sons were encouraged to participate. Therefore, women may not only be disadvantaged through a lack of access to land but through the skills they acquire, despite showing an interest and enthusiasm in farming. Similarly, Trauger, et al. (2010) outline that the expectation that women are marginal in farming extends to knowledge transfer in formal education as farm finances, safety or sustainable agriculture are popular specialisms for women. Their interviews with male educators of agricultural training in the US show that these tasks are deemed subordinate or reproductive, which reproduces the idea that women have different educational needs to men.

So, research to date tends to focus on 'the family farm' whereby women and men are responsible for different tasks based on normative understandings of gender and patrilineal inheritance (Whatmore, 1991b, Shortall, 1999). Within the hegemonic discourse of family farming, the ideology that women are unnatural farmers is reproduced by the status of a 'farmer's wife'. The salience of kinship can limit women to 'behind the scenes' tasks such as making the lunches, running errands or helping in busy periods which often lead to the triple burden of domestic, on-farm and off-farm work (Saugeres, 2002a). The family tends to be conceptualised as blood or marital relations (e.g. Shortall, 1999), given the predominance of lineal succession practices. However, I argue that it is necessary to question the conflation of kinship and family by exploring what kinship means to women farmers today. For example, Charles (2014) highlights that pets can be part of one's social network and may be understood as kin

across the species barrier due to the 'connectedness' that embodies a relationship with them. In application to the current project, the diversity of women farmers' trajectories suggest that affiliations may be forged through additional or alternative means to the traditional conceptualisation of the family. Scholarship must be extended beyond the preoccupation with the family farm to understand the individual experiences of women farmers within their diverse contexts.

On the other hand, there is a growing body of research that recognises that farm diversification offers new opportunities for resistance to normative gender roles (Gasson and Winter, 1992, Kelly and Shortall, 2002, Brandth and Haugen, 2010). As the focus may shift to a service business, as well as food production, in some cases, "the husband and wife are brought closer to an equal status within the enterprise" (Brandth and Haugen, 2010, p. 428). For example, catering, cleaning and caring are traditionally considered an extension of women's household activities, but it was found by Brandth and Haugen (2010) in Norway that both men and women are flexible in adopting such tasks. Therefore, it is argued that diversification reshapes gender relations in more equitable ways.

Diversification refers to activities which generate an additional source of income as "a way to maintain and renew the farm" (Brandth and Haugen, 2011, p.39). The financial pressures of subsidy losses and a competitive global food market has led to innovative ways of repurposing existing assets such as vacant buildings or land. For example, the ventures that participants in this study developed included a farm shop, farm nursery, holiday letting and contracting businesses. Contrary to the idea that diversification away from conventional farming may be a 'betrayal of the agricultural profession" (Brandth and Haugen, 2011, p. 35), women may be empowered through leadership in economically orientated work within farming businesses. This contrasts with farm women's pluriactivity off-farm which Shortall (2014, p.78) argues "reinforces men's identity as a farmer, the decision-maker, the person in charge".

Following the restructuring of agriculture[2], some have argued that farming has gone full circle and become 'feminized' (Sachs, Barbercheck and Brasier, 2016). Using farm life histories in the Peak District, Riley (2009) draws attention to the historical invisibility of women's work on farms as constructed through their spatial positioning inside the

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[2] "Market and policy pressures" such as reduced profits and subsidies have led to the expansion of farm revenue beyond food production or employment sought off farm (Lobley and Potter, 2004, p.500).

home. However, he illustrates that "rather than being passive or silent partners, women's hidden but integral role within these operations is revealed" (Riley, 2009, p.675), given that farming is becoming increasingly bureaucratic in its governance today. It is argued that this administrative work is equally as vital as 'on-farm' work for the success of the business. Therefore, the meaning attached to an area of work in which women were previously marginalised has shifted to afford them status as decision-makers for financial and regulatory matters.

Shortall (2001) draws on Acker (1990)'s notion of a 'gendered occupation' to understand the expectations of a certain type of behaviour and person belonging within farming that maintains the dominance of masculinities and of men. Historically, women have been relied upon for tasks with less status and power in farming, such as animal handling or domestic work. These activities are seen to contribute to the running of the farm yet are often unpaid and reproduce traditional gender roles. Acker's (1990) wider theorisation of gendered processes at an occupational level is useful to frame the relationship between assumptions embedded in work culture and an individual's negotiation of them. At an individual level, identity negotiation may occur in relation to the hierarchies engrained in farm work practices. It is noted that "the ranking of women's jobs [as inferior] is often justified on the basis of women's identification with childbearing and domestic life" (Acker, 1990, p.152). For example, in the discussion of embodiment later in this chapter, the conventional essentialist framing of strength and care as masculine and feminine respectively will be examined to discern the gendered dichotomies that may prevent the reshaping of farming in more equitable or neutral ways.

More recently, the Scottish Government commissioned research by Shortall et al. (2017, p.20) to "identify barriers and/or opportunities for women in farming and the agriculture sector in Scotland". The interviews and focus groups with men and women working in farming explored women farmer's daily lives but the analysis did not direct attention to the ways that gender and identities are actively constructed. Rather, the focus was on the challenges to women's successes posed by the system of gender relations apparent in a male-dominated field. Therefore, what it meant to be a woman was taken for granted. The current study is timely to understand not only the salience of gender to farming activities, but how women make sense of their own gender identities and their perceptions of how they are viewed by others. My research extends existing research in novel ways by exploring how the cultural practices in farming, such as land transfer and

farming methods outlined by Shortall et al. (2017), may shape women farmers' experiences of the body and their sense of self in the construction of gender identities.

The treatment of gender identities as socially constructed, the approach taken by this study, establishes scope to resist normative ways of being as they are negotiated in interaction. A number of previous studies, such as by Shortall (2014), suggest that women in farming verify, suppress, and/or reinforce their identities in nuanced ways as a result of the masculine ideal in farming. For example, women working in organic farming in the USA felt empowered by their position as a farmer yet reported being dismissed by male colleagues due to the expectation of women's ignorance in farming (Trauger, 2004). Similarly, women farmers in the research of Silvasti (2003) had their capability to manage a farm questioned by professional networks which led to attempts by them to masculinise their behaviours. Alternatively, Pini (2005a) found that women who farm alongside their partners in the Australian sugar industry used a variety of gender management strategies to emphasise their femininity, such as through domestic work. Although this indicates agency, it simultaneously demonstrates convergence to the normative expectation that being a women and farmer involves negotiating aspects which are deemed contradictory.

Qualitative research undertaken in the US state of Iowa (Carter, 2016) found that gendered expectations were either challenged or reproduced by women farm owners. Similarly to the current research, the aim was to understand the negotiation of identities within a context in which women are typically marginalised by speaking to them about "how they conceptualize and experience cultural narratives" (Carter, 2016, p.8). However, specifically, this study explored the decision-making, ownership and control associated with the management of farmland. 'Placeholders' alluded to the women who reproduce the narrative that men have a natural ability to farm by allocating them tasks that require specialist knowledge. Despite the improvement of access to land for women, as opposed to patrilineal patterns of inheritance, it seems that culturally embedded narratives remain prevalent in expectations for a division of labour. The sample aimed to "reflect diversity of land acquisition, age and type of ownership" but Carter (2016, p.9) did not consider the question of whether women with no familial connections to the land are more likely to challenge expectations on the farm.

The existing literature on women's participation in farming has therefore revealed the ways in which gendered norms have come to be embedded in the field of farming. It seems that lack of ownership and control underpins the disassociation of women from

the identity of a farmer, despite their involvement in the industry in the UK, US and Norway. The studies reviewed here indicate the salience of family as farming resources tend to be inherited and the boundaries between home and work are blurred. However, recent scholarship recognises that emerging configurations, such as diversification and professionalisation of agriculture, have the potential to challenge the patriarchal practices that led to the appropriation of farm work by men (Shortall, 2000). Therefore, this research is uniquely positioned to examine to what extent women negotiate their identities in a field where women farmers have been a numerical and normative minority. Accordingly, this study will examine the extent to which gender is made salient to contemporary farming practices and how this may shape the presentation of the self and the construction of a gendered occupation.

2.2 Gender and identity

The way identity is conceived in this research resonates with Lawler's (2014) conceptualisation which draws attention to reflexive thinking about social roles and categories, such as gender, to understand one's self. Similarly, Skeggs (1997, p.4) focuses on identity as both the product of and the producer of social relations whereby "recognition of how one is positioned is central to the processes of subjective construction". Therefore, this study examines the extent to which women farmers treat gender reflexively, negotiating their identities in response to their handling of interactions at work to refine their sense of who they are. The research question 'how do women farmers negotiate their identities?' operationalises identity as an ongoing process which is subject to revision (Lawler, 2014). At different moments, such as throughout the interviews, individuals may or may not identify with being a 'woman' and/or a 'farmer' which highlights the relevance of multiple and contradictory positions. I refer to these processes as negotiations by individuals who make sense of their selves in response to their context, such as their biography, experiences and social expectations in farming.

Identity is a fluid phenomenon, according to Bauman (2000) who recognises that social life is unstable and precarious as individuals are freed from collective constraints, such as family and community. However, as we will see, some of the respondents in the present study see their identity as tied from birth in a way that does not fashion their sense of self as precarious. That said, they may consider themselves as a farmer but may not be treated as one by others which may lead to them playing up or down different constructions of gender depending on the situation. In that sense, the enactment of

identity may remain mobile, whilst the identification with a category is static, for example, woman and/or farmer. This resonates with Lawler's (2014, p.5) critique of post-structural understandings of identity as she argues that "as well as fluidity, we see very powerful expressions of fixity around identity".

Critiques of post-structural approaches such as Lawler's (2014), maintain that identities are not autonomous because the character of the cultural context, such as the male dominance of farming in the current study, may shape the ways that others see us. Therefore, inequalities may manifest in farming interactions whereby one is recognised as a woman which makes such presumptions of an outsider status inescapable. As Burkitt (2008, p.114) explains, "the gender that we attribute to our own selves" may differ from what others attribute to us. Similarly, according to Woodward (2004), social structure can limit the extent to which identity is chosen, and more specifically, Goffman (1969) refers to the cultural expectations of a given situation as 'scripts' which act as a reference point for appropriateness. The extent to which one may be able to construct their identities along these lines or to resist them is shaped by agency which does not necessarily equate to fluidity.

The extent of agency exercised in identity construction underpins the current study's research questions, such as 'how do women farmers negotiate their identities?' An assumption is not made that identities are done to us or created by us straightforwardly because negotiation highlights the multiplicity of identity categories that one may identify with and the relationship between these positions. Similarly, it is not assumed that negotiation is necessary due to identities being in dispute and requiring reconciliation. Instead, the approach made apparent by the study research questions is that the presentations revealed to others may be variable, compared to a sense of self which may be more stable. It is important to note the distinction between identity and self as it is conceived in this research. According to Blumstein (2001) identity is the presentation of the self to others. Whereas, as Elliott (2001, p.33) suggests, "if identity is performed, then the self is an effect, not a cause". The performance of identity helps constitute a way of looking, therefore the "self is the agency through which individuals experience themselves in relation to others" (ibid, p.26).

The identities of the participants in this study are embedded in their recruitment, given that this research is interested in a particular population who are identified as a minority by the studies discussed in the previous section. The respondents self-identified as women farmers at the time of consent to take part in the research, but it is likely that

they may identify in different ways at different moments, for example they may not have identified in the past, or in the future identify, as women farmers. Trans identities are not considered as part of the thesis due to the fact that none of the participants identified as trans.

Given the transgender debates on sex and gender, I am treating both terms as contingent. Firstly, the participants in my study identify as women as a subjective position and no assumptions are made in the study that this is biologically compatible with a female body. I argue that bodies are culturally mediated and this challenges neurological explanations about essential properties which make men and women act differently, for example that women's brains are naturally suited to emotion work (Brizendine, 2007). Secondly, it is recognised that sex differences are not natural or predefined but are shaped by cultural discourses which are changeable throughout time. For example, science has reproduced patriarchal culture through biological accounts that construct female genitalia as an inverted version of one essential sex, rendering women's inferiority as marked on the body (Laqueur, 1990). It must be noted that participants may orientate to a felt or assumed natural difference as the conventional way of thinking about gender, but they may also contradict this perspective in their narratives as a sense of identity is shaped as stories are told (Lawler, 2014).

Sex and gender can be conceived as biological and social differences between men and women respectively (Stanley, 1984). Within this approach, biological differences encompass aspects of the body and mind, such as reproductive organs and hormones, which are seen to naturally determine social roles and behavioural competencies. Therefore, gender inequalities are presumed to have a biological basis and so appear fixed. This issue is aptly framed by Alsop, Fitzsimons and Lennon (2002, p.14) as deterministic: "the appeal to nature is commonly an appeal to a certain kind of givenness, an appeal to a world which has a structure and order independent of our interactions with it, a structure which we cannot modify". I argue that an individual may view gender as fixed, but the expressions of their identities may not be. This premise underpins the research question within this thesis which addresses identity negotiation informed by scholars such as Goffman (1969) and Martin (2003) who outline that gendered ways of being are presented in interactions to the extent that they may be malleable in different circumstances.

Gender is not attributable to sex defined by physical genitalia, hormones or other bodily traits (Fausto-Sterling, 2012). Both sex and gender are cultural products according to

Fausto-Sterling (2000) because physical differences between men and women are better construed on a continuum of overlapping characteristics, rather than a scientifically objective binary. 'Neurosexism' is referred to by Fine (2012) as the science behind differences between male and female brains that is used to legitimate a hierarchy which positions women as substandard. She highlights that it is deterministic to claim that assumed biological differences simply translate to different roles in social life. Therefore, Fine (2012) does not question the science per se, but how gender differences are interpreted in a way that ignores the complexity of cultural variables which shape understandings and performances of one's identity. As she argues, "the social context influences who you are, how you think and what you do. And these thoughts, attitudes and behaviours of yours, in turn, become part of the social context" (Fine, 2012, p.18).

The dichotomous thinking which underpins explanations of gender based on binary notions of difference (Brizendine, 2007) does not acknowledge the negotiation of identity in interaction. A sense of self may comprise tensions as Chamberlain (1975, p.17) notes that land work can "unsex a woman" which seems to refer to the historical tendency to deem being a woman and a farmer as conflicting identities. This links to Halberstam's (1998) notion of 'female masculinity' which highlights that treating gender as an expression of sex is too simplistic because masculinity may be performed by women. However, in the case of the above quotation from Chamberlain (1975), it is suggested that a woman can be tainted by working in farming. As Powell, Bagilhole and Dainty (2008, p. 432) note in the context of engineering, "they are perceived as defective women for choosing the 'masculine' occupation of engineering, but also as defective engineers because they are not men".

The performance of gender identities may be shaped by, and lead to, inequalities in status. Powell, Bagilhole and Dainty (2008) investigate the coping strategies used by women working in engineering. In the study, they found that women may assimilate into the male culture, which involves 'acting like one of the boys' by joking around or accepting discrimination, in order to achieve work success. However, this perpetuates the gendered expectations of the industry, as akin to farming, the public image of engineering is tough, heavy and dirty work. Powell, Bagilhole and Dainty (2008, p. 422) distinguish between 'getting in' and 'getting on' which informs the current research project to examine if the increase of women in farming is equivalent to inclusivity or if the perpetuation of gendered expectations shapes experiences and identities. This investigation examines how women make sense of their lived

experiences and considers the extent that gender is 'done' in relation to the embodiment of farm activities.

The presentation of the self may sustain or resist gender differences by using certain resources or 'gendered practice' (Martin, 2003) which are presumed to correspond to the nature of either sex. For example, sartorial choices may render the body a symbol from which interpretations are read about one's expected roles and behaviours. Similarly, the dramaturgical approach offered by Goffman (1969, 1976) emphasises gender as something performed but acknowledges the diversity of femininities and masculinities that become apparent in different situations. It is argued by Goffman that social expectations are like scripts which shape actors' behaviour to conjure up a certain image of their self, based on how they think they are perceived by others. Therefore, I am interested in whether women position themselves with agency as social actors and I consider how this is enacted, such as by adapting their presentation of the self in relation to a specific audience and setting in conjunction with working in a traditionally male environment. Consequently, gender is conceptualised as something that is 'done' as part of a dynamic process (West and Zimmerman, 1987, p.13).

The concepts of 'doing gender' (West and Zimmerman, 1987) and 'undoing gender' (Butler, 2004) acknowledge gender identity as an active process and highlight the power at play in individuals' abilities to reproduce or resist inequalities that they may perceive. According to West and Zimmerman (1987), 'doing gender' highlights that gender is a project to be accomplished in interaction whereby individuals sustain their identity through a reoccurring pattern of behaviour associated with masculine or feminine characteristics. However, this theory assumes that gender differences, and therefore inequalities, are reproduced in a normative fashion (Kelan, 2018). Its limitation may lie in the fact that it is a 'theory of conformity' according to Deutsch (2007) who explains that the potential for gender difference to be reduced or disrupted by individuals is overlooked. The accompanying theory known as 'undoing gender' can refer to the subversion of gender norms (Butler, 2004), but its usage by Deutsch (2007) refers to the potential irrelevance of gender to interactions altogether. This discussion is key to the question of neutrality and whether women farmers seek differences to be disrupted or considered in equal terms.

It is unclear whether 'doing gender' means performing the behaviour expected for one's sex (given that West and Zimmerman (1987) understand gender as an enactment of sex) and/or if it can refer to doing gender in a way that is normative for a particular work

task or setting. It is possible that women may undo gender by entering farming (on the basis that it is construed as a masculine occupation), but they may also do farming or dress the body in gender normative ways. For example, women performing masculinity in farming might be taken as doing gender normatively for the setting, but undoing gender based on the woman's assumed sex. Goffman's (1969) assertion that gender is done in interaction resonates with this study as it focuses on the specific context of farming, the nuances of different settings and people within farming encounters.

The rise of women's entry into farming may render what it means to be a woman in this setting as contrasting to domains in which women are typical, such as nursing. Porter (1992) amongst others recognises that power operates within professions, such as nursing, on two levels, vertical and horizontal segregation. Similarly, farming is an occupation which has been characterised by horizontal segregation, the underrepresentation of women, and vertical segregation which refers to an unequal division of labour. There are also differences between these professions because it is professional values that segregate genders in nursing. For example, nursing is associated with compassion and femininity in contrast to the skills which are valued in medicine and deemed masculine such as intellect (McDonald, 2013). On the other hand, the perpetuation of physical strength as a masculine ideal has restricted opportunities for women's progression in agriculture (e.g. Saugeres, 2002b). Therefore, the gendered discourses which shape hierarchies within occupations are not universal and as Shilling (2003) acknowledges, "what counts as a legitimate body" is shaped by the circumstances in which they occur.

Together these empirical and theoretical works provide important insights into the conceptualisation of gender identities as multiple and dynamic. Biology can have a role in women's experiences but in conjunction with performative elements constructed in social life. A theme emerging from these studies is the relationship between structure and agency in forming identities as individuals make choices within the constraints of resources and the perceptions of others (Woodward, 2004). On the one hand, identities are individual as the meaning we attach to our situation may be the result of reflexivity, yet these processes are shaped by cultural values in terms of the way in which they can be interpreted, reproduced or resisted. Identity cannot be abstracted from its context and in the case of farming, a history of gendered inequality offers a rich site for identity negotiation with manifestation in the embodied labour of farming activities. As gender

is relational, in the next section it is considered how the position of women farmers is defined against masculinities.

2.3 Embodiment

Given that this research aims to understand the gender and work identities of women in farming, it can be situated within the literature on the interrelationship between the body, society and identity. The established interest in the body within sociology challenges Descartes' (1974) dualism which treats the mind and body as separate entities. The body may not be an individual and passive experience, but socially constructed through practices, performance and management in alignment with the boundaries of a particular time, place or affiliation (Shilling, 2003). Similarly, Douglas' (1973) theorisation of the social and physical body emphasises that the lived experiences of bodily processes are mediated by the social construction of what it means to have a female or male body. Therefore, this research is interested in the ways in which identities are "inscribed on, marked by and lived through bodies" (Halford, Savage and Witz, 1997, p. 25).

The research question 'how is farming embodied by women?' draws attention to the meaning of the body at work. Brandth (2006) identifies that the body is often focused upon for its symbolic value rather than as an instrument at work. For example, in the case of women in the airline industry, Tyler and Hancock (2001) note that the management of the body through grooming and dieting is expected to reflect the role and identity of a flight attendant. Similarly, the body may be managed through dress for an expression of identity, to portray something specific that is salient to an encounter. As a result, the body may be meaningful to the experiences of women in farming because it may bear symbolic value for their work and/or gender identities. In my previous research, clothing and make-up were used by women in farming as gendering practices to make the connection between looking and feeling feminine (Robertson, 2015). Therefore, the performance of femininity by women can help avoid condemnation for being perceived an 'honorary man' or 'flawed woman' given that farming tends to be coded as masculine (Powell, Bagilhole and Dainty, 2008, p.2).

One of the assumptions that underpins the idea that farming is men's work is the perceived inferiority of women's strength (Brandth, 2006). It is assumed that women's bodies lack the capacity for physical farm labour, which legitimises their relegation to the status of helpers (Saugeres, 2002a). These assumptions tend to be reduced to the

assumed dichotomous biology of men and women, without consideration for the malleable aspects of the body such as diet or exercise. However, the physical body can offer some constraints on action and is not totally malleable, as shown by ageing in farming (Riley, 2016). Riley (2016) found that the decline in stamina of older men farmers meant that the tasks they could complete to maintain a farming identity were limited to managerial roles. As a result, there may be a resemblance between perceptions of an aged (male) body and a female body as marginal which are both mediated by biological and social understandings of physical capacity.

A study by Young (1980) of body comportment emphasises that the way in which we experience our bodies is gendered and therefore can be shaped by patriarchal structures. According to Young (1980, p. 142), "the approach persons of each sex take to the performance of physical tasks that require force, strength, and muscular coordination is frequently different." By this she means that the body is managed through deportment and it is not biologically given that women's capabilities are limited. Similarly, Skeggs (1997) draws upon the body as a site of identity as she examines how working-class women negotiate their sense of themselves through the way they stand. Posture may be deemed an enactment of cultural capital derived from gender and class which is coded in the context of a continuum of respectability. Therefore, the body is a nexus between the individual and society whereby notions of oneself can be reinforced and disciplined.

A useful means to attend to embodiment is Bourdieu's (1984) notion of habitus which "cuts across conventional mind/body splits" according to Lawler (2014, p.145). By this it is meant that the body is central to one's sense of self. Habitus is the embodiment of dispositions which are appropriate for a specific field; a concept that has been applied to various contexts, such as ballet (Wainwright, Williams and Turner, 2006). One of the ways in which habitus is expressed is through posture which is socially produced and valued so that it becomes naturalised as a resource for success. Similarly, this resonates with the demeanour of flirting which was strategically used by women in farming for success in business deals (Robertson 2015). The expectations in the field of farming can influence the construction of embodied identities as the resources or 'capital' needed to 'play the game' (Bourdieu and Waquant, 1992, p. 98) are mutually understood. Therefore, the concepts of habitus and capital in a field emphasises Brandth and Haugen's (2005a, p.152) observation that "bodies are constraining as well as facilitating".

The objective of this research is to capture the situated nature of identities in terms of the "everyday processes of identity-making" which occur in relation to the embodiment of (farm) work (Lawler, 2014, p.7). A recent study by Shortall (2014) reports that men and women on farms often face an absence of significant others to reinforce their work or gender identities. However, 'significant others' are conceptualised by the author as colleagues or family members. My research questions the view that farmers are not 'lone workers' in identity construction and argues that a sense of self may be constituted in relation to interactions with machinery, animals and humans in everyday work practices. By making a comparison across women involved in arable, pastoral and mixed farming, the extent that tools used in farm work are a resource in meaning-making will be examined. As a result, the study will contribute to existing understandings of the embodiment of identity by considering the intersection of work practices, such as relationships with animals or machinery. As the following literature suggests, here the presentation of the self may be managed by 'gendered practice' (Martin, 2003) as shown by the adoption of roles which are presumed to correspond to traditional forms of masculinities or femininities.

2.3.1 Working with machinery

According to Brandth (2006) and Saugeres (2002b), the male body is often privileged in farming for its perceived compatibility with the strength, dirt and danger involved in tending for land or livestock. Masculinity is the dominant discourse, in particular for the operation of machinery, as shown by analyses of representations in the farming media (Brandth, 1995, Morris and Evans, 2001). Brandth (1995) found that tractor advertisements perpetuated dominant masculinity by emphasising control, size and technical abilities of machinery which were deemed exclusionary to women. Similarly, Morris and Evans (2001) found dualistic constructions of gender identities in *The Farmer's Weekly* from 1976 and 1996. For example, in reports which focused on farming couples, the woman was not associated with the operation of machinery or portrayed as the farmer and therefore focused on domesticity in farm business success stories.

In alignment with the literature surrounding the embodiment of identities, the body is a site of gender production and reproduction, according to Brandth and Haugen (2005a, 2005b). They draw upon Goffman (1969) to illustrate how gender is 'done' by rural men using machinery as a 'prop' for impression management given that it is symbolic of a masculine identity. Accordingly, Brandth (1995, p.128) recognises "a mutual

process of construction" as machinery is imbued with gendered connotations which may reinforce the identity of the operator. Similarly, Saugeres (2002b) maintains that agricultural technology is used to reinforce patriarchal ideologies, as shown by the suggestion that men are naturally attracted to, and have the bodily capacity to wield, tractors. However, it was also considered that it is not the *operation* of machinery that stratifies women at a disadvantage, but *knowledge* of its workings which can be acquired from being a man or being raised in a farming family (Saugeres, 2002b).

The embodied knowledge referred to by Saugeres (2002b, 2002c), according to Leckie's (1996) findings, can be the result of the gendered socialisation experienced by those from farming backgrounds. For example, some of the women farmers in Leckie's (1996) research described childhood experiences in which they were encouraged to work with their mothers who helped with the animals on the farm so they developed expertise in this area. Therefore, a family background in farming may also create inequality in the transfer of tacit skills. However, if identity is a 'reflexive project' (Giddens, 1991) which can be redefined, then the dichotomous thinking which categorises roles and associated tools as oppositional may be subverted. I am interested in whether women position themselves with agency as social actors who 'do' gender as something which can be "donned or shed, muted or made more salient, depending on the situation" and as part of a dynamic process (West and Zimmerman, 1987, p.13).

Women in farming are often viewed to occupy a liminal position as neither a man nor a woman because they work in a masculine context but do not embody the skills of a man (Saugeres, 2002a). According to Coldwell (2007a, p.29), there is "the perception that women who do physical hands on farm work are more masculine" because manual work is associated with the bigger build of men. As Cockburn (1985, p. 8) questions, "if technology is a historical aspect of male power, can women participate in it at all without becoming 'honorary men'?" The current study will investigate whether women perceive themselves in this way and whether strategies of identity management relinquish essentialist conceptualisations or reinforce them.

It must be noted that Saugeres (2002c, p.646) situates farming as a "manual occupation". In a modern context, everyday practice may encompass more than physical labour to include managerial and technological skill. The professionalisation of farming is comparable to forestry in Norway, which Campbell, Bell and Finney (2006) argue is work typical of rural masculinity, as it traditionally privileges manual labour. However, men's roles have shifted "from lumberjack to business manager" as machinery has

advanced which challenges traditional notions of hegemonic masculinity because strength becomes devalued compared to a "white collar image" of management (Brandth, 1995, p.130, Brandth and Haugen, 2000). As gender is deemed relational, the current study will consider how women interpret their sense of self in relation to the changing configurations of farming practice and the masculine ideal.

Far from the presumption that farm life is technologically backwards, the recent impact of digitisation on gender relations in farming is identified by authors such as Bryant and Pini (2006), Bear and Holloway (2015), Hay and Pearce (2014) and Klerkx, Jakku and Labarthe (2019). Farm technologies consist of those positioned indoors and outdoors such as personal computers and machinery respectively. However, increasingly they are not discrete relations because they are part of a network of communication on farms which warrant new subjectivities in terms of decision-making, skills and knowledge for their operation. For example, Klerkx, Jakku and Labarthe (2019, p. 9) recognise that digitalisation affects "farmer identity, farmer skills, and farm work" and therefore they propose for future research to address the question; "how does it [digitalisation] affect gender relationships on farms and in rural communities?"

My research can contribute to an understanding of the lived experiences of 'smart farming'[3] and the implications for women farmers' identities. The focus thus far tends to be on gender and technology in terms of machinery as a symbol of men's power (Saugeres, 2002b) and women's exclusion (Saugeres, 2002c). However, more recently, Holloway, Bear and Wilkinson (2014a) have examined how automated systems shape the embodied experiences of farmers in their relationship to animals, space and time. They found a shift in the choreography of humans and cows, namely from daily rhythms bound by the herding of cattle, to the management of data collection about their productivity. Similarly, Hay and Pearce (2014, p.324) found that remote livestock management was more likely to be used by women than men in the Australian cattle industry to the extent that it "gave women more control over the business". Despite this work being undertaken from the homestead, a site which traditionally symbolised farm women's marginalisation, farming can be embodied differently with digital technology and in ways that potentially subverts the gender dichotomy which situated brawn as superior to brains.

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[3] 'Smart farming' is characterised by the automation of machinery or manual labour and the associated data collection (Klerkx, Jakku and Labarthe, 2019).

Some argue that farming has undergone de-traditionalisation (e.g. Bryant, 1999) and professionalisation (e.g. Bjorkhaug and Blekesaune, 2007). This implicates farming identities by challenging the reproductive/productive and indoor/outdoor dichotomies which underpinned a gendered division of labour according to Alston (1998). Pini (2005b) questions whether the decreased salience of manual labour will prompt gender neutrality, given that rural masculinity has been premised on the demonstration of physical strength. Similarly, Bryant (1999, p. 246) outlines the move towards a "managerial self-identity [which] meant a removal of physical labour from farming to oversee and plan the production process." Traditionally, paperwork such as accounts and governance were likely to be undertaken by the 'farmer's wife' as a practice symbolic of her peripheral status. However, bureaucracy may be afforded significance within contemporary farming practice since it is subject to increased governance.

The reconfiguration of farm practices as a result of developments in digital technologies has meant that "identities, roles and subjectivities of humans and animals are unsettled" (Holloway, Bear and Wilkinson, 2014b, p.185). Yet, within recent years, little attention has been paid to the everyday experiences and challenges faced by women farmers in England. Dichotomous task allocation and gender construction may be disrupted because farm technology is normatively appropriated by men, yet indoor work, which now involves collating information such as milk yields, is deemed feminine (Shortall, 2016). However, following the digitisation of administration, Bryant (2003, p. 464) argues that "the personal computer has become the symbol for the professionalisation of farming" in a way that maintains "men as gatekeepers of information and knowledge" (p.465).

2.3.2 Working with animals

A growing body of literature exists about the relationships between humans and animals since Bryant (1979) initiated the 'zoological connection' as a sociological agenda. The categories that animals are grouped within, such as livestock, tend to be socially constructed, as shown by the 'sociozoologic scale' (Arluke and Sanders, 1996). This classification system acknowledges that animals are imbued with meaning in a hierarchical fashion, but it ignores the negotiation of statuses in everyday life, such as whether livestock can be viewed as food, a friend or both. Livestock are referred to as "any creature kept or dealt for profit" (Hribal, 2003, p. 435). Therefore, livestock are situated within the context of food production which imposes constraints on interactions with them (Stuart, Schewe and Gunderson, 2013). For example, in the dairy sector, the

value of a cow is determined by the quality and quantity of milk production which may be managed by breeding selection. However, livestock may also be considered as social actors who work in coordination with farmers (Porcher and Schmitt, 2012). Accordingly, the nature/culture boundary must be challenged by understanding the significance of nonhuman animals in social life, particularly in the experiences of women in farming.

An emotional attachment with livestock is possible as a result of regular interaction, such as feeding and handling. These interactions may be imbued with subjectivities due to the interpretation of behaviour as cooperative, as well as getting to know the feelings or personality of an animal (Porcher and Schmitt, 2012, Ellis, 2014). However, Ellis and Irvine (2010) refer to a 'caring-killing paradox' which acknowledges the ambiguity of building relationships with an animal as a subjective being but also as a commercial product. In the 4-H Youth Livestock Program (Ellis and Irvine, 2010), young people were socialised into the emotional culture of livestock farming. They learnt, through their experiences of caring for the animals, that they were active participants in a process of attachment and detachment. Resistance from naming is a means of managing ambiguity, such as in the instance of laboratory animals (Beumer, 2014). In comparison to pets, naming affords an animal with a biography and identity which facilitates companionship (Sanders, 1999). With applicability to my current research, I will investigate whether this is the case for farmers engaging in relationships with animals on a daily basis, whilst orienting to a profitable business. How can an identity as a farmer, woman and animal lover be managed?

This research takes into account the embeddedness of animals in social life, specifically working relationships on the farm. As Porcher and Schmitt (2012, p.39) recognise, "animals are actors involved in the process of work". Livestock may be considered social agents positioned within a 'natureculture' (Haraway, 2003), as the boundary between nature and culture associated with human and non-human respectively is blurred, given that human-animal relationships are actively constituted in interaction. Wilkie (2010) investigated the meanings attached to working with animals and the contingent nature of relations throughout an animal's career. For example, respondents spoke of complications which meant that animals had to be hand reared and led to a personal connection with a particular animal's history and temperament. The identities of farmers and livestock are often entwined due to the proximity and regularity of interaction. Therefore, this involvement can make it difficult for farmers to relinquish

contact upon the departure of an animal for sale or slaughter (Wilkie, 2010, Riley, 2011, Burton, Peoples and Cooper, 2012).

Distancing strategies resonate with human-animal working relationships in science, according to Birke (1994). Scientists "learn not to admit them [emotions]" (1994, p.46) which suggests that the contradiction of caring for animals and justifying their death is managed by emotional labour (see Hochschild, 1983). Hochschild's contribution questions the determinism of emotion as a biological response in favour of its malleability in interaction. It will be important to explore whether a similar strategy is used by farmers in their everyday work practices. The claim that "in order to survive in their jobs, they [flight attendants] must mentally detach themselves" (Hochschild, 1983, p.17) acknowledges that emotion in social life is negotiated according to the appropriateness for a given role, context or identity. The emotional disposition of women has been stereotyped as a natural outcome of their reproductive capacity but, as already discussed, it is argued here that expectations for men and women are socially constructed and may shape experiences, such as with working animals (Brandth, 2006).

As professed by Wilkie (2010, p. 43), "stereotypical notions of masculinity and femininity are expressed, justified and contested in a range of commercial and hobby livestock-productive contexts". In Wilkie's (2010) research, women were perceived by men as gentle with baby animals, susceptible to making an animal feel comfortable and positioned as having a superior understanding of expectant animals. Therefore, there are two lines of inquiry which are interesting to pursue: firstly, the experiences of women in relation to the masculine stereotype of a farmer as 'emotionally aloof' (Wilkie, 2010, p. 60). Secondly, the extent to which livestock and farmers engage in a gendered relationship. Are there, for instance, perceived parallels between women and female animals as child bearers? This study does not focus on the attribution of sentience to the animal but the emotion work of women, drawing on Hochschild's (1983) theory, and how it may shape work and gender identities.

Femininity may be performed through the embodied experience of doing livestock work. For example, Sachs, Barbercheck and Brazier (2016) show that building relationships with animals and maintaining their wellbeing, affords women a place in farming due to their assumed suitability to nurturing. Following this, it is suggested by Trauger (2004) that sustainable agriculture is empowering for women farmers due to the care work involved in small scale production. More recently in Colorado, Shisler and Sbicca (2019) found that women reclaim a farmer identity by reframing farming such as

feeding stock as care work which allows them to perform femininity and forge a niche in which they feel valued. Despite challenging the masculine ideal of farming, a gender division is maintained by doing farming differently and in a way which aligns with a stereotypical vision of womanhood. Therefore, it is crucial to understand how farm work is imbued with meanings which shape and are shaped by (gendered) identities in a UK context.

Similarly, the findings of my undergraduate dissertation suggested that women justify their role in farming by viewing themselves as particularly skilled in working with livestock (Robertson, 2015). Interviewees felt that a 'maternal instinct' made them able to empathise with animals and this manifested in work practice through the delicate handling of animals experiencing pregnancy complications. From this I concluded that the everyday work experiences of women in farming may involve interactions in which biological differences are reinforced. Similarly, Kaarlenkaski (2014) found that women compare calving to childbirth and identify with cows as 'fellow females' which positions the cows as insiders and co-constructs the gender of both farmer and animal.

By treating the literature on working with animals and machinery separately, I do not mean to construe them as discrete practices as many farmers work with both, but I highlight the complex nature of gendered ideologies embedded in farm work. Drawing on Hochschild (1983), the tensions posed to work and gender identities will be explored in relation to the 'emotional labour' of working in partnership with livestock. In contrast to the masculine stereotype of the 'emotionally aloof' farmer (Wilkie, 2010, p.60), embodied interaction with animals may contribute to the construction of a coherent sense of self as a woman due to the perceived compatibility between women and female animals as child bearers. This reproduction of gender may be problematic for inferring that motherhood is the most suited role for women, thus reducing women to their biologies, or it may be perceived as a way for women to find their niche in farming.

2.4 Rurality

The preceding literature review has focused on the construction of gender identities in interaction with animals and machinery, but this final section of the chapter considers identity beyond working life to encompass the emplacement of farming within rurality. According to Cloke (2006, p.20), rurality involves "living as part of an extensive landscape" and Carolan (2008, p.413) found that the countryside is a lived experience, to the extent that a farmer commented that "it's almost like the tractor is part of me". As

a result, an investigation of women in farming cannot ignore the embodiment of rural space in lived experiences, practices and identities. The positioning of women within rural life brings to the fore political questions of power and marginalisation embedded in a space in which gender is produced and reproduced.

It may be argued that rural sociology is marginalised because it seems the antithesis of fashionable and mainstream concerns, such as 'the urban' and innovation in industry (Hillyard, 2007). Similarly, Rose (1995) identifies that the rural idyll is associated with harmony and a non-progressive way of life. Yet, there is a growing trend towards engagement with rural relations in the popular imagination, through television programmes such as *This Farming Life* (BBC, 2017) which confront the romanticism of the rural idyll. As Newby (1979, p.24) suggests, "the countryside is not just a charming view but a working environment". Accordingly, this research draws upon cognate disciplines such as human geography and human-animal studies which both have strong associations with investigating rural lives. Functionalist perspectives have defined the rural in relation to the urban, as shown by distance or population size (Cloke, 2006), but this study moves beyond dichotomous understanding to consider the lived meanings of place and within which women identify.

By taking the view that rurality is social constructed, "the exclusionary qualities within these constructions need to be highlighted" (Cloke and Little, 1997, p.4). For example, the rural idyll links womanhood with domesticity which presumes that a woman's place within the rural community is defined by her positions as wife and mother. As a result, one's identity may focus on collective experiences of the family or business rather than personal achievements (Little, 2014). Feminist perspectives, as taken in this research, are needed to disrupt male-centric narratives which dominate rural life and to understand the marginalisation of women as they vie for status in a space that men have occupied for generations. As Hughes (1997) suggests, single women may not fit within the dominant construction of the rural imaginary. Bearing in mind the ways in which the nuclear family is privileged, as shown by socialisation and succession practices in farming, how does this affect a single woman's sense of self? This research confronts any singular definition of a woman or farmer by speaking to participants who run their own farming business and defy expectations relating to the tradition of rural structures.

Constructions of rurality can inform identity, for example in the case of young adults who have grown up on a farm and move to a university in a metropolitan area (Cassidy

and McGrath, 2015). Cassidy and McGrath (2015) found that students sought to distinguish themselves from 'townies' even if they did not play an active role in farm work because they identified with rural life. As I articulate in the following methodology chapter which examines my position in the research, I consider myself a farmer's daughter, despite not having a future on the farm. Similarly, Cassidy and McGrath (2015) found that farming is used to reference belonging to the rural community which might involve participating in pursuits such as shooting, or a connection to an upbringing in the countryside with vast open space. Edensor (2006, p. 484) argues that "different rural performances are enacted on different stages" including agricultural shows (Holloway, 2004), Young Farmers Clubs (Neal and Walters, 2008) and fox hunting (Marvin, 2003) which have been studied as spaces in which shared forms of knowledge and habitual practices are enacted as part of a rural community.

Farming may be considered a distinct culture given the attachment to rural space and work practices that afford its coherence. Accordingly, it is often described as a 'way of life' (Newby, 1985, p. 101) specific to a network of individuals, as shown by the temporality of the farming year embedded in the rhythms of everyday life. Following Bourdieu's (1984) conceptual approach, the 'field' harbours a 'habitus' comprising tacit knowledge and embodiment of an identity as a farmer. Being a 'good farmer' is a subject position constructed through displays of competence, such as crop yields, a tidy farm or stocksmanship, according to Riley (2016). Therefore, this study will question whether women perceive themselves as able to accrue the cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1984) to achieve status as a 'good farmer'. The fact that Riley (2012) found that the 'ageing body' poses a challenge to one's identity as a 'good farmer', indicates the value of physical endurance which historically posed a barrier to women's participation in farming.

The importance of a farming habitus for one's self-concept has led to the reluctance of farmers to retire and consequently the average age of a 'farm holder' in the UK is 60 years old (DEFRA, 2017). Therefore, a growing body of literature highlights the intersectionality of gender and age (e.g. Gullifer and Thompson, 2006), as well as the negotiation of retirement practices (Riley, 2012, 2016). As indicated in the work of Riley (2012), more than a professional identity is lost upon retirement as farming incorporates a lifestyle and social network. Accordingly, it is not uncommon for farmers to transfer their business to a successor at pension age whilst remaining some involvement in the farm's daily activities (Riley, 2012, 2016). The complexity of

negotiating retirement is a result of the blurred boundary between home and work which means that a professional identity cannot simply be abandoned (Riley, 2016). For example, having kept land or livestock in good shape is a legacy that represents one's identity and often a lifetime of embodied work (Riley, 2012).

In similar terms to Bourdieu's (1984) attention to the particular rituals of a context, referring to a 'community' may be appropriate to conceptualise the relationship between identities, space and place. Lived experiences may be shaped by belonging to a group of people or a place (Bruhn, 2011) and coincides with Liepins' (2000a, p. 23) definition of community which incorporates "cultural meanings about social life and rurality". By this I mean that farmers may consider themselves part of the rural community who share values or stories about the landscape which inform how they view their own selves. Yet, communities may not be unified because as a place is constructed by its people, according to Massey (1991) it is open to inequalities such as gender and background. For example, the auction mart is a "social hub" (Rowling, 2015, p. 72) for people to gather who share the ritualistic construction of the farming community as shown by dress and knowledge of the order of activities. However, the auction mart may be deemed a masculine space which is epitomised in the positioning of the women's toilets on the periphery and reproduces the idea that women are 'out of place' (Rowling, 2015).

Identity can be shaped by the communities to which an individual belongs (Lawler, 2014) and thus a unifying factor of community and identity is that they are both concerned with boundary making. Simmel's (cited in Wolff, 1950) consideration of 'the stranger' highlights the tensions that may occur as a result of not being a fully-fledged member of a group. He argues that "the unity of nearness and remoteness" (p.402) can be experienced simultaneously when an individual is part of a group but is distant in terms of embodying the recognised disposition to be accepted. For example, a woman may enter the rural community as a farmer but "subtle degrees of differentiation" (Alexander, 2004, p. 88) such as an urban background may be symbolic of otherness such as a lack of socialisation into the rural community from a young age. This resonates with the work of Bourdieu (1984) who similarly shows the relationship between embodied practice, space and social relations.

2.5 Summary

Together the research reviewed in this chapters provide important insights into the construction of identities by women in farming. There is some evidence to indicate that the character of farming can be explained by the patriarchal structures of inheritance and the resultant socialisation of gender roles into farming activities. Therefore, previous work on the sociology of the farm tends to focus on the family farm as the dominant configuration and to exclude those who do not own land and/or those who have not entered farming through marriage to a male farmer. Such studies rarely consider the entanglements of gender and kinship as they shape the cultural, material and economic capital available to women that may afford them (dis)advantages for their work and sense of self. I address the presumption that ownership is central to the definition of a farmer and consider women who identify themselves as farmers and may not be bound by the legitimation of family. Women may be self-employed farmers, part-time farmers or anything in between, so by taking a feminist perspective this research acknowledges that there is not one singular definition of a woman or a farmer.

The literature which frames theoretical approaches to gender outlines the contingent nature of identities. Accordingly, the project will deepen our understanding of the ways in which women in farming negotiate, construct, and reconstruct their selves and how this may be shaped by gendered structures in the field. In accordance with interactional approaches, this project understands contradictory narratives as part of the messiness of social life as individuals situate their selves within shifting contexts and sense-making practices. By speaking to women in wide-ranging roles about their achievements, I uncover perceptions of their selves in relation to constructions of what it means to be a farmer and what it means to be a woman today.

The novel contribution of this research is in building an understanding of the ways that the salience of gender may shape doing farming and how the body and mind may or may not be viewed by women themselves and others as gendered. In doing so, I challenge the biological essentialism of women's perceived lack of strength which traditionally limited their involvement in farming, and I question the qualities valued in farming in the UK today. The existing empirical work about women in farming suggests that patriarchal discourses and structures in farming are based on the coding of manual/outdoor work as masculine. I address how women farmers engage with such dichotomies through the labouring body given the claims in the literature about the changing context of farming as professionalised, feminised and/or mechanised.

Following the argument that hegemonic forms of masculinity and femininity in farming are distinctive from urban counterparts, this project offers new insights into the construction of identities embedded in the rural. The originality is found in its application of concepts to a field that they are not typically applied. For example, sociological literature on gendered occupations readily focuses on urban contexts in which notions of feminism, gender and in/equality may be familiar given the organisational processes. Farming may be unique in the way that it is structured, as shown by the rhythms of the seasons, weather and spaces. This leads me to question that farming may be historically situated as male-dominated, but do women farmers experience it as such? Do they perceive inequalities to exist and, if so, what do they consist of and how are they enacted? Analyses of post-modernity suggest that individualism means that any divisions are downplayed. However, it is important to understand the nuances of affiliations in farming and the ways in which they shape women farmers' identities and implicate their success.

Chapter 3 Methodology

This chapter provides a reflexive account which positions myself within the research, makes the feminist perspectives which underpin the research transparent and details how the research process contributed to my experience of becoming a researcher. I document the process of gathering and analysing data which meets the aims of the project, including the recruitment and characteristics of the participants. I set out the reasons for choosing to conduct semi-structured interviews and thematic analysis, by situating these methods within ethnographic and feminist approaches. Finally, I outline how I gained research ethical approval, including reflections on the ethical considerations which were made throughout the research process to protect the wellbeing of respondents and myself as the researcher.

This research is a qualitative interview-based study comprising of ethnographic elements which take into account the multifaceted nature of identity construction. Participant observations at agricultural shows sought to complement the interviews by reintroducing myself to the field of farming as a relative stranger; a dynamic drawn upon throughout the chapter to understand my contradictory positioning. I discuss the impact of this positioning on the data and with the participants, including the problems encountered, in relation to adopting a feminist epistemology. In addition to the observations, the interviews are examined, specifically their situated nature within the everyday spaces that women farmers occupy and the changes which this necessitated to my research methodology, for example in relation to walking interviews. Altogether, the methods used are able to reveal the subjective and varied lived experiences of women who self-identify as farmers.

3.1 Reflexive positioning

Despite having lived in a city throughout my time at university, being a farmer's daughter remains part of my identity. My upbringing involved an affinity with the countryside, and associated annual activities, such as attending agricultural shows; both of which have translated into my adult life. Even after leaving home, I continued to attend agricultural shows. These events provide the opportunity for often-solitary farming professionals and families to socialise. They permitted me to re-immerse myself in farming rituals, whilst living away from the family farm. Similarly, this research offers a means of contributing to and maintaining my connection with farming, other than by living or working on my family's arable farm. In the latter stages of this

research, this relationship became pronounced as the coronavirus pandemic [4] meant that I was unable to visit the farm and my family or attend farming events for the first time.

It is important to acknowledge that farming kinship motivated my enthusiasm to understand gender issues in farming and impacted the knowledge I have produced. Throughout my undergraduate studies, I developed an interest in the sociology of gender which encouraged an awareness that my identity as a 'farmer's daughter' was a gendered construction in relation to my father. The farmer in question is presumed to be a man, which was the case for me, but I sought to challenge this assumption about what it means to be a farmer by speaking to those who are women. Referring to myself as a farmer's daughter communicates an understanding of farming and enjoyment of the countryside as part of who I am, whilst being physically apart from such rural spaces. I became interested in understanding how this identity might afford cultural capital for others in their work, for example as symbolic of tacit knowledge and this led to the following research question: how is farming embodied by women?

This research satisfies a curiosity based on my observations about the position of women whilst growing up on an arable farm and being immersed in a farming community from a young age. A notable example is the assumption by others that my mother did not have a professional career of her own because she is married to a farmer, when in fact she has a career outside of farming. The role of a farmer's wife as limited to domestic or administrative tasks in the farmhouse is a widely held view, as shown by Whatmore (1991b) amongst others. Accordingly, frustration with this stereotype became the point at which I started to question the involvement of women in agriculture, such as the tendency for the wives of farmers to be overshadowed by their husband. Similarly to farming, it has been found that for members of the clergy, the boundaries between home and work are blurred which lends itself to the incorporation of wives in their husband's profession, for example by making a significant contribution to domestic and parish labour without recognition (Finch, 1983).

My investment in the research emerged from my lived experience of farming culture, but as I learnt about the stories of women who farm, I came to see that this experience was also implicated in power relationships within my project. My background is in arable farming, and arable farmers are stereotypically considered to be richer and more

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[4] A worldwide outbreak of the COVID-19 disease led to a period from March 2020 whereby the UK government advised individuals to stay at home to prevent its spread.

powerful than livestock farmers, for example due to the fact that arable farming is more mechanised. According to Harvey (2013), an 'insider' status can give a false sense of familiarity with the research participants which I found to be the case as my family connection to farming did not always facilitate rapport. The extract from my research journal below recalls the alienation I felt when participants outlined the tensions between the type and size of farming they participate in and that to which I am familiar.

> *After introducing myself, I was asked who my father was, which was a tense moment, especially when she mentioned later in the interview about her hostility towards arable farmers who she believes have monopoly over land.*

The instance above shows that the participants based in Norfolk (where my family's farm is) were concerned about whether they had heard of my father as a means of verifying my authenticity. According to Reinharz and Chase (2002), the researcher's self-disclosure can constrain participants if their experiences differ, but this was managed by reciprocity, as advocated by Oakley (1981), when I answered questions that interviewees posed about my family's farm and my motivations for the research. Therefore, this gives an insight into the ways that my position was brought to the fore by the participants and how reflexivity shaped the nature of our relationship.

My position as an insider and outsider constantly shifted throughout the research, as shown by the salience of my farming upbringing, but as situated within a particular type of farming. My negotiation across these boundaries, as recognised by Sherif (2001), aligns with the theoretical basis of this research. This is reflected in the dramaturgical model of Goffman (1969) which highlights that the roles we construct for ourselves are embedded in the specificities of interactions. For example, I chose my clothing for the interviews based on the appropriateness for the countryside in the knowledge that farms tend to be dirty and outdoor spaces, so smart clothes may prove alienating for the emphasis on my status as an academic. Therefore, dress may render "the body [of the researcher] as a site of knowledge production" which influences how the participants relate to the research encounter (Ellingson, 2006, p. 308).

It can be difficult to articulate how reflexivity is done in practice (Russell and Kelly, 2002). Rather than describing one's biography for its own sake, Ortlipp (2008) suggests that it should be part of the analytic process to capture the role of the researcher in the production of knowledge. Therefore, I used a journal to record reflections throughout

the fieldwork, analysis and writing stages. Pini (2004a) acknowledges that often no-one besides the researcher has access to a research diary in contradiction to Ortlipp's (2008) claim for transparency. As a result, extracts from my journal will be drawn upon in this chapter to illustrate the positionalities involved in the connection between theory and method which may help others make sense of the findings.

3.2 Feminist framing

The epistemology underpinning my methodological choices emerged intuitively as I dealt with the unpredictability of the research process. Retrospectively, my approach can be framed within feminist terms by drawing upon Stanley and Wise (1993, p.66) who premise their work on "the importance of the subjective" which incorporates the researcher's interrogation of their own position and the treatment of women's experiences as situated. The common theme within these principles is attention to the participant-researcher relationship. As DeVault (1996, p.29) notes, "there is no single feminist method", but following Stanley and Wise (1993), I envisaged that my research would deconstruct hierarchies of power in the research encounter, as well as in social life by understanding how the micro experiences of women farmer's everyday lives may be constitutive of and responses to wider structures of gender difference.

In attempt to develop a non-hierarchical relationship, Weber's (2012) method of 'verstehen' was drawn upon which highlights the co-construction of knowledge between the participants and researcher. Simply put, empathic understanding was sought by 'stepping into their shoes'; understanding the meanings of their experiences within the broader context of their biographies and exploring the opportunities and constraints which may interact to form their identities. Complementing this, insights were generated from women in their own words by asking open questions and allowing them to guide the conversations rather than imposing a 'researcher as expert' positioning which may have limited their willingness to talk freely. Accordingly, in the conduct of the interviews, women farmers are regarded as active agents in their identity construction to explore "what it is to be a woman, what the social world looks like to women, how it is constructed and negotiated by women" (Stanley and Wise, 1993, p.120).

The understanding advocated by Weber aligns with the feminist aim of Hesse-Bibber and Piatelli (2012, p.569) and others to "find ways to share power as well as to better represent people's lives". Both approaches incorporate the researcher's positionality in

acknowledgment that the knowledge produced is the outcome of a human process subject to cultural assumptions, or 'values' in Weber's terms (Weber, 1919), which influence the topic and aims of the research. As a result, Oakley (2000) suggests that the rationale for qualitative research, as distinguishable from quantitative studies, is often inseparable from feminist ways of knowing. For example, a focus on the subjective may be shared across interpretivist studies, including those concerned with the distribution of power and the experiences of individuals considered to be marginalised, such as women farmers.

Women farmers are focused on as the subjects of this research in order to challenge the assumption that only men could be farmers, and women had to be farmers' wives. As shown from the research questions discussed in Chapter 1, women farmer's everyday experiences are at the forefront of the investigation to understand from their own perspectives the extent that gender is salient for their identities. Unlike government statistics (ONS, 2018) which reduce identity to a singular category, this study captures the multiplicity of women's involvements in farming and builds a comprehensive picture of how identity and experiences are negotiated. Women in farming tend to be misrepresented in large scale surveys which show an increase in the number of women farming (as based on self-definition in a restrictive category). This leads to the assumption that gendered, or even sexist, experiences no longer exist.

The data collection and analysis of my study situates women as agents within the structures which shape their lives. In contrast, Shortall (1999, p.7) states from the outset that her "argument is that the structure of farming culture affords men more power than women". Her focus on how power is maintained through the structure of farming families does not consider their capacities for resistance and the ways that the family may contribute to a positive sense of self. As a result, the research questions in this study are designed to capture the often complex and contradictory ways that the multiple facets of one's identities are negotiated as they arose inductively from the analysis. Immersion in the settings that participants discuss as influences on their identities, such as the farm or agricultural show, has enabled me to examine "how structures are lived, reproduced and challenged on a daily basis" (Skeggs, 1994, p. 74).

My research resonates with the approaches of Scott (1992) and Griffiths (1995) who highlight a feminist commitment to documenting the experiences of those who are unheard. This is a political endeavour in terms of satisfying the underrepresentation of women farmers and challenging the objectivity imposed by a singular definition of a

farmer. As Stanley and Wise (1993) note, the claim to universal experience is sexist when it is defined as male by default which can be applied to the relative numerical and normative dominance of men in farming. The aim to unsettle the identity of a farmer was embedded throughout the research process, as shown by the diverse sample of women who self-define as farmers in the participant recruitment section later in the chapter.

This research was inspired by a curiosity developed from my biography, including growing up on a farm. Therefore, my experiences and identity as a farmer's daughter cannot be separated from the research process. To that end, the research is not value-free because it was initiated on the basis of an insider status. In this chapter I endeavour to make the negotiation of these subjectivities visible as they emerged as relevant, for example whilst accessing participants and creating a supportive relationship that was conducive to in-depth insights. Taken together, my epistemology incorporates the practice of reflexivity to enable the participant-researcher relationship, the situated nature of knowledge and the gender agenda to be examined.

3.3 Participant recruitment

3.3.1 The study areas

Between October 2018 and July 2019, I conducted semi-structured interviews with twenty two women farmers; eleven from Norfolk and eleven from Yorkshire. I had networks within both study areas which facilitated recruitment, as well as ease of travel and accommodation during the fieldwork. These locations were chosen because they typically represent a concentration of two different farming types; arable and livestock respectively (DEFRA, 2016). It must be acknowledged that there is some variation within each area; for example, livestock farming also takes place in Norfolk and arable farming takes place in Yorkshire, so a few participants are, or have been, involved in more than one type of farming. This project does not involve a comparison between the findings of the two locations; rather it is designed to understand working lives across farming types. This is pertinent given the debates outlined in Chapter 2 about gendered divisions of labour in farming which tend to construct work with machinery as masculine and with livestock as feminine.

3.3.2 The participants

The criteria for participation was self-definition as a woman farmer. As already discussed, farmer is often subject to a narrow characterisation around full-time involvement and/or farm ownership which can exclude women on the basis that they may be responsible for childcare and/or bypassed for inheritance (Shortall, 2006). Therefore, it was appropriate to design the sample to accommodate women from a diversity of farm types and roles to understand what it means to be a farmer today. For the participants who approached me with an interest in taking part, fulfilling this criteria was on their terms, but in the cases where I approached an individual in the first instance, it was important to establish that they were happy to be referred to in this way. In most cases, I had identified them as a person of interest due to a newspaper article having used farmer as their job title and in the context of a feature about women in agriculture, or someone working within the farming community having identified them in this way. This is not to say that the participants may not identify themselves in alternative ways simultaneously, such as farmer's wife or shepherdess, which may be synonymous with farmer to varying degrees which highlights the complex and gendered construction of identities.

The structure of modern farming varies across England according to typography, size of farm and type of production. Yet, the diversity of farming is rarely extended to understand the identities of farmers who, as Newby (1979, p.77) suggests, "do not form a homogeneous group". Akin to Trauger (2004, p.293), I was interested in individual's own perceptions of their work, including "women who consider themselves independent operators of their farms as well as women who are partners in the farm operation". However, I also interviewed women who fell between those definitions and as Table 1 shows, came from varied backgrounds in terms of farm responsibility and ownership. This includes at least four women who are also involved in off-farm work such as working in education or design. The financial viability of farming in the UK has become unpredictable as a result of subsidy cuts and high costs so in some cases, new sources of income on and off farm are sought. Numerous studies (e.g. Gasson and Winter, 1992, Kelly and Shortall, 2002, Brandth and Haugen, 2011) have highlighted the consequences of diversification for gender relations and questioned the extent to which these activities empower women. However, these examples are of studies that share a focus on farming couples, so the inclusion of the perspectives of women farmers is timely to explore the nuances of negotiating multiple roles.

As I transcribed and made sense of the data during the ten-month fieldwork period, it was clear that data saturation was reached after twenty-two participants had been interviewed as no new analytic leads emerged. The data provide rich insights to satisfy the exploration of what it means to be a woman farmer today, as shown by the diverse sample of participants from contrasting farming types and backgrounds. Over half of the participants had grown up on a farm, but that is not to say that they did not have a period away. For example, some participants studied, travelled or participated in alternative forms of work. Ownership of a farm by their family was not necessarily synonymous with a straightforward integration into the business, but Table 1 provides an overview of the background of the sample. The complexity of ownership is overlooked here, as some participants work on their family's farm as well as having their own business or being employed elsewhere.

Table 1. Description of interviewees

Participant [5]	Age	Area	Farming type	Job title[6]	Ownership	Farm upbringing (yes/no)
Flo	Late 40s	Yorkshire	Cattle and sheep	Farmer	Partnership with husband	No
Jane	Early 30s	Norfolk	Sheep	Farmer/ shepherd ess	Rented land	No
Bryony	Late 20s	Norfolk	Arable	Farm business manager	Family farm/ contracting business	Yes
Julie	Late 30s	Norfolk	Mixed	Farm manager	Owner Family farm	Yes
Sharon	Early 40s	Yorkshire	Arable	Farmer	Managing Director	Yes

[5] The real names of participants have been replaced with pseudonyms.

[6] The way in which participants referred to their self changed throughout the interview encounter and/or they have more than one job which accounts for multiple titles.

					Family farm	
Jenny	Late 30s	Yorkshire	Pigs	Pig farmer	Director Family farm	Yes
Kate	Late 40s	Yorkshire	Mixed	Farmer/ Farm manager at agri college	Partnership with husband	No
Rachel	Early 30s	Yorkshire	Mixed	Farmer	Partner Family farm	Yes
Alice	Late 20s	Norfolk	Sheep	Sheep farmer	Family farm	Yes
Judy	Early 40s	Norfolk	Sheep	Shepherd	Self-employed	Yes
Catherine	Late 30s	Norfolk	Cattle and sheep	Stockperson	Employed	No
Danielle	Early 20s	Norfolk	Sheep	Shepherdess/farmer	Family farm + self-employed	Yes
Ellen	Late 60s	Norfolk	Sheep	Shepherdess	Family farm	Yes
Helen	Early 20s	Norfolk	Cattle	Textile designer/ farmer	Family farm	Yes
Ida	Late 40s	Norfolk	Sheep	Teaching assistant/ shepherdess	Family farm	Yes
Jackie	Late 20s	Yorkshire	Dairy and sheep	Dairy farmer	Family farm	Yes

Louise	Late 60s	Yorkshire	Arable	Nurse/ farmer's wife	Family farm	No
Mel	Early 30s	Yorkshire	Pig	Pig farmer	Director Family farm	Yes
Paula	Late 30s	Yorkshire	Mixed	Business support	Partner Family farm	Yes
Ruth	Late 50s	Yorkshire	Mixed	Farmer	Partnership with husband	Yes
Susan	Early 60s	Yorkshire	Dairy	Dairy farmer	Family farm	No
Jill	Early 60s	Norfolk	Mixed	Farmer	Family farm	Yes

3.3.3 The recruitment strategy

The fact that women farmers can be hidden economically as well as linguistically meant that accessing potential participants was not a simple matter of examining an online telephone directory. As Riley (2010) found, such resources tend to identify farm owners and may have obscured access to women farmers, especially those who rent land, are employed or who are part of a family business in which the 'public face' is attributed to a man. Therefore, to challenge gendered practices of gatekeeping which is an aim of feminist research according to Cook and Fonow (1986), it was appropriate to use an email address or mobile telephone number to directly contact the individual of interest where possible. This also set the tone for the interviews that I was interested in the person rather than the business.

As a farmer's daughter, similarly to Pini (2002), I was able to draw upon my contacts to access women who tend to be numerically and normatively hidden. This method for recruiting participants may be conceived as snowball sampling as referrals were sought and received from existing networks (Gilbert, 2008), such as my father and his farming network, as well as from the participants themselves as the fieldwork progressed. It was a delicate matter to preserve anonymity in this process as I was often asked who had already taken part and had to avoid disclosure of this information. As indicated below in Table 2, I also approached the leaders of women in farming groups based in the two

areas. They were able to send an email on my behalf to their members, inviting them to get in touch if they were interested in finding out more about participation. Similarly, I searched for people who fulfilled my sample criteria in the press, such as the Yorkshire Post and Farmer's Weekly.

The participants who were recruited from the news press tended to be those who are prominent in the public domain, hold positions within farming organisations and/or who are passionate about the newsworthiness of being a woman in farming. Therefore, if this had been the only means of recruitment, I may have overlooked women farmers who were less publicly engaged which may have reproduced some of the inequalities that I sought to address in terms of the visibility that can be afforded by farm ownership and/or family farming background. The variety of methods used, such as by reaching out to farming communities directly, sought to avoid this bias.

'Virtual snowball sampling' (Baltar and Brunar, 2012) complemented traditional means of forwarding information about the study to acquaintances by calling for participation through digital networks. Twitter tends to be used by organisations and businesses (Harris et al., 2015), including the farming and rural community, with whom a poster was shared via a tweet such as; '@FarmerGuardian [rural press] I'm looking for women farming in Norfolk or Yorkshire to take part in a research project.' The information in the poster produced for digital spaces (see Appendix A) was simplified to attract interest and if a response was received, further details were given, such as the time commitment. Similarly to traditional means, individuals were free to think about their possible involvement and decide whether to respond as I found that using social media did not force them to make a quick decision.

Table 2. Means of participant recruitment

Means of recruitment	Number of participants recruited	Who initiated contact about participation?
Recommendation from my father or his contacts	6	Researcher
Recommendation from a participant	2	Researcher
Women in farming groups	5	Participants and researcher

Appearances in the farming press	5	Researcher
Flyer circulated online	3	Participants

During recruitment I was sensitive to the rhythms of the farming calendar as I had assumed that those involved in lambing, harvest or agricultural shows would be more likely to agree to an interview which did not occur during these concentrated periods of work. Usually such basic information about working cycles of relevance would be gleaned from either their email or a gatekeeper, such as my father or a 'women in farming' group leader. Therefore, I was able to enact my 'insider status' through my initial contact with respondents. For example, I used the farming calendar to set a time scale for the interview to take place, such as 'before lambing'. By demonstrating an awareness of the farming seasons and therefore showing respect for the nature of their working lives, rapport could be established during initial contact in order to generate interest and trust. For similar reasons, all correspondences were personalised and sent individually to prospective participants.

The initial contact with those interested in taking part was negotiated via email, telephone or Twitter. However, I had assumed email as the default means to retain contact because it is part of my daily work practice, but I had not considered that for farmers it depended on the type of farm work they were involved in. For example, the mobility of outdoor labour suited communication via text, whereas those in desk-led farming positions were happy to use email. As a result, I proceeded to give them the option of their preferred means of contact. This experience shows that the relevance of diverse farming identities across a continuum of outdoor and indoor roles became embedded in recruitment methods and impacted the framing of the research relationship. For example, the email contact tended to be more formal and less intrusive than texting. Similarly, arranging meetings via telephone call, as requested by some of the participants, seemed not only to be convenient to them, but gave them the opportunity to discover what kind of person I was before agreeing to participate.

The specific locations of the four agricultural shows in Yorkshire and Norfolk observed were determined by the interviewees as venues that they frequent. As a result, the interviewees could vouch for the aims of the research in negotiation of access to the sites for observation. Getting into the field of study was negotiated with gatekeepers, namely the organiser of each agricultural show, who has the authority to grant

permission in advance for the research to take place.[7] This process involved gaining trust and showing "a commitment to the community", as identified by Johl and Renganathan (2010, p.42), such as by outlining the relative lack of knowledge about the experiences of women farmers and my farming background. It became clear in the interviews that the interviewees often felt misunderstood by those outside the farming community so were reassured by my position as a farmer's daughter to reveal their experiences. Similarly, Whatmore (1991a, p.62) notes that "it was also important to be accepted as someone who was interested in, and informed about, farming, because all the women experienced farming as a distinct lifeworld".

3.4 Data collection

3.4.1 Semi-structured interviewing

The interviews took place face to face at a location that was convenient to participants. This was appropriate for the study given that their surroundings acted as probes within the interviews to help understand women farmers' life worlds. Across the sample, the interviews were held at a variety of settings within the home and/or farm, for example, their kitchens, living rooms or offices. In some cases, they took place outside on a bench, in an office or a design studio in a farmyard. There were two instances where the interviews were conducted away from the home or farm, namely at an agricultural college and at a National Farmer's Union office, given that these can be characterised as extended farm workspaces for the women involved.

After permission was granted for the interview to commence by informed consent, a digital recording device was introduced to avoid the limitations of memory or trying to write and listen simultaneously. On average the recorded interviews lasted for one hour with some time afterwards for debriefing, recommendations of further participants and in some cases, a tour around their farm. The formality of the encounters differed depending on the setting. For example, I found that being in an office building on a farm was conducive to discussion which focused on the business and farm team rather than the individual. I specifically investigated the personal perspectives of women farmers, otherwise the data would not adequately tackle the research questions which focus on identity negotiation. Within such environments, it was clear that farmers were

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[7] The negotiation of entry to observation sites and the associated ethical issues are discussed in detail in section 3.4.4 Participant Observation and section 3.6 Ethical Considerations respectively.

working to their own time and usually use these spaces to 'do business' in a meeting rather than for conversation.

The interviews were semi-structured, as defined by Kvale (2007), which meant that I prepared topics of relevance to the research questions and questions to use if the conversation did not lead us there organically. As shown in the Table 3, the concepts of embodiment, gender, and identity concerned with the research questions were operationalised in the interview guide (see Appendix B) by encouraging the participants to explore issues related to their background, working day and identification as a farmer. In doing so, they addressed experiences of their career trajectory and family life which are shaped by their understanding of who they are in relation to interactions with others. The interview guide was piloted and showed that some participants were resistant to the idea that gender had anything to do with their lives or how they were treated. In response, the interview questions evolved as the research progressed to avoid the imposition of a feminist perspective, even where sexism was evident. The participants were not asked directly about what constituted their gender identity, but rather these constructions emerged from the interviews in their responses.

Table 3. Operationalisation of concepts in the interviews

Research questions	Interview questions
How do women farmers negotiate their identities?	How would you introduce yourself to someone who didn't know you?
How is gender made salient to farming?	What is it like to be a woman who farms?
How is farming embodied by women?	Do you think you look like a farmer?

The interview guide I prepared in advance was not a prescriptive tool because I pursued interesting lines of inquiry as they emerged to ensure that the flow and content was led by the participants. In order to "gain insight into gendered social lives" (Ramazanoglu and Holland, 2002, p.3) of women farmers and the ambivalences they face, open ended questions gave them chance to explain their stories in their own words without predetermined categories which may be insensitive to the aspects of importance in their

everyday lives (Letherby, 2003). Therefore, semi-structured interviews were appropriate to gather data on the meanings attached to, and negotiation of, gender and work identities because the flexibility allows in-depth responses that capture the multiple ways that identities are made sense of.

3.4.2 Researcher positionality

According to Ravitch and Mittenfelner Carl (2016, p.39), positionality is "the researcher's role and identity as they intersect and are in relationship to the context and setting of the research". Following this, my identities shaped by age, family background, gender and profession were made salient to the research process from the selection of the topic, relationship with the participants to data interpretation. In alignment with feminist scholars such as Hesse-Biber (2007), my experience, supported by data excerpts, reveals that the position of the researcher is a complex navigation of being simultaneously an insider and an outsider. I made various decisions as a result of my awareness of these positions, to emphasise or minimise them at different moments based on the impact on the data and the research relationship, and in retrospect having been referred to as belonging to them by participants.

As found by Oakley (1981, p.45), the interviewees wanted to know "what sort of person was I and how did I come to be interested in this subject?" This led to me sharing my interest as a farmer's daughter which Oakley (1981) advocates for reciprocity between interviewer and interviewee. I tended to emphasise my insider position in the moments that were off the record, for example, during email contact, briefing and debriefings. Yet, during the interviews I was cautious to identify with them by sharing my experiences or commenting on their responses to avoid infiltrating the data and to welcome explanation of the issues that it may have been taken for granted I understood. Therefore, as Ntseane (2009, p.302) describes, in interviews "I constantly had to switch hats and put on the outsider status" to avoid any assumptions about a shared understanding and to improve the clarity of the stories in the data. That said, in retrospect, I should have adjusted my interviewing style to suit different interviews. For example, those who were less forthcoming in their responses may have benefitted from informality whereby I revealed more about myself to put them at ease.

The presence of a recording device draws attention to an assemblage negotiated in the interviews. The extent of power symmetry possible was challenged by the recording device which drew attention to the "conversation with a purpose" (Burgess, 1984).

Participants often interacted with the recorder by asking 'can I say x' which shows the role of the recording in constructing the research data. As a result, it seems that interviewees tended not to have 'forgotten' that they were being recorded, as Seidman (2013) suggests. Interaction with the recorder distinguished 'natural' or 'private' talk against the (recorded) interview. By this I mean that upon arrival to an interviewee's home, often conversation would start about what they had been doing that day, whilst they prepared refreshments for us. It proved difficult to interrupt the conversation to set up the recorder and start the recorder, as this formality contrasted with the informal setting of the home. However, I did not record the conversations that occurred before the recorder was switched on or after it was switched off to avoid deception.

This scenario brings ethical considerations to the fore as the recording device acts as a reminder that the relationship is unlikely to continue beyond the interview to avoid the interviewee interpreting the situation as the beginning of a friendship (Kirsch, 1999). However, interviewing in participant's homes can blur the distinction between a professional and personal relationship according to Oakley (1981) because, as Rodriguez Castro (2017) identifies, typically these spaces are occupied by family and friends. The expectation of future contact with participants beyond the data collection could be deemed exploitative, but I argue that the hospitality I received may have been indicative of the rapport constructed from a shared background and the informal setting of the home. Interactions with personal affects or pets found within these spaces established personal relationships with the owners. Therefore, the ethnographic component associated with the interviews provided insight into participant's life worlds and drew attention to the situated nature of knowledge as the following discussion reveals.

In contrast to Michael's (2004, p.12) experience of the entanglement of nonhumans as a 'disastrous interview episode', the liveliness of the spaces did not disrupt data collection. I orientated to the pets at my feet by talking to them, about them and encouraging the interviewees to talk about them. It was an opportunity to elicit stories around the relevance of dogs to farming activities such as shepherding or shooting. As Michael (2004, p.10) notes, the "co(a)gents thus serve as heuristic probes", not in a counterproductive way but as a means to develop rapport with an interviewee, to encourage a willingness to speak and to gain an insight into their life world. Similarly during an interview conducted outside, lambs were present in the encounter which provided a stimulus of relevance to the ongoing discussion. As one of the aims of the

research is to understand how farming is embodied by women, interactions with livestock alongside the interviewee allowed me to become immersed in their everyday life. Dogs or lambs contributed to an 'ordinary' experience in negotiation with any tensions posed by the 'extraordinary' nature of the recording. Had these nonhuman actors been excluded from the conversation, it may have created an inauthentic environment in which participants did not feel comfortable.

On a few occasions after the interviews, participants said they found comfort in speaking to me about their achievements, ambitions and experiences in farming given that I was not part of their personal network. As shown in Ida's case below, trust in the research relationship may have been facilitated by my outsider status as a researcher which Cotterill (1992, p.596) refers to as being a 'friendly stranger'. Ida suggests that I could appreciate that her work success is due to merit because I am not acquainted with her family. As Skeggs (1994) acknowledges, it seems that participants, especially those who do not tend to have public visibility through the press such as Ida, found it rewarding to learn that their experiences are interesting to someone else. In Ida's case, this could be due to her family's initial dismissal of her interest in farming given their expectation to have a son who could follow the normative practice of patrilineal inheritance which equates a farmer with a man.

> *Ida: I think it's healthy to talk to someone like you who I've never met before because I've always been passionate about both of them [teaching assistant and farm work] rather than just doing it [farming] because I was born here and brought up here.*

As referred to in the extracts below, the purpose of the research relationship was drawn attention to by the concern of participants to 'be helpful' to me. Simultaneously, this made their position as the subject of the research salient by highlighting the provision of their experiences as data. I felt indebted to them for cooperating with the research. As a result, I always followed up the interview with an email or text to thank them again for their time.

> *Flo: I hope I've been helpful.*

> *Ellen: I hope you've gained something from it [the interview].*

In addition to the satisfaction that the participants expressed in sharing their stories with me, reciprocity was achieved by offering them insights from the emerging findings of

the research. For example, Julie and Rachel were interested to hear about how their experiences compared to those of other women I had spoken to, which is indicative of identities being made sense of in relation to others' (see Lawler, 2014). Julie orientated to the afterlife of the project and how the data could be used as case studies to inspire young girls to enter the industry and to challenge the lack of female role models in farming that she had experienced whilst growing up.

> *Julie: It'd be interesting to see if there are any patterns [with the*
> *other participants]. I get the impression that the most successful ones*
> *are the one who just get it done. I think a lot of the time you create*
> *your own barriers so if there are case studies about successful women*
> *in farming.*
>
> *Rachel: How's what I've said compared to other people?*

Two of the participants who are in their 50s – 60s indicated generational change in gender equality in farming by drawing attention to the difference between our ages, but similarity in terms of gender. Therefore, this shows that, in practice, the dichotomy of the researcher's insider or outsider status is unsettled as there are multiple facets to identity, as the literature review discusses, which may or may not be made salient at different moments.

> *Louise: Most of the farmer's wives in my generation haven't gone*
> *back to work. They've helped on the farm and things but they haven't*
> *had their own career. Now it's taken for granted that girls of your*
> *generation do.*
>
> *Ruth: There will be so many opportunities for women [after Brexit].*
> *That probably will change that 'oh I'm a farmer's wife'. I think that*
> *will give the opportunity to get rid of that stigma. It would be*
> *wonderful to be your age.*

3.4.3 Ethnographic approaches

The emphasis of this research on the relationship between identity and work is original in its nuanced exploration of how farming is embodied by women. Theory and method are interwoven for a unique approach which incorporates place-based interviewing. As a result, the situated complexities of farming culture are revealed, such as the blurred distinction between home and work, and the relationship to gender identities. In order to

achieve an understanding of the embodiment of farming, this research drew upon the principles of 'sensory' ethnography (Pink, 2009). As Pink (2009, p.2) acknowledges, there are multiple ways of experiencing and knowing about social life. The observational aspects of the interviews are sensitive to the body as a site at which context is experienced and negotiated "through our emplaced engagements with persons and things" (Pink, 2009, p.35).

Sensory research is often undertaken in urban environments, for example through sound walking methodology (Adams, et al., 2008), to explore how soundscapes affect our relationship with place. Sound walking involves moving around a space with participants whilst engaging in semi-structured interviewing about what is seen and heard during the shared sensory experience. O'Neill and Hubbard (2010, p.47) recognise that it is counterproductive to lapse into 'sedentary methods' and suggest shadowing as an alternative which allows a detailed understanding of place and practices. For example, the rhythms of farming activities and bodies coincide with temporal patterns often related to seasonal and agroecological changes (Andersson, 2017, Gill, 2013). Therefore, an affective and dynamic connection to farming was captured by referring to places and activities directly during interviewing.

In addition to sensorial elements, work is "both constitutive of, and constituted by, spatial and temporal relations" (Andersson, 2017, p.91). In a farming context, time management is part of everyday work experiences and is significant for understanding embodied identities (Andersson, 2017). Farmers are faced with flexibility, yet unpredictability of tasks, such as when animals may have to be tended to at night or weekends, which may blur the distinction of a 'working day'. Working from home is nothing new as shown by the mobility of professionals in computer-based roles who can situate themselves anywhere with an internet connection (Tietze and Musson, 2002). However, farm work is connected to a particular space, which is often also occupied as a residence. As a result of the ambiguity of home and work, farmers may face the negotiation of multiple identities, such as professional, wife and mother. Temporality may be made relevant to the identities of women in farming in other ways, as both Gill (2013) and Riley (2011) outline for the generational influence on family farms and succession management.

I had originally intended to use walking interviews by sensing and moving with farmers around their workplace to capture the ways in which they shape a sense of self in relation to the rhythm of work practices. Similar to gardening (Tilley, 2006, p. 328),

farming "involves doing rather than saying" so walking is a helpful route for understanding the lived experience of work. In alignment with the rationale of this research to study a diverse sample, the farming type and position of participants influenced the feasibility of researcher participation. For example, the initial plan was to accompany women as they worked in order to learn about their experiences through the place and probes encountered, but this did not seem appropriate due to the variety of tasks completed inside the office. Therefore, by proposing walking methods, I had unknowingly reproduced the assumption about the outdoor nature of a farmer's work that this study aims to challenge.

However, the interviews were not static as they often responded to the space we occupied as a stimulus for discussion, such as by answering an unexpected phone call or showing me their show rosettes displayed on the wall. Similarly, the home, office or yard settings of the interviews was made relevant by participants as they spoke of the interconnection of home and work life, as well as the prominence of administrative tasks respectively. As previously noted, interviewing occurred 'alongside' animals and/or objects which allowed immersion into the participants' lifescape. Convery, et al. (2005)'s notion of 'lifescape' captures the complexities of identities, emotions and social relations rooted in place that this research considers in terms of women's embodiment of farming.

According to Brewer (2000, p.10), ethnographic approaches study "naturally occurring settings or 'fields' by means of methods which capture their social meanings and ordinary activities". The in-situ interviewing I conducted can be articulated as 'natural' because the home or farm setting included the presence of pets which would not have been possible had the research been conducted virtually or in a neutral space to both parties. As a result, by sharing the everyday spaces of women farmers, discussion was elicited about our surroundings by drawing upon the likes of farmhouse and memorabilia as prompts (Riley, 2010, Rodriguez Castro, 2017). Similarly, Riley (2010) found that by interviewing (men) farmers in their homes, actors usually hidden, such as employees who moved through the encounter, could be included. This was even the case with a turkey, as shown by Rodriguez Castro's (2017) research! Embodied knowledge is performed and reflected in the organisation of the spaces occupied by farmers (Riley, 2016) along with non-human animals and objects.

3.4.4 Participant observation

Participant observation is a method for studying naturally occurring interaction at a specific time and place through the immersion of the researcher (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983). Following Angrosino's (2007) suggestion that the selection of sites should be theoretically informed, the initial rationale for collecting observational data at agricultural shows was to examine the work of women farmers in interaction with other farmers, visitors and animals. In contrast to work on farms which is often solitary (Pilgeram, 2007), these public settings could offer insights that help to understand how the identities of farmers are negotiated in relation to others. I planned to capture the activities that they engaged in to supplement the experiences reported in the interviews as a way of understanding how farming is embodied by women. However, in practice, this purpose was abandoned, due to the complexity of observing gender. Instead, the observations contributed to the ethnographic approach taken in this research to critically examine my position in relation to the participants. The final research design of in-situ interviewing and observations at agricultural shows allowed me to re-immerse myself in the farming 'lifescape' (Convery, et al., 2005) in a way that was conducive to understanding the identities of women farmers.

Agricultural shows allow farmers and associated businesses to promote education about food and farming to the public by exhibiting livestock and farming innovations. As Holloway (2004) outlines, they constitute a space in which agriculture can be reimagined from its meaning in popular discourse as an idyllic lifestyle or an unethical profession. As expressed in the interviews, especially by livestock farmers, agricultural shows are part of the sociality of farming and are treated as an extension of farm work. The investment is two-fold; both in terms of the preparation of the animals on the farm before the event and on the day. In the interviews, the participants spoke vividly about the cultural importance of the shows within their own lives, as well as for the status of their industry and community. For example, success at livestock competitions is viewed as a culmination of their hard work throughout the year (Darian-Smith, 2011) and can contribute to the performance of an identity as a 'good farmer' (Riley, 2011).

Four agricultural shows were chosen for observation on the basis of attendance by interviewees. In asking about involvement in their work activities off farm during the interviews, participants would mention agricultural shows they are involved in and/or attended annually. The Wayland Show and The Driffield Show are one day country shows, whereas The Royal Norfolk Show (RNS) and the Great Yorkshire Show (GYS)

take place over two days and three days respectively. GYS is the largest agricultural show in England (BBC, 2014) but all the shows include the following areas; country pursuits, lifestyle and food, motors, agricultural machinery, equine and livestock. For the purposes of this study, the observations focused on the two main areas in which the activities associated with livestock competitions take place. Firstly, the sheds or tents which house farmers and their livestock before and after they compete where they may be groomed and interacted with by the public. Secondly, the competition rings where the handlers and animals are called upon to be paraded and judged.

I observed intermittently between 9 -3 pm and recorded notes about the activities and actors I saw, my interactions, my feelings and the sounds and smells. I had decided to use a notebook and to type up the notes later because speaking into a dictaphone would be indiscreet. However, in practice, writing on a mobile phone was the only viable alternative for durability in torrential rain. Similarly, in the setting of an agricultural show, it is not uncommon for visitors and exhibitors to use their smartphones to take photographs. It is a normalised activity so helps to facilitate an insider status (Gorman, 2017). Hammersley and Atkinson (1983, p.2) suggest that field notes are "descriptions of social processes and their contexts" (p.145) but akin to a research diary, I incorporated reflections on my behaviour and feelings to form the start of the analytic and reflexive process in which the researcher locates their position to the data. It has been argued that the researcher's subjective experience can be incorporated in the field notes because both are theoretically interesting, in my case, to questions of identity (Emerson, Fretz and Shaw, 2001).

The observations were carried out overtly as approval was sought from gatekeepers to the setting, namely the show director, chief steward and/or livestock coordinator. I adopted a 'peripheral membership' role (Adler and Adler, 1994) as I did not participate in the activities of the group, such as by showing livestock. Unlike in the interviews whereby the participants were fully briefed and aware of my purpose, I was faced with the choice to introduce myself as a researcher to those I wanted to speak to, or to 'pretend' to be an inquisitive member of the public. This ethical dilemma of the position I adopted in the field was coupled with a concern about the extent I could 'observe' gender without probing such questions to the individuals concerned[8]. For example, I

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[8] Ethical and safety concerns, for example the nature of informed consent in a public domain, are discussed in detail in section 3.6.

could not presume that a woman was doing an activity because she was a woman, neither that any behaviour I saw that was sexist would be deemed in the same terms by the individuals involved. The following extract from my field diary shows how I grappled with these issues, which lead to the repurposing of the observations as part of my feminist commitment to reflexivity.

> *I'm watching a woman with long blonde hair muck out a trailer and carry pales of water to her sheep. She puts a farm sign up, unloads the sheep and equipment into the corrals. Later on, she changes the nappy of her little girl in front of the sheep on the grass. Then she ties plants to the wooden slats of the pens and waters them. She is wearing pink jeans and a polo top with the farm name embroidered on it. I can't say that she decorates the pen because she is a woman. There could be many reasons for her doing this task as opposed to the man she is with. (Field diary, Royal Norfolk Show, 26th June 2018)*

As outlined at the start of this chapter, my identity as a 'farmer's daughter' was mediated by my family background, university experience and the research process. Whilst living away from the countryside, I was concerned with the extent I could claim familiarity with the participant's lives. Therefore, observations at agricultural shows allowed me to re-introduce myself to farming as a relative stranger. For example, I became aware that my experience of agricultural shows had been shaped by moving around spaces occupied by arable farmers, such as the stalls of machinery dealers or grain merchants. This contrasts with the activities of livestock farmers which can revolve around showing their livestock in competitions. My relative unfamiliarity with livestock farming, in which some of the interview participants are involved in, and the fact that there does not seem to be a clearly defined space that arable farmers occupy at agricultural shows led to observations around the livestock corrals and rings.

The extract from my field diary below shows how my lack of tacit knowledge about livestock farming emerged in my interactions with the animals at the shows, as shown by my insensitivity towards a sheep being prepared for showing. In her research with women in the countryside of Columbia, Rodriguez Castro (2017, p.304) highlights that her "embodied experiences unveil the heterogeneity of the countryside as a space in which human and non-human actors influence the research process". For example, she suggests that her urban background was made visible by a clumsy encounter with an unfamiliar animal which resonates with my experience with the sheep. The significance

of non-human actors was brought to the fore during engagement with the agricultural shows and highlighted the contrast between my identity as a non-farmer and the woman's position as a livestock farmer.

> *In between showing her sheep, I watch a woman groom a sheep on a table. Its head is clamped so it doesn't move. I see others stroking the sheep and I do the same but am promptly told off for doing so. She says: 'Please don't dig your nails in until they're shown'. This positions me as an outsider and I am keen to point out that I am a farmer's daughter but I know that the extent of my knowledge lies in the arable sector and I feel embarrassed. (Field diary, Royal Norfolk Show, 27th June 2018)*

The conviviality between farmers in these environments was striking, in contrast to my anonymity, as in most cases farmers travel to multiple shows across the country and build a network who they know by name. The interaction depicted above shifted my position to a novice member of the public which added to the feeling that my research activities were an imposition. Similarly, the physical barriers imposed by the cattle sheds reinforced my position as an outsider. Despite having permission from the shows' directors and livestock coordinators, I felt uncomfortable when faced with the prospect of explaining myself to security guards to gain entry. Therefore, I observed from behind the barrier, rather than engaging with the actors and immersing myself in their activities. In contrast to the supportive role of interviewing alongside pets in the participant's homes, the cattle sheds could be physically intimidating due to the size and the noise of the animals.

3.5 Data analysis

3.5.1 Transcription

My experience of transcription was to treat it as part of the active process of analysis, as suggested by scholars such as Kvale (1996) and Bird (2005), in which I started making notes about any interesting quotations or issues and why they had caught my attention. For example, references made by respondents to themselves or others as a 'tomboy' resonated with questions of gender identity negotiation that was relevant to follow up in future interviews and analysis. Akin to the interviews, the transcripts were shaped by an interpretive epistemology which acknowledges that the contextual character of the data, the researcher and participants are co-constructed (Kvale, 1996). As Lapadat and

Lindsay (1999, p.70) note, "language meanings and processes, which are situated in time and place and always negotiated or emergent, evade such neat description". For this reason, field notes from the interviews were added to each transcript to capture the texture of the encounter as an aide-memoire during coding.

I repeatedly played the audio data from the interviews, took notes and transcribed the recordings using Microsoft Word. One of the first decisions I made was about capturing non-verbal characteristics, such as laughter, to illustrate the 'liveness' of the encounter which can represent emotion or changing meaning (Bazeley, 2013). The inclusion in transcription of interruptions such as phone calls, background noise of animals, children, washing machines, as well as show and tell of objects documented the ethnographic elements that helped me make sense of the conversations. However, I chose to 'tidy up' the data by adding punctuation, for example to improve the clarity of incomplete sentences or lengthy reported speech. McLellan, MacQueen and Neidig (2003) recognise that this can be a delicate task to ensure the meaning and emphasis accurately represent what was said in the encounter.

Following Kvale's (2007) recommendation, prompt transcription after each interview allowed accurate recording of contextual aspects and reflection on my interviewing style. For example, I considered how gender could emerge from discussions, rather than targeting questions on the topic which may have been leading towards a particular viewpoint, such as femininity as a norm for women and not a farmer, or relied on a mutual understanding of gender or femininity as concepts which they may not have considered before. The openness of questions, such as about what they thought a farmer looks like and how they relate to this image, led to insights of relevance to the research questions, for example, where interviewees classed themselves as a 'girl' who is not 'girly'. I chose to transcribe the interviews in full, including tangents, because it gave an indication of how I could improve my interviewing technique in subsequent sessions. Secondly, this avoided doing an injustice to my participants by disregarding data on the basis of its initial irrelevance to my research aims, when I felt privileged that they shared experiences with me, such as of ill health or relationship breakdown, which they viewed as important to the wider fabric of their lives.

3.5.2 Thematic analysis

My approach to data analysis resonates with Schiellerup's (2008, p.164) suggestion that it encompasses the "interpretation of experiences encountered in the course of the

research". This highlights that searching for meaning across the data is not a distinct phase, but part of an ongoing process developed from the beginning of the fieldwork. Similar to the experience of Schiellerup (2008), I found that analysis did not only occur at my desk, especially given the significance of the project to my personal life, but also through conversations with friends, family and colleagues. For example, talking to my father about the position of women at agricultural events that he attended and making comparisons to the ways in which my participants described themselves prompted making sense of the data which Schiellerup (2008, p.165) aptly refers to as 'interpretative moments'. Therefore, I identify with Lewins and Silver's (2007, p.165) suggestion that analysis is an iterative and reflexive process that entails "becoming aware of what is interesting and significant" to satisfy the research questions.

The approach I have drawn upon is Braun and Clarke's (2006, 2013) thematic analysis. They emphasise the importance of familiarisation with the data as an initial activity. The process of repeated listening during transcription acted as a preliminary form of analysis. Patterns were noted to follow up later, such as women farmers' understanding their position as 'role reversal' given that they subvert the norm of a farmer being a man. Following transcription, I used the NVivo 11 software in order to store and retrieve the data in a manageable way. I imported the interview transcripts from Microsoft Word into NVivo and read the individual interviews one by one ready to code them based on emerging lines of inquiry.

My first round of coding was descriptive; in other words, segments of text were marked where topics reoccur to organise the data into meaningful groups and to find links between them (Braun and Clarke, 2006). This included coding some terms used by participants themselves such as 'male-dominated', which is known as 'in vivo coding' (Strauss, 1987), because it preserved the language of the participants as evoked by their lived experiences. The next step involved identifying the theoretical connections and relevance to the research questions; these were documented as memos. According to Saldana (2012, p. 42), memos are a "reflection on the deeper and complex meaning" of codes. For example, the code named 'being a good stocksperson', as shown in Appendix C, was associated with the memo: 'Relationships with livestock are symbolic of competency because nurturing skills are derived from being a woman'.

Thematic analysis was conducted by an iterative process of creating codes, memos and themes as outlined above. The codes were reorganised to reduce repetition, in response to Braun and Clarke's (2006) suggestion that they should be internally coherent and

externally discrete. This was aided by NVivo as codes could be merged together when they covered similar content, for example I cut and pasted 'feminism' into 'gender invisibility' because the data alluded to the same idea and improved the clarity of the meaning. NVivo collates codes so that it is easy to view which participant/s it applies to and 'coding stripes' provided a visual reference for sections of the data which are labelled as significant. Finally, codes were organised into themes, then reviewed and refined as part of the active process of searching for meaning.

The appropriateness of using Computer Aided Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS) as a tool is debated amongst qualitative researchers (Gilbert, 2002, Bazeley and Jackson, 2013) who reiterate that the incorporation of technology is not a substitute for the interpretative skills of the researcher. It can be argued that the embodied closeness of eye balling and hand coding is more engaging, so the nuances of the data are appreciated (Saldana, 2012). As a result, I used a combination of on-screen and off-screen methods to prevent any detail being missed. For example, it was helpful to approach the analysis of a very lengthy response to an interview question by highlighting key areas of the data by hand on paper before returning to NVivo to input the codes. Similarly, I manually cut out and moved around sections of my writing and the data to reorganise my analytic narrative.

As stated by Braun and Clarke (2013), ethical practice includes ensuring that the interpretation of the data represents the participants fairly. For this reason, computer aided data analysis software enhances the process by creating an audit trail which can be used to make visible the rationale for analytic claims as outlined in this section (Fielding, Silver and Bulloch, 2017). The themes developed as a result of the analysis are the basis for the following chapters in this thesis which are each organised into sections that reflect the coding of the data.

The considerations for ethics and power that underpin feminist epistemology can be extended to analysis in terms of the researcher's role in the interpretation of the data. Scholars such as Maynard (2004) and Cook and Fonow (1986) recognise that it seems contradictory to harness women's words, whilst simultaneously making power relations visible if the women may not have articulated their experiences on such feminist terms. To address this in the analysis, I make the ways in which participants view themselves apparent alongside the assumptions that may be reproduced.

3.5.3 Developing an argument

The conceptual boundaries were developed whilst working with the data as an inductive process. For example, it was necessary to distinguish between terminology (such as marking, malleability and maintenance of the body) to clarify the nuances of participants' experiences and to draw attention to the concepts which I established as a result of in vivo coding of the data, or the existing ones I identified as relevant. Part of the rationale of the project is to explore issues of gender identity beyond the tendency for urban centric portrayals and therefore it is apt that Becker (1998, p.109) notes that "since concepts are ways of summarizing data, it's important that they be adapted to the data you're going to summarize". With regards to my research, this was applicable to the handling of 'feminism' as a code, given that it seemed to be understood in ways that were not easily applied to their lives. This supports the idea that rurality may warrant one of multiple feminisms (Little, 2014) beyond the universal treatment in public discourse, such as that purported by #MeToo.

Becker (1998) notes that operationalising terms and clarifying theoretical tools is part of the conceptual work that resides in analysis. This resonates with the fact that Braun and Clarke (2006) acknowledge 'producing the report' within their stages of thematic analysis. I formulated ideas as I wrote and spoke to colleagues, friends and respondents which illustrates the iterative process beyond the impression that 'writing up' is the passive expression of analysis that is already complete (Braun and Clarke, 2006). It seems that this work can never be 'finished', akin to Mills (1959) recognition that the sociological imagination is a craft and that inflexibility can inhibit the mindset of a sociologist. As I 'wrote through' the data (Schiellerup, 2008, p.166), I reorganised and refined interpretations whilst immersing myself in their messiness as part of the trajectory of the analysis.

Doing the analysis included decisions about the selection and arrangement of data excerpts used to evidence themes. Following the method of Braun and Clarke (2006, p.10), thematic analysis does not warrant a set number of data to be presented or a number of instances of a phenomenon to be considered as a theme, as long as "it captures something important in relation to the overall research question". The significance of an issue therefore did not correspond to its numerical popularity, but the validity and complexity it offered in characterising the lives of some of the participants.

In addition to identifying patterns, thematic analysis also allows contradictions within and across interviews to be explored. This was appropriate for this research as a way of understanding the nuances of identity construction. At some points in the thesis I have included the question that individuals responded to with the data excepts because it provides a sense of the trajectory of the conversation at a given moment that may have prompted the emergence of tensions within the articulation of identities.

3.6 Ethical considerations

Ethical approval was granted for this research by the University of York's Economics, Law, Management, Politics and Sociology (ELMPS) Ethics Committee based on adherence to British Sociological Association (2017) guidelines. As noted by Guillemin and Gillam (2004), given the unpredictability of the fieldwork process, acting on ethical issues as they arose throughout the research was an ongoing commitment to protect the wellbeing of the participants and the researcher.

3.6.1 Informed consent

I sent an information sheet (see Appendix D) to potential participants via email so they could make an informed choice about whether to take part in the research. The information sheet outlined the expectations of participation and was written in a way that a layperson could understand what they would be agreeing to, as recommended by Silverman (2010). For example, I summarised the aim of the interviews by stating that I was interested in "exploring women's experiences of working in farming". Following receipt of the information sheet and prior to the recording of an interview, a briefing gave participants the opportunity to ask further questions, to clarify the nature of their involvement and the use of the data. In the consent form (see Appendix E), participants were notified that participation was voluntary, so they could withdraw at any time during the interview without providing reason. Permission for the words of participants to be quoted in publications, reports, web pages, and other research outputs formed part of the consent, as well as, agreement for the data to be archived at the UK Data Archive and used by other researchers who agree to maintain confidentiality.

On one occasion, I arrived at a farm and interviewed someone different to who I was expecting because the original participant had to deal with an emergency with her cattle. This instance shows the contingent nature of farm work and the relevance of ongoing consideration for ethics throughout the research. I ensured that the alternative participant met the criteria of the sample, was sufficiently informed and consented to the

research to the same extent as those who had been 'recruited'. Israel and Hay (2006) recognise that introducing formal consent forms into the interaction can be disruptive, so I dealt with the consent forms in a way that did not obscure rapport by drawing a comparison to the bureaucracy in farm work. However, this was negotiated on a case by case basis as some participants were more familiar with the process than others, such as an interviewee who had taught medical ethics. This differed to those who required me to operationalise the activities detailed in the consent form. The careful articulation of the research requirements and their integration within the encounter eased any discrepancies in communication that may have emerged due to my academic position.

On the same terms as Colosi (2010), the decision to use an ethnographic approach was based on making sense of the space in which individuals work and the meanings they attach to their role in different arenas. However, ethical issues emerge regarding informed consent when observing settings in which a wide range of people are present and whom it would be considered disruptive to approach (Bryman, 2008). For example, Colosi (2010) made her researcher identity known to dancers and staff, but not customers. Similarly, Atkinson (1997) alerted doctors, but not their patients. Therefore, the openness of the research may be viewed on a continuum between overt and covert in recognition that the setting can be accessed by the public and permission has been granted by a gatekeeper, yet it may be difficult to alert everyone in the vicinity that research is taking place (O'Reilly, 2009). Immersion in the field drew attention to the ambiguous meaning of public space, which Hammersley and Atkinson (1983) recognise as an ethical issue. The areas of preparation for showing livestock at an agricultural show may be defined as public because "no process of negotiation is required" for entry (p.56) but it is not taken for granted that "appropriate activity" in this space includes social research.

Overt participant observation is defined by Dixon, Singleton and Straits (2015, p.260) as when the "researcher is made known to others". For example, gatekeepers in charge of the setting were contacted in advance with an information sheet (See Appendix F) and to ask for permission to conduct the observations. However, given that agricultural shows are open to all, informed consent was not gained from everyone in attendance. In order to guard against claims of deception, I initially planned to display posters at agricultural shows for the duration of the observation to alert the public of researcher presence. However, in the pilot studies it became clear that the agricultural show organisers were concerned that posters would cause distraction and confusion to

visitors, so they decided not to display them. In two cases I accompanied an individual who I had interviewed so I could be introduced to the arena directly to make my research intentions known.

3.6.2 Avoidance of harm

The potential risks to the interviewer and interviewee during the fieldwork process were managed in order to prevent harm. Harm may be construed as social and emotional discomfort (Israel and Hay, 2006). To mitigate such concerns, as part of the consent process, participants were briefed that they may decline questions, take a break or withdraw from the study at any time. The interview guide was organised in such a way that questions at the start were general to make the respondent feel comfortable, before referring to more specific events and experiences as the interview progressed (Mann, 2016). Similarly, interviewees were protected from harm by last questions which were broad enough so they were not emotionally heavy and to prevent any sentiments of abandonment after the interview. However, the openness of questions meant that the interviews could become sensitive at any point, as acknowledged by Israel and Hay (2006). For example, although sensitive issues such as mental health were not probed in the interviews, they arose as important in farmers' lives.

According to Carroll (2012), consideration for emotional wellbeing must be extended to the protection of the researcher. As I conducted interviews during the period in which #MeToo[9] was prominent, some of the participants used the movement as a lens to understand their lives. On occasion, it prompted defensiveness about gender and hostility towards the perceived research agenda, as shown by the suggestion that only speaking to women reproduces unwanted segregation. Therefore, I encountered views I disagreed with and I found myself avoiding confrontation by "presenting with an absence of emotion despite intense emotion being felt" (Carroll, 2012, p. 549). In addition to Hochschild's (1983) theory of emotional labour shaping understandings of gendered work with livestock, this shows the relevance to my own expression management which was achieved by the cathartic process of keeping a research diary.

The interviews were conducted in the remote locations of participant's homes and/or farms. The physical risks of isolation and poor telephone signal, drawn attention to by

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[9] The #MeToo Movement started on social media in October 2017 after allegations of sexual assault against American film producer Harvey Weinstein. It became a means to share instances of sexual harassment in order to increase the visibility of the issue.

Chiswell and Wheeler (2016) in their study with farmers, were mitigated by scheduling the interviews for daylight hours and by letting a family member about the times of the interviews in advance. My wellbeing was also promoted by fulfilling a reflective diary, receiving support from colleagues and limiting the number of interviews conducted in a week, as recommended by King and Horrocks (2010).

3.6.3 Anonymity

As advised by the professional guidelines of the British Sociological Association (2017) and the legal requirements of the Data Protection Act 2018, anonymity was facilitated in this research by using pseudonyms. Identifying details, such as the real names of participants, family members or places, were removed to help avoid information being traced to individuals and used against them (Walford, 2005). However, anonymity was not guaranteed due to the interconnectedness of the farming community and public profile of some of the participants. For example, it became apparent in the process of snowball sampling through word of mouth that some participants in Norfolk and Yorkshire knew each other and acted as gatekeepers for further interviewees. In addition to this, despite the interviews occurring on a one to one basis, sometimes family members 'passed through' the encounter. Therefore, similarly to Yodanis' (2000, p. 27) reflection, "in such a small setting with a very strong information (i.e., gossip) network, it was impossible to conceal who had been interviewed".

Silverman (2010) acknowledges that anonymity is assumed by governing institutions to encourage participants to talk freely; a dynamic which is desirable for validity. However, in my research diary, I noted that some of the interviewees treated pseudonyms with suspicion which resonates with Robinson's (2020) characterisation of negotiating anonymity as an 'ethically important moment'. For example, one woman suggested that she did not wish to discuss her political views about Brexit with me which revealed an assumption that the discussion was to cover topics of a sensitive nature. Some of the participants regularly appear in the press where it is the norm to attach their name to their story for a sense of ownership. Contrastively, anonymity is the default according to professional standards of liability (British Sociological Association, 2017) and adhering to these guidelines may have made participants feel invisible. This draws attention to the power held by the university as a gatekeeper that mediates the relationship between interviewer and interviewee.

In future studies, it may be appropriate to allow women to choose the pseudonyms themselves. Consequently, this would avoid using pseudonyms which are not equivalent to a real name in terms of their cultural significance, as discussed by Grinyer (2002). Similarly, it may empower participants to have their experiences acknowledged, rather than protected. Making participants feel invisible through a replacement name is a risk, as Guenther (2009, p. 413) recognises, "because names are powerful, choosing to use-or to alter- them is also an act of power". My reflection on participant responses to anonymity has highlighted that the extent to which anonymity is afforded and how it is put into practice should be negotiated on an individual basis in consideration for the group being studied and the aims of the research.

3.6.4 Confidentiality and data storage

In association with anonymity and the avoidance of harm, confidentiality was afforded to participants to prevent unauthorised access to the data. The data comprises audio files, transcripts and field notes which are saved securely on the University's managed network with a second copy on an encrypted hard drive in a locked cabinet. As a result, in recognition of the Data Protection Act 2018, access to data is restricted to the researcher and my academic supervisors to maintain privacy. Similarly, the contact details of participants and log of replacement names against real names are kept separately from the research data, password protected and will be destroyed once the project is complete. As they are not anonymised, paper copies of the signed consent forms are kept in a locked cabinet which is separate from the data stored electronically.

3.7 Summary

At the start of this chapter, an account of the researcher's positioning contextualised interest in the topic and outlined how it informed the feminist means of inquiry. The discussion outlined the ways that my identities as both a farmer's daughter and a feminist researcher were pertinent. Examples of this were shown when referring to snowball sampling for participant recruitment and by choosing to conduct semi-structured interviewing and observations of an ethnographic nature. The process of analysing the data highlighted the inductive approach taken. From the initial stages of transcription, interpretations were crafted which allowed refining of the interview design. As a result, the methods in this study were adapted to manage the specificities of forging relationships with farmers during fieldwork and to enhance the validity of the data. In summary, this chapter has shown that the research was a journey of

improvisation by responding to issues that emerged in the field, including ethical dilemmas.

Chapter 4 Navigating gender identities

This chapter documents the ways in which women farmers make sense of their work and the bearing this has on their gender identities. Identity may be performed in relation to other's perceptions, for example, what is considered the norm for a woman and/or farmer. Goffman (1969) refers to the expectations that may shape perceptions of a certain role as cultural scripts. However, such scripts may be ideologically bound and reinforced, as well as disrupted in interaction. For example, a key finding of this chapter is that the patriarchal expectations in farming, which frequently render women who farm invisible, can constrain their presentation of themselves as farmers. This resonates with Woodward's (2004) acknowledgment that a disjuncture can exist between how one sees their self (as a farmer in one's own right) and how others see them (as a woman first and foremost). Therefore, I will explore the extent to which structurally embedded inequalities, as expressed through interactions with men in the field, may constrain the participants' visibility as farmers or create opportunities to exercise agency by responding in a way that enables them to claim the identities of a woman and a farmer.

Following the legacy of farming as a male-dominated field, as addressed in Chapter 2, the extent to which women farmers exercise agency in dealing with marginalising encounters will be considered in relation to the negotiation of their gender identity. Gender differences do not necessarily equate to inequalities in participants' accounts, as Chapter 5 will show that women farmers may view their skills as of equal or higher value than men's. However, this chapter shows how and why identities are negotiated to achieve difference or similarity to the dominant farming identity and culture as masculine. It will be shown that in some cases gender is 'undone' by the participants muting the salience of gender to their working lives by adopting a meritocratic viewpoint which asserts neutrality. This is demonstrated through the ways that the women draw on examples of women's farming groups and female agricultural leaders to make sense of feminist goals with relevance to their own lives in the context of individualisation.

Individualisation is a condition of contemporary life, according to theorists such as Giddens (1991) and Bauman (2000), which is embedded within discussions of identity because it refers to the agency to shape one's narrative. Therefore, in the context of this study, it would suggest that individuals have responsibility to construct their identities. This chapter provides some support for the conceptual premise that identity is both the product of and producer of social relations (Skeggs, 1997) because the identities of

women farmers can be conferred by others and made sense of in relation to culturally engrained gender inequalities in farming. Alongside this, to a certain extent, the ideological and material inequalities found in farming can be worked around to resist women's invisibility by using strategies such as working harder or differently to men. I argue that the structural basis to the assumptions that women can't and don't farm is left intact, despite the ability to transcend a stigmatised identity on a personal level.

4.1 Experiencing (in)visibility

Many of the participants referred to farming as being 'male-dominated' and their experiences show how this manifests numerically and normatively. By this, I mean that the predominance of men is made evident in the interactions between women and men farmers. Men are viewed as articulating traditional roles on farms, which are based on women's limitations as cognitively and physically gendered beings. Therefore, women's experiences indicate that gender is seen by others to predetermine success in farming. The expression of gender inequality that was most prominent in women farmer's accounts of their working lives was being made to feel invisible or patronised due to the ideological construction of a farmer as a man.

The choice of terminology used by participants to describe the character of their experiences, such as 'assumptions' and 'sexist', recognises marginalisation on the basis of gender. As a result, they tend to interpret these instances as an example of power being enacted at a structural level which is engrained in farming culture, rather than as an individual enactment by male farmers in interaction. This is an expression of patriarchy or the unequal relation between men and women as sustained through the reproduction of ideological apparatus which glorifies men (Smith, 1987). For example, respondents spoke of men's assumptions that women farmers 'don't' farm which relegates them to a peripheral status as a helper or defines them as someone who 'can't' farm due to a lack of tacit knowledge, as shown by the comments below from Rachel and Ida respectively.

> *Rachel: There's this assumption that you don't do anything because the title of a farmer doesn't fit with a woman.*

> *Ida: Sometimes now you can get certain men who will assume that you're a woman so you can't do it basically, which is a sexist view.*

These two types of prejudice of 'don't' and 'can't' can then be mapped on to two types of discrimination faced by participants in the study; being ignored or being patronised respectively, which contribute to barriers to belonging in a 'male-dominated' domain.

4.1.1 Being ignored

Seven women recalled being treated as invisible by men in a professional environment on the basis that a woman is not assumed to be a farmer. For example, questions were directed at a man instead of Flo and Jane who were mistaken for a 'farmer's wife'. A farmer's wife is considered to be a traditional role where women participate at the periphery of the business by maintaining a house, family and acting as reserve labour on the farm (Sachs, 1996).

> *Flo: When they [farmers at the auction market] ask anything about the farm, they direct them at my husband. They might glance at me. If I wandered off to get a coffee, they'd never notice I was missing.*

> *Jane: There's always some funny buggers at market who won't speak to you because you're a girl or at work when I sell shotgun cartridges and they want to speak to a chap. I say that I ran a gun shop for 3 years so how can I help? They stop dead. You get the odd one like that which I find entertaining.*

Both Flo and Jane explain their experience of being ignored by men at a livestock market but they react in different ways. Flo finds it 'dismissive' of them to assume that she is a 'plus one'[10]. On the other hand, Jane refers to her treatment as 'entertaining' and goes on to contrast it to 'people [women farmers] who have had some horrendous negative experiences', which suggests that she does not view her experience as problematic. A reason for this may be that the reaction of outsiders acts as a reminder that being a woman in farming is unusual which provides a challenge to rebel from the norm, as similarly found for women engineers (Faulkner, 2009).

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[10] A plus-one denotes a person's guest at a social function. In the case of Flo it suggests inferiority on two accounts; firstly that her presence is for leisure rather than business purposes, and secondly that she has joined her husband as a helper rather than a farmer.

The extracts below from Sharon and Catherine show that women farmers' abilities to provide an answer to a farming question is undermined by men's failure to include them in professional conversations.

Sharon: When I go to Cereals[11] I go with a few of my friends who are blokes and they [other men] honestly think I'm a wife. Then one of them [a male friend] will go 'by the way she farms 1500 acres and has all the new kit'. Sometimes I'll go on a stand and no-one comes and talks to me. They ignore me. All the farmers you are speaking to aren't going to buy anything, but I'm interested. I was looking to buy something. They treat you like you're stupid. Having done engineering, I know quite a lot about the science of it and they'll bluff me off with rubbish.

Catherine: I've had times where people have come onto the farm from outside to do a job and I've been stood with one of the lads who've been there to help me and they direct all their questions to the male person. They've had to go 'actually she's in charge so you better talk to her'. They're like 'what?' It completely throws them sometimes. Some people can't get their head around it. Sometimes they glaze over me and don't consider I'm the one in charge.

The preference to speak to a man or husband presumes that a woman is married and/or that she is inferior to a male decision maker. Catherine and Sharon are dismissed on the basis that they are a wife who is accompanying their husband and who lacks sufficient knowledge to participate in business matters. Therefore, these interactions reproduce the discourse of the family farm which entails ownership and control by men in the heteronormative portrayal of a farmer and farmer's wife. Within this context of structural inequality, male control is maintained by being head of the business and family so it is assumed that women have entered farming via marriage, rather than as an independent career choice (Brandth, 2002a).

In all these examples, the women are made to feel invisible by outsiders, farmers who they are not well acquainted with. However, in Catherine's and Sharon's cases, it is

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[11] Cereals is an annual event held in the UK for the arable industry whereby innovations in technology, such as new machinery, are showcased to farmers.

their male peers who are supportive of them by indicating to others that they are farmers in their own right and should not be excluded. Sharon views herself as capable to farm, as shown by the comment about her background in engineering. As Faulkner (2009) found in her study of women engineers, credentials had to be re-established when meeting a new client to be taken seriously, which is achieved by Catherine and Sharon's male colleagues. It is therefore important to note that these men have built a relationship with Catherine and Sharon as individuals, so do not resort to judgements on the basis of their gender presentation as an indication of their legitimacy as a farmer.

It must be recognised that in the majority of cases sexist attitudes came from men, as opposed to other women, and occurred in a public setting rather than on the farm. For example, marginalising interactions experienced at a meeting or a market were characterised by participants as a result of making contact with individuals they may not have met before. This is further evidenced by Jackie who contrasts men farmers with whom she is familiar and treat her as equally competent, with those at a meeting who were suspicious of her legitimacy and imposed gendered expectations. This shows that marginalising encounters were prevalent when meeting someone for the first time and in this example her pregnancy may highlight the visibility of her gender.

> *Jackie: The lads that I know will talk to me about farming just as they would their mates. I think it's very much generational. A lot of their fathers of my Dad's age at auction that know my role will talk to me like any farmer. I know that there was a meeting with our milk supplier and they'd joined two groups together and there was a lot more farmers there who I didn't know and I got sent when I was eight and a bit months pregnant as I wouldn't have been doing anything else and a farmer went home and told his neighbour that there was a lass there who was pregnant – 'I don't know what she'd come for' but he'd worked out who it had been as he knew my husband and was telling him about it.*

In this excerpt, Jackie indicates that social networks acted as a resource which afforded her legitimacy at the meeting. Her characterisation shifted from being out of place to being emplaced as part of the community of farmers in the area due to her connection to a known family member. Therefore, this may be an example of 'social capital' (Bourdieu, 1986) which resulted in Jackie's position as a woman being neutralised. Bourdieu (1986, p. 58) recognises that social capital can also manifest in a negative way

as the 'old boys club' can limit the access of women to support so that privilege of the dominant group is reproduced. However, in this case, credibility is inherited through affiliation with an established farming network so patriarchy in the form of knowing the right men can benefit women farmers.

4.1.2 A sense of injustice

As discussed so far, invisibility of participants as farmers can be challenged by knowing men who support women. However, it can be experienced as a form of ideological determinism which conflates one's gender and ability to be a farmer. For example, Kate views the assumptions made about women's limited roles on farms as socially constructed when she says; 'they've nothing written down saying that a woman can't be a farm manager. The cycle's got to be broken….' From this, it is clear that she is aware that the meanings attached to women farmers like herself are not fixed but are reproduced in interaction and thus can be challenged. The relevance of this potential for progress is that she works with students at an agricultural college, including her daughter, for whom she hopes the industry will become more welcoming. Similarly, in the quotes below, Kate questions the basis of preconceived ideas about a gendered division of labour in farming by inverting the assumption that women should work with animals and men with machinery.

> *Kate: I walked past somebody who was above me telling a room full of apprenticeship students that men have obviously got more brute force. I said 'I don't think so'. You've now instilled in them that females are weak and pathetic so can't do the job. That really irritates me. We're not in the dark ages. Members of staff should know better. It frightens me. Why shouldn't a woman drive a tractor or a man calve a cow?'*

Here Kate recalled an occasion when she witnessed the socialisation of traditional gender roles in farming when a male colleague in a senior job role told agriculture students that women are physically weaker than men. In an educational environment, this 'knowledge' transfer may be a powerful source of authority which Kate identified as causing prejudice and, as outlined below, can develop into discriminatory practice towards women in farming.

> *Kate: They think automatically that a farm manager should be a man. 'Are you the farm secretary?' Would a male farm secretary be any*

different? Can a man not be a secretary? It's people's perceptions. I wish I could see inside people's heads to see why they think men and women can only do certain jobs. I drive big tractors. A lot of people, male and female, do a double take – 'is that really a female?' When you get out of the tractor they're looking at you, looking at the tractor, looking at you. It's like driving a car – forward, backward and gears.

In the extract above, Kate shows that she was not trusted to drive a tractor and makes a comparison to a car as a gender neutral vehicle to demonstrate the potential of women if they are freed from prejudice on the basis of their physicality. Acknowledgment of the interrelationship between machinery and masculinity in farming is noted by scholars such as Saugeres (2002b) who maintains that agricultural technology is used to reinforce patriarchal ideologies. Firstly, this may be expressed in terms of strength, as Brandth (1995) found that tractor advertisements emphasised the precision, control and size of machinery which were deemed exclusionary to women. In addition to the association between machinery and strength, Leckie (1996) recognises that technical and mechanical knowledge is categorised as the province of men and is bound by gendered transfer of information during childhood which may produce and reproduce the gendered division of tasks in farming.

Kate also reflects on the opposite scenario to a woman undertaking tractor work by considering a man in the 'woman's job' of secretarial work which highlights that there is no logical basis for gendered occupations given that they are based on the essentialist categories of male and female. From the treatment that she receives, she discerns that men articulate gender in terms of strength, focusing on seemingly fixed notions of the body to inform assumptions about the division of labour. Similarly, Danielle compares her experiences to men's to show that women in farming are disadvantaged. She is aware of the way in which people are attributed a social identity as belonging to a particular group, as shown by one women's behaviour being deemed as representative of all women.

Danielle: There has been a particular person, I won't mention any name, that hasn't given females the best reputation in the Norfolk farming industry and I have had a comment referred to me that since they've employed her and she's messed them about they wouldn't have another woman back there. That annoyed me slightly because

you wouldn't say you're not going to employ another man because
that one didn't do the job properly. It wasn't aimed at me at all but it
slightly irritated me. Just because she messed him about doesn't mean
we're all going to.

By acknowledging that "you wouldn't say you're not going to employ another man because that one didn't do the job properly", Danielle orientates to this situation as representing gender superiority in favour of men. Similarly, Jill turns the assumption that she helps her husband on its head to show that it is thoughtless to presume that a woman must be a farmer's wife and that a farmer is a man.

Jill: We went to this meeting and our friend met a friend of his at the
door who was a dairy farmer too. We'd actually bought some of his
cows a few years before that and we got introduced and when I got
introduced to him he said; 'oh do you help your husband on the
farm?' I said: 'sometimes after I've milked the cows and fed the
calves, I have a little bit of time to do tractor work. Do you help your
wife on the farm?' His face! He walked off!

The fact that Jill was asked if she helped her husband on the farm suggested that she was not primarily responsible. By her response, it is shown that this is interpreted as referring to her position as being equivalent to the temporary assistance expected of a farmer's wife. Therefore, the assumption that Jill 'helps' her husband is deemed derogatory since it presumes a role as an assistant rather than as a professional. Flo's comment below indicates that women's control of the domestic space has been viewed in relation to the default conception of a farmer as a man. This reproduces the prevailing discourse that women 'help' on the farm as a secondary activity (Sachs, 1996), yet farming men are not viewed to 'help' in the home, despite both partners working full-time in farming in the cases of Judy and Alice.

Flo: Back in the day, farmer's wives did do things around the home. I
think they've always been well-respected individuals. Their primary
role might be to run the home and cook but they've always done other
things as well like helping outside.

4.1.3 Being patronised

Another form of marginalisation which was common across the sample of women farmers was being patronised by men who did not take their capability to farm

seriously. This manifested in interaction by men explaining information to them which they already knew or passing off ideas instigated by their female colleagues as their own. In popular discourse this is referred to as 'mansplaining' and according to Judy and Catherine this was underpinned by the idea that the men felt undermined by women's involvement in decision-making and leadership practices on the farm. A lack of tacit knowledge, despite having both undertaken a formal agricultural education and Judy having grown up on a farm, is assumed.

> *Judy: The farmers didn't like it if I had an idea. Basically, if we were thinking about how to get this flock here, that flock there, I'd say let's do such and such and the farmer would go completely silent. Literally he would say exactly what I said but like I hadn't said it. You'd almost want to laugh. They were not going to be told how to run their farm so they had to say it themselves. They wouldn't say it was a good idea. It wouldn't happen.*

> *Catherine: I did have a sales rep that wouldn't deal with me. He wouldn't talk to me. He didn't like discussing things with me because he couldn't get his head around it until I got the job here as head stockperson and I was the only person that could be dealt with. He would try to tell me stuff that he thought I didn't know. I told him I didn't what to deal with him if he'll be funny like that.*

Following these experiences where women were disregarded as farmers due to the visibility of their gender, Sharon and Jane recalled that they received support and praise. Therefore, they did not view offers of help and advice from men as condescending towards their ability to farm. This may be linked to the denial of sexism as explored in section 4.3, because the novelty value of being one of few women in farming is seen as an advantage in securing cooperation at work. For example, Jane compared her working relationships with men to those with other women in the industry, the latter of which she viewed as uncooperative.

> *Jane: It's interesting actually that you tend to find that men seem to be more helpful. Women tend to be more guarded about things. There's a lot of competition around here for grazing. There's a tiny pocket of it. There must be something in our genetic make-up that men are less competitive and women seem to hold back a bit. I have a*

friend up the road that I lamb for […] You can always tell there's an
element of jealousy. There's a world of difference in our customers.
There's no need for competition as they're such different products.
There's an element of rivalry even though we're friends. I never
experience that with my male friends. They've always said to me that
if I get stuck, they'll lend me a tractor or a truck. You don't tend to
find that with women. You ask if you really need a favour and then if
you're lucky you might get a hand.

It must be noted that Jane and Sharon's experiences are mixed, as shown by being ignored by men as discussed earlier and viewing men as helpful here. This difference can be discerned from the extent that they are already acquainted with the individuals concerned, for example men who are met for the first time tend to be judgemental about their farming knowledge on the basis of their visibility as women. As a result, this shows that it is over-simplistic to claim that women farmers are victims of oppression because they do not have a fixed or singular orientation to their gender identity as a barrier, in response to the complexity of interactions that constitute farming activities. This has implications for the women's opportunities for resistance in interactions where gender is made salient and the ways in which they make sense of attempts to challenge gender inequalities in farming, such as women-only farming groups, in the context of their own identities, experiences and conceptions of gender.

On the other hand, Sharon suggests below that the novelty of being a woman who attends farming meetings can offer familiarity. Therefore, in contrast to her disapproval of the marginalising interactions she faces in some encounters with men, she does not deem not being introduced to people as the outcome of her invisibility as a farmer which undermines her capacity to be included, but her visibility as a woman.

Sharon: When I first started, I went to every meeting going and I was
the only woman. It was good because I never had to queue for the loo!
It was amazing. Everyone knows my name because I'm the only
woman. That's why I never get introduced to people.

The novelty of being part of a minority of women led to special treatment in business deals according to Sharon. She suggested that she was the recipient of gender-differentiated interaction, as shown by men's lack of toughness towards her, which is deemed to converge to a style more appropriate for a 'girl'. Similarly, the encounter

between Jackie and visitors to the farm draws attention to the fact that she is perceived to be working in an unconventional role for a woman or as Faulkner (2009, p.172) professes, a professional role which is gender 'inauthentic'. Despite the impression that this concept refers to a biological essentialism, Faulkner (2009, p.172) uses it to highlight "mismatches between such stereotyped images and actual people and practices" in the context of the outsider status of women in engineering.

> *Sharon: Sometimes the men really look after you. Loads of them like having a woman around and I've benefitted. They're not very tough about negotiating with a woman as they think they can't be mean. I think there's more benefits of being a woman than negatives. Sometimes the machinery dealers are nice and like talking to a girl.*

> *Jackie: If you've got people bringing straw and you have to unload it you get 'you're handy' or 'I'm surprised you can drive that'…*

> *You take it as a compliment that you can drive the machine but you think you probably wouldn't have said that if I was a man.*

Jackie recognises the remarks about her capability as praise, despite the connotation that she is good at her work for a woman who is expected to be incompetent. These examples show that gender is made salient to farming activities, but unlike Sharon and Jane, Jackie defines it is unfair. For example, they would be unlikely to remark on capability if it was a man as it is taken for granted that he can drive a tractor, given the allegiance between masculinity and machinery. Similarly to these participants, women engineers justify the support they receive as chivalrous (Miller, 2002). Visibility as a woman ostensibly leads to being treated 'well', but also corresponds to being treated unequally in a paternal way by men based on the idea that women need to be protected.

According to Miller (2002), when women in non-traditional roles are viewed as novelties, it may be condescending or perhaps advantageous, given that it is a means of becoming memorable. The fact that their identity as a woman is noticed and subjected to preferential treatment, may indicate tokenism. Tokenism is the inclusion of members of minority groups, which in this instance refers to women working in an occupation which is gender typed numerically and normatively as male-dominated. Kanter (1977) notes polarisation as one typical response which may lead the acceptance of an outsider status, and in the case of Sharon this occurs because being visible as a woman is positive yet being invisible as a farmer is negative.

I have discussed interviewees' accounts of interactions with men and women which tended to highlight women farmers' status' as women and undermine their positions as farmers. Gender was made salient to farming activities through encounters which subjected women to invisibility, patronising remarks and special treatment. I have shown from the data that assumptions about a lack of farming knowledge or strength were made on the basis that woman have inferior biology. For example, their strength has been criticised in terms of not being able to drive machinery properly and derogatory assumptions are made about their cognitive capacity such as an inability to understand technical information. However, there was some difference between interactions, as the participants drew attention to the support of men who know them, in contrast to antagonism from female peers. The characterisation of gender relations is contextually contingent, for example once a reputation is established as a farmer, inclusivity may follow from men, as explained further in the next section which considers strategies used by women to deal with unequal encounters.

4.2 Confronting (in)visibility

Following the ways in which invisibility can manifest in the everyday lives of women farmers, how it is confronted by them will be examined in relation to the significance for their identities. The participants used strategies which enabled their success as a woman and farmer, such as building belonging, which I argue is underpinned by a form of emotional labour. Gendered expectations are navigated, as the women themselves reported, by working harder than men and working differently to men. Working harder is conceptualised by the women as extra determination and resilience, whereas working differently refers to the alternative practices they enforce compared to the default within a masculine tradition. These three strategies for navigating gender show the interrelationship between body, identity and society as women are empowered by their agency in responding to marginalising encounters.

4.2.1 Building belonging

The participants tended to distance themselves from bringing gender to the fore in discussion with men in order to negotiate an insider status within farming. Kate was the only person to describe confronting men in interaction about their degrading remarks, for example when they patronised her role as a farm manager by assuming that she was a secretary. 'Telling them to go away' was a means to incite change, which is of relevance to her work with agricultural students, especially raising the aspirations of

young women. However, she does not situate herself as a victim of prejudice, as shown by 'it doesn't upset me anymore'. This toughness may be associated with being a 'good farmer' because it suggests that the pressures of farming, such as the unpredictability of weather, disease and finances, can be navigated with ease (Little, 2002, Riley, 2016). The definition of a 'good farmer' is thus also engrained in notions of hegemonic masculinity and situated in opposition to feminine stereotypes which cast women as emotional, and to marginalised forms of rural masculinity which situate the homosexual body as a threat to toughness (Little, 2006). However, the fact that Kate has become hardened to sexism, as shown by 'anymore', suggests that she is used to prejudice as a habitual practice engrained in farming culture.

> *Kate: I don't want any female having to deal with what I did growing up in an industry very male-dominated. If anyone is rude or sexist towards me, I tell them that's pathetic or laugh at them. It depends what mood I'm in. It doesn't upset me anymore. I tell them to go away.*

Similarly, Judy, Jane and Bryony explain that they are 'used to' marginalising interactions which suggests that the dominance of men in farming is a normalised, embedded and mundane occurrence in their lives. In Judy's case, as shown below, she is 'used to' not having her ideas listened to by male colleagues but avoids conflict in order to maintain solidarity within her team. Therefore, this may be deemed assimilation according to literature about women in masculine occupations, such as engineering. For example, Jorgenson (2002, p.351) notes that "efforts to gain legitimacy" involves "disqualifying their femininity" to show their colleagues that they were receptive to the work culture which privileges hegemonic ideals of masculinity. Therefore, the dismissal of women farmers by men is not disrupted to foster belonging in the field.

> *Judy: Maybe they felt threatened. I don't know. It still happens today. I'm so used to it now. You get on with it. Never be reactive is what I've learnt. You don't want bad feeling because you have to work with these people and you rely on them. I've always just done it by my work quality really. They realise you can do the job and they let you get on with it. If you're constantly arguing and making a battle they would lose faith in you I think.*

Jane and Bryony are 'used to' sexism because they have both previously worked in roles within the agriculture industry which they also consider to be male-dominated. As a result, Jane justifies patronising remarks which presume that she is incapable of driving farm machinery by interpreting them as a joke and differentiating herself from women who take it seriously. Below Jane suggests that the "joking comments" are 'based on some kind of fact' which may condone the treatment of women as inferior under a binary gender system. They do not confront insults in conversation but conform to the masculine camaraderie by participating in gender differentiated language. On the other hand, they both seek to emphasise their femininity to compensate. Jane considers wearing 'brighter pink' and similarly Bryony aims to 'enforce a bit of change' through her presence as a woman in a role traditionally considered as 'men's work'. Therefore, the negotiation of gender identity is shown to be complex because sameness and difference to men is reinforced at different moments. Both Jane and Bryony present their identities as the outcome of a choice, irrespective of the tradition in farming which tends to confine women to the role of a farmer's wife.

> *Jane: They have a good laugh about it! Bloody woman drivers! They think it's hilarious. The same is true at market. You always get joking comments about women trying to reverse trailers to unload sheep. The trouble is that usually they're based on some kind of fact. I've always worked in male-dominated industries so I'm used to it. I take it as a joke and that it's meant as one. From what I've seen, a lot of women get uptight about it. I think fine, I'll wear brighter pink next time and make a real point about it! I think it depends very much on your personality. I'll go up to market and stand at the burger van and have a burger and coffee for breakfast for a chat with the fellas and won't think anything of it. Every now and again we'll have a laugh and banter. The language will get worse and they'll say 'sorry ladies present', then I'll laugh and say I've heard worse, so they'll carry on.*

> *Bryony: I don't mind being the only female or only one of a few but it is something I do remark on and I am aware of it, but it doesn't bother me. Where I worked previously, they were quite a mixed gender and age office but the board was very much middle aged men and male-dominated and a lot of them older. I play rugby as well so I'm quite used to being in environments that tend to be male-*

> *dominated anyway and trying to enforce a bit of change. Some people*
> *probably don't like it but I don't mind it.*

A comment by Jill aptly summarises the strategies of Judy, Jane, and Bryony as she states that "confronting the male is not good" because it will politicise the encounter. By this I mean that it is assumed that any criticism expressed to colleagues will draw attention to one's identity as a woman and position oneself as a victim. For example, Judy mentioned that an outcome of confrontation could be that male colleagues would "lose faith in you" and Jill says that "it won't get you anywhere". In a similar way to Jane, humour is used as a defence mechanism by Jill. Despite recognition by the participants that humour is often at their expense, joining in may create solidarity in terms of legitimating an identity as a farmer. Therefore, this may help the women's success individually, whilst reproducing gender within farming more broadly. By this I mean that building belonging is achieved by ignoring or joining in with banter which resonates with convergence to the dominant culture of rural masculinity.

> *Jill: Confronting the male is not good. Women have to think around*
> *the issue and not head on as it won't get you anywhere. If you've got*
> *a sense of humour, and a lot of people know I've got a sense of*
> *humour and will wind you up. I love a good wind up! I think that's*
> *served me well over the years to be honest.*

> *Alice: My friend has come with me before when she's shearing and*
> *she gets a bit horrified with the comments. You can't take offence. If*
> *you show that it gets to you, they do it more.*

> *Bryony: Occasionally if the guys are having a laugh and a joke about*
> *something a bit crude I'll laugh with them and try not to be offended.*

A number of studies examined the status of humour within the workplace and its contribution to belonging. Nielson (2011, p. 511) found that prisoners and prison staff "use humour to craft themselves collectively" as the reciprocity of understanding jokes is a pathway to power symmetry. Similarly, Sanders (2004) draws attention to the use of humour to manage an impression of the self as belonging to a team. However, both scholars recognise that inclusivity is created even when jokes may be inappropriate towards women. As a result, it seems that many of the responses of participants to marginalisation addressed so far may be explained as a form of emotional labour. Hochschild's (2012, p. 50) concept of emotional labour refers to the "customs designed

to manage the human feeling that threatens order". By this she means that emotions are not fixed but can be shaped to suit the conventions of an interaction at a specific time and place. Emotional labour is alluded to in the following excerpts because the participants describe the mediation of feelings through active verb forms, as similarly outlined by Hochschild (2012). Feeling is changed from the outside in by displays such as laughter which are used to avoid *showing* offence, despite *feeling* offended by humour which is inappropriate towards women. Alice, for example, expresses that you cannot "show that it gets to you" and Bryony "tries not to be offended" as this emotion work is a strategy to avoid provocation. Therefore, the stigma of being irrational, as negatively associated with femininity, or being an outsider in a traditionally masculine domain can be escaped. These results seem to be consistent with those of Hochschild (2012) in terms of adhering to conventions of emotion to maintain a professional image.

Unlike the emotion work of flight attendants in Hochschild's (2012) study which is based on an expectation to maintain a positive demeanour to increase sales, the evidence in a farming context suggests that it is based on the expectation for solidarity between colleagues. The management of emotion within farming culture is informally endorsed by the prospect of disapproval from colleagues for non-participation (similarly found in the study of women farmers by Pini (2005b), as opposed to the formal training of workers in the customer service sector (Hochschild, 1990). In the examples used in this chapter, emotion work is enacted to distance the self away from being noticed as a woman in specific interactional settings. However, Chapter 5 of this thesis will show how women legitimate their identity as a farmer by emphasising that livestock care and staff management demands emotional labour that women deem they are most competent at. Therefore, this research shows that emotion work is interrelated with identity practices in complex ways because it serves to create a positive self-concept for these women but does not seem to disengage them from traditional gender ideologies. As Hochschild (2012, p. 167) aptly points out, through emotional labour "women accommodate [men], then, but not passively".

4.2.2 Working harder than men

In addition to building belonging, a common response to unequal encounters was for participants to evidence their capability to farm. Displays of effort or knowledge were used to challenge the idea that women cannot be farmers, as shown by the reservations of male colleagues about their cognitive abilities or strength of character. Gender relations are drawn attention to by Sharon, Jill and Catherine who suggest that women

have to be exceptional in farming to reach equivalency to the average man in terms of the perception of their ability. For example, Sharon views that the time investment in working longer hours has enabled her survival and has avoided mistakes which would be explained by others as a result of her gender. Therefore, it seems that the interactions with men outlined in the previous section reinforced understanding that a farmer should be a man which leads to negotiations by women to 'prove' them otherwise.

The extracts below indicate that Sharon, Catherine and Jill perceived that they were subject to the expectation that they would fail at being farmers. As Powell and Graves, (2003) identified with women in leadership roles, failure as a leader meant being a good woman and vice versa due to the idea that being a woman and leader are incompatible. Failure seems to be judged through interactions with men which (re)create the liminality of women, positioning them as out of place in farming. To this extent, in Pini's (2005a) study of leaders in Australian agriculture, one of the participants refers to herself as part of 'the third sex' due to the complex navigation of difference which may not resonate with binary constructions of gender identity. In the cases of the women outlined below, gender expectations act as a constraint which provokes self-reflection and extra effort as a means to overcome them.

> *Sharon: To survive as a woman in agriculture, you have to do a bit better than men. At harvest, I'd always be working more than everyone else to make sure everything is running smoothly. Even though they treat me well, they'd be more judgemental if I didn't get more stuff done than a man.*

> *Catherine: You've got that extra hard work to do because you've got to prove you know what you're doing. You have to be a bit firm sometimes and stand your ground. I think it is harder for women in farming because a lot of people just don't think you can do it.*

> *Jill: It really annoyed me because if I was doing something I would have to be one hundred and ten percent. A man could get away with ninety percent. It was their attitude towards you. They were expecting you to fail and were totally surprised when you succeeded, you know.*

Kate and Rachel explain below that showing that "you know what you're talking about" and "throwing out information" were their initial reactions to challenge the idea that being a woman and a farmer are incompatible identities. However, usually participants

considered that their efforts to work harder than men achieved recognition due to them being known personally, rather than gender being their most salient identity. As Faulkner (2009) found was the case for women in engineering, having to prove their capability to be taken seriously and earn respect resonates with an initiation process. Similarly, gender is made salient to farming activities as some of the participants in this study reveal occasions whereby one must perform better than men to transcend the stereotypical view of women that they are usually at the periphery in farming. For Kate and Rachel, earning respect is an active process achieved by drawing attention to their technical abilities. Accordingly, to construct a professional identity as a farmer they must make a special effort to transcend perceived failure, given the normative categorisation of a farmer as a man.

> *Kate: In my career I've been very lucky in what I've done. I think it's because I'm very determined. If anyone says I can't do it, it's like red rag to a bull and I'll prove to them that I can do it. I just think that no-one has the right to judge me just because I'm female. People are very helpful – it's never been a problem. If you're talking to farmers, whether you're male or female, and you know what you're talking about, it's fine. If you go in and spout a load of rubbish they don't want to listen to you.*

> *Rachel: I suppose you have to gain respect really. Initially I did talk a lot to gain people's respect and throw out information so I come across that I know what I'm on about but as time goes on I realise that I don't have to do that as much. I think you do have to put yourself out there. I think women feel a lot more comfortable to say I'm a farmer's wife as people know what that job is rather than saying I'm a farmer and I run this business.*

4.2.3 Working differently to men

The previous section outlined the ways in which women negotiate their gender and work identities in response to the doubts of others about their cognitive abilities. I turn now to their negotiation of physical capabilities by creating alternative methods for doing farming. The self is constructed by interviewees in terms of difference to men by drawing upon the brain versus brawn dichotomy which situates women's strengths in their intellect, rather than their physique.

Alice explains that her height can make handling livestock difficult, so she uses a halter to mediate the disadvantage of her body to achieve the task successfully. She outlines that her capability is recognised by those within the farming industry but not those who she has not encountered before who view her as a 'girl' first and foremost so are unconvinced by her manual labour, such as fencing and sheep work. However, Alice finds 'ways around things' by adapting traditional practices of managing sheep that are interpreted as more suited to men.

> *Alice: You can find ways around things. I'm short so it doesn't help but you can just find a way. If you've got a ewe you want to milk out and you can't lean against the front end and milk out of the back end so just grab a halter and make life easy for yourself. Other than the people in farming who understand I can do it, people outside think I drive around and look at sheep. I do all the fencing and sheep work but they see me as a girl.*

Similarly to Alice, Julie says that "you have to be smarter about what you do" as a woman to accommodate the body. She does not talk directly in the first person about herself like Alice, but suggests that the approach of women in general differs to men's, as shown by being thoughtful and patient. The outcome is that the atmosphere of the work environment is improved which suggests that success is not only achieved for one's sense of self but the whole team.

> *Julie: Because men have physical strength, they use physical strength. If you don't have physical strength, you have to be smarter about what you do. In particular, a classic example is managing down a cow. She will struggle, she will go through a shock phase. If you're a woman, you won't drag her during the shock phase as she weighs a tonne. You'll wait. Whether it's labour or injuries. A guy says he's strong enough to do it and will do it. Because you have to think about things differently, those things can make the workplace a safer, more relaxed place to be.*

It seems that height and weight are viewed as a proxy for the strength of a farmer and also their animals. Like Julie, Judy refers to the discrepancy between the weight of the cattle that she works with and the size of herself. However, a different strategy is used compared to Julie and Alice who consider being "quicker and faster" as the common

approach of a man. Care is alluded to, as their ways of doing farming are framed as more considerate than men's with the welfare of animals in mind. This idea will be returned to in Chapter 5 as the professionalisation and care involved in farm work is seen to offer opportunities for women.

> *Judy: I feel very proud that I'm very capable in this job. I might not be able to carry 4 hurdles to the trailer like the lads can but I'll take my 2! I'll never forget that we were having a competition and I was the only girl. It was a silly competition about who can turn over the rams. There were all these massive rams and the lads were busting a gut trying to turn them over. I was probably about eight and a half stone so I wasn't very big and I'd learnt that I can't do that. It doesn't matter how much technique you have, a ram has got no neck to twist it round but I learnt a technique and they hadn't seen what I did. I said I'd have a go and they thought it'd be really funny. I went up to the ram and grabbed its front leg and it didn't like it so pulled against me. As it pulled against me, it reared up and I walked backwards and it fell on its arse. I did it quicker and faster than any of them.*

Catherine and Jill use machinery, rather than manual strength to complete tasks on the farm such as heavy lifting. The strategies used by the women farmers for problem-solving or "using your brains a bit better [than men]" as Jill refers to, are qualities deemed to be worthy of women's legitimacy in farming. The implications of this are that gender is made salient through the comparisons made to men's bodies and that women are empowered by this difference.

> *Catherine: It's not all about strength with cows - it's about how you handle them. They do know what you want them to do. They're not generally nasty. The sheep side of it is more as there's more manual handling and you've got to physically do it but there's always ways around things – that's why I find people say you can't do that. There's a way around it because we have machinery. You just have to do things in a different way. Rather than being the strongest person, you can find other ways to do it. You have machinery to help you on that side of things.*

Jill: OK, we're not as strong but there are times that I've hung gates and things and people have said 'how on earth did you lift that?' I didn't lift it. I used the equipment I've got to do it for me. If you think about it, you don't need to be as strong. You've just got to use your brains a bit better.

From the accounts above, it can be seen that women do not allow their bodies to disadvantage their success at work, as they find ways to be "smarter" when working with livestock or using machinery. As a result, these women farmers show ingenuity and determination in adapting established farm practices. Felski (1989, p.224) argues that "existing structures are reproduced by human agents who modify and change these structures to differing degrees even as they are shaped by them". This way of theorising the potential for empowerment seems to be demonstrated in women farmer's experiences as their navigation of normative ways of doing farming provides new opportunities for creativity which enable them to assert their position in farming. Not only do these processes encourage inclusivity of women in the industry, but they suggest that they benefit the whole farming community for introducing a different perspective to what might be considered to be a universal men's standpoint (Smith, 1987). It has been shown that a man's body is normative in farming, through its representation as universal and natural. This indicates "a view of the world from a place women do not occupy" (Smith, 1987, p. 19), whereby the presence of women, as they interact with these dominant understandings, offers opportunities to shift gender relations.

These findings help to understand women as active agents in their identity construction, as the inequalities that manifest in encounters with men are confronted by strategies such as building belonging, working harder than men and working differently to men. As a result, the salience of gender to farming activities is demonstrated by the nature and extent that these strategies for success as a woman and farmer manifest in farming activities. The way that farming is done by these women allows them to overcome the barriers posed by a masculine discourse which situates them outside of the expectation that to be a good farmer is to be a man. However, often their means to be accommodated in farming does little to challenge gender differences because they are always cast in relation to men's. A gendered hierarchy is reinforced by the shift from only one way of doing farming, namely the men's way, to two ways which are viewed as oppositional.

4.3 Asserting gender equality

The salience of gender differences is muted by some of the participants who view men and women as equal in farming and suggest that they, as women, have not been victims of unfair treatment. Accordingly, participants tended to view success as individually determined which may justify their peer's actions. This meritocratic standpoint is similarly evident in the way that women in science and technology fields, such as engineering, understand gender (in)equality within their working lives (Cech and Blair-Loy, 2010, Seron, et al., 2018). The data drawn upon in this section illustrate how the participants orientate themselves to gender issues, as shown by their understanding of feminism, sexism, and equality, often in relation to topical moments, such as farming elections and the #MeToo movement[12].

The fact that this research investigates the experiences of women in farming was equated with an agenda to talk about difference to men by some of the participants. For example, Rachel seemed defensive about gender issues as shown during the preamble to the interview where she expressed concern about isolating women as subjects of research. This draws attention to the intersection between theory and method in terms of how the way that the project is introduced in the information sheet, email contact and beyond can impact the relationship between the interviewer and interviewee (King and Horrocks, 2010). As a result, during the course of the interview I fostered "a supportive attitude toward the interviewee's life or work", as suggested by Rubin and Rubin (1995, p.129), to mitigate any further tensions. I found myself contextualising the rationale of the project in subsequent interviews as exploratory, to confirm that it was not driven by a hypothesis about inequality, but to understand their experiences and identities in the context of what it means to be a farmer today.

In the field of care work, another gender coded occupation in which enquiry from gender studies is prevalent, Husso and Hirvonen (2012, p.40) found that "gender can be a sensitive topic for individuals under the dominating discourse of gender equality" because it tends to situate one group as victims. However, it seems that the #MeToo movement reintroduced gender politics to the public imagination and gave participants (who were interviewed around the time of its launch) the vocabulary to understand their

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[12] The #MeToo movement is a form of feminist activism which aims to raise awareness of sexual harassment through social media. Predominantly, it surfaced in 2017 in response to allegations against a male film producer.

selves within a narrative of feminism. By this, I mean that some of the participants, such as Bryony and Jenny, introduced #MeToo into the conversation as a point of reference to gender inequality.

> *Jenny: I find it annoying all this #metoo stuff in the news when it's somebody touching somebody's knee. If something bothers you, say so at the time. If someone goes too far with me, I'd stop it there and then. There's nothing wrong with having a bit of banter with the lads as long as it doesn't go too far. If that makes them happier, then fine.*

> *Bryony: Women who progress to higher levels within business whatever sector they work in often adopt one of two roles; overtly feminine and play to their sexuality and maybe that's one of the reasons there's all the stories in the media at the moment about the film industry. Or you have those that take on the lad role and manly gender role a bit more…*

> *…Occasionally if the guys are having a laugh and a joke about something a bit crude I'll laugh with them and try not to be offended. I wouldn't say I'm necessarily one or the other but play a bit of each role depending on the situation because you are trying to build a rapport with people so you can't make them feel like they can't be themselves around you.*

In the instance above, Jenny dismisses inappropriate touching by men and the reluctance of women to speak out as an example of inequality by suggesting that she would react at the time. Instead, she frames inequality as a problem created by women, for example through displays of their (hetero) sexuality and suggests that it would be oversensitive to associate this kind of display with the intention of assault. Similarly, Bryony asserts that women's agency can be manipulative, as shown by "play to their sexuality", to the extent that accusations of assault are unwarranted. Therefore, she justifies the actions of perpetrators exposed as a result of the #MeToo movement in contrast to its aims to create solidarity amongst those affected by gender inequality (Mendes, Ringrose and Keller, 2018). An explanation for her reluctance to admit being discriminated against may be the nature of everyday sexism, as defined by Rambo Ronai, Zsembik and Feagin (2013), which tends to go unnoticed and is normalised, for example by disguising sexualised remarks as 'banter'. In particular, as she has

previously worked in industries and participated in sports which she considers to be male-dominated, she may be desensitised to experiences of crude humour.

According to Jenny and Bryony, 'banter' could be misconstrued as demeaning towards women, which creates the impression of inequality, but it is the outcome of women's agency to participate. As a result, banter may facilitate the negotiation of gendered positions as part of one of two strategies which are illustrated in the above stories. Jenny recalls joining in with the camaraderie by conforming to the masculine practices of humour, whereas Bryony emphasises her femininity by going along with heterosexual innuendo. Both approaches use humour as a 'refuge' to achieve solidarity with male colleagues in a similar way to Watt's (2007) study of civil engineers. The acceptance of banter contributes to a sense of belonging and resists the construction of an outsider status, as shown by the expectation for women to be 'prim and proper' (Pini, 2005a). Bryony's adoption of a masculine identity at some moments and feminine at other moments resonates with women agricultural leaders in Pini's (2005a) research who described themselves as the 'third sex' because they navigated across the thresholds. Therefore, self-discipline was not necessary for men who did not occupy a liminal positioning given the patriarchal culture of farming whereby "men's standpoint is universal" (Smith, 1987, p. 19).

Following this individualised portrayal of identity negotiation and its muting effects on gender, both Jenny and Mel state that being a woman is not a 'problem' to be overcome. For this reason, as the following extract shows, Jenny is sceptical of the perpetuation of gender differences through research which focuses on women only. The feminist idea that "gender… is a key organizer of social life" (Sprague, 2005, p.3) seems less important to these participants as they reject the victim stereotype and claim to be empowered by the idea that success is at their own will.

> *Mel: I think there's a lot of women in agriculture so I don't think it's…I don't know if women get paid differently. I don't see it as a problem. I think some women make it a problem for themselves. [Interviewer: What do you mean by that?] Being pathetic I suppose and not just getting on with it and thinking people have an issue when they don't at all. You've got to prove yourself if you're a man or a woman, it doesn't matter. Be good at it and just get on with it [the job].*

> *Jenny: I've spoken to a lot of people doing this kind of thing [making women in farming visible] and I keep saying that being a woman isn't a problem or a challenge.*

> *Susan: It's always been an equal opportunities type occupation. I don't think there was any discrimination because you were female. If you could do the job, you could get the job.*

It could be argued that participants such as Bryony and Jenny draw upon a post-feminist discourse which highlights that the solution for inequality lies with the agency of the individual to change their behaviours (Ozkazanc-Pan, 2018). Similarly, Rhoton (2011) found that women scientists displaced blame away from the structural constraints of a masculine culture and towards a meritocratic understanding of emancipation at the will of individuals (women themselves). Martin (2003) suggested that women in engineering had "limited consciousness about practicing gender", but in contrast Bryony draws attention to her decision-making practices with regards to the presentation of the self by navigating between the positions of "overtly feminine" and "manly". Despite Susan and Mel also muting the structural basis of gender inequalities, they seem attuned to a liberal feminist approach of gender mainstreaming which situates progress in the form of equal access by bringing gender into focus of policy and practices (Walby, 1997).

It has been argued that it is taken for granted that the subject of feminism is urban (Brandth and Haugen, 1997, Brandth, 2002b). For example, equality principles within the workplace tend to assume application to corporations, as shown by the implementation of quotas or equal pay. However, feminism may not be relatable for women farmers due to the synergy of domestic and economic space which often characterises the particularities of rural life. For example, equal pay cannot be operationalised if farmers do not take a salary, as shown by Julie who mentioned that "I certainly work at a vastly subsidised rate because of a sense of obligation or duty to the family." As a result, gendered barriers inherent to farming may be difficult to articulate and lead to the meritocratic understanding of success advocated by Jenny, Mel and Susan that if you work hard, you will achieve (Cech and Blair-Loy, 2010).

In the above extract, gender inequality is understood by Susan in terms of biased recruitment and Mel suggests that the numerical prevalence of women in farming is an indication of gender equality. She explains that pay is a potentially unequal structure but

that generally individuals are responsible for reproducing the 'problem' of women in farming. By this, she alludes to women 'being pathetic' and drawing attention to themselves; interactions which support stereotypical gender differences that cast women as the other in farming. As a result, agency is emphasised at the expense of structure and the salience of gender at work is rejected as she explains "you've got to prove yourself if you're a man or a woman". This is an example of 'undoing gender', according to Deutsch's (2007) adoption of Butler's (2004) original concept, because an essentialist view of differences is challenged in a way which mutes the salience of gender altogether. For example, Mel outlines below that initially she was bypassed in business interactions for the reason that she was new to the role. This highlights that gender can become a 'background identity', as referred to by Ridgeway and Correll (2004), because different aspects of identity become more or less salient at a given moment.

> *Mel: I mean because I've been back home for quite a long time now…initially when I started doing it [farming] they would always want to speak to Dad which I think is the same in any business. I don't think it's anything to do with me being female. Now I'm the person they go to.*

> *Judy: I don't see myself as a woman in farming. I just see the job that I do.*

> *Rachel: It doesn't matter who you are. Your personalities are more important than what gender you are.*

In the example from Judy above, one's professional role takes precedence and Rachel emphasises that the personality or unique character of an individual informs work practices. It is no coincidence that the defence of sexism in the industry from Judy, Mel and Rachel appears in response to the last question of the interview, as shown in Appendix B, which does not prompt a particular line of enquiry. The participants tend to use this moment within the encounter to clarify their opinion about the status of sexism in the farming industry and as the last opportunity to introduce a discourse of progress. If inequality is constructed by women, it is not deemed a 'problem' to them. Yet it is assumed that gender inequality is instigated by men, which they do not admit to experiencing in the last moments of the discussion even though it may have been alluded to earlier. For this reason, it seems that they are empowered by the agency

exercised in their responses to sexist encounters so that they do not accept gender as a stigmatised status.

These instances of participants relating to gender as a 'problem', despite arguing that it is constructed by women themselves, resonates with Goffman's (1990) understanding of stigma. It seems that women farmers are in receipt of stigma in interactions from male colleagues or acquaintances, but they do not always allow it to define their sense of self. For example, Rachel clarifies in the quote above that her gender is not salient to her work role and later draws upon examples of women leaders in agriculture to evidence that personality is more important. However, this is not to say that patriarchal practices are not present in interactions because elsewhere in the interviews marginalising experiences are recalled on the basis of being a woman, as shown by the previous section in this chapter. Rachel earned respect through displays of knowledge to destabilise the assumption that a farmer was a man.

Stigma according to Goffman (1990, p.13) is the result of an individual being categorised by "an attribute that is deeply discredited". In this case, womanhood can 'taint' an individual because their perceived attributes, such as being weak as confronted by Kate below, are not deemed appropriate for farming. A woman in farming poses a danger to the withheld position of men as 'normals', as shown by the sexist remarks of male colleagues which normalise the idea that men are better suited to farming.

> *Kate: I walked past somebody who was above me telling a room full of apprenticeship students that men have obviously got more brute force [than women]. I said 'I don't think so'.*

> *Jill: Farms are obviously getting larger and there's so much more paperwork and involvement with government things and what you can and can't do so I think there's a role there for somebody as women are probably more organised in an office than men…My son said 'I'll set up GPS for you so you're straight', so you have to get used to modern technology. But with that sort of modern technology there's no stopping girls from coming into the industry. You don't have to have brawn, as long as you've got a brain.*

Most of the participants, including Jill, told me that the increase in women farming in their own right is positive for the future of the industry as their ability and character are

appropriate for the move towards business practices, such as paperwork and people management on farms. Therefore, it may be argued that the participants are "insulated by his [sic] alienation, protected by identity beliefs of his [sic] own" (Goffman, 1990, p.17). Stereotypical expectations are reproduced through a loss of status in certain interactions but individuals do not accept this "disadvantage as a basis for organizing life" (p.32). However, in the previous section it was outlined that in her earlier career, she was discriminated against and expected to fail. Jill's experiences do not represent a contradiction, but illuminate the shift in attitudes that she has witnessed within the industry as she fails to see experiences as gendered now, using the example of the first female NFU president.

In the interviews, I asked participants about networks they joined, such as 'Ladies in Pigs', to capture a sense of their interactions off farm. In the extract below, Jenny suggests that groups specifically for women in farming reproduce a division between men and women which she equates to sexism for excluding men. However, she believes that the division is warranted in the case of motherhood which she poses is an experience unique to women. Here we can see that it is assumed that motherhood is the only 'true' difference between men and women, perhaps because this arises from a biological capacity to give birth. This serves to justify her own attendance at these groups as she is concerned with the tensions between being a 'good' (single) mother and farmer.

> *Jenny: As a rule, I'm not really into women-only groups. I think if men were to do that then they'd get slated for being sexist. Having said that, the differences between when you've got children, it's good to be able to discuss those issues with people who understand. Those are the only things. I think feminism creates the problem. I think women feel that they probably have to prove themselves more than men in their work.*

> *Rachel: I don't really like putting women on a pedestal. You can't do it on your own. It has to be a mix. It's too extreme to say women in farming or men in farming. It has to be a mix in the team.*

Both Rachel and Jenny frame feminism as counterproductive for causing, as opposed to challenging, inequality between men and women. This was also seen earlier on in this section where Bryony and Jenny draw upon the #MeToo movement as an example of

the perpetuation of the treatment of women as victims. Similarly, Rachel associates women-only groups with segregation and the superiority of women; preferential treatment which she views as unfair as exclusion. Women-only groups are an unwelcome outcome of feminism according to them, unlike the motive to set up such groups, as expressed by Julie who set up a women in agriculture group because "there are specific issues that women face more of and I think having a support network address that [helps]." The issues that Julie refers to are intimidation from men physically dominating a meeting space and working career ambitions around motherhood which, in line with Jenny's argument, may be associated with the negotiation of 'innate' characteristics of body size and pregnancy. However, it seems that these issues are dealt with by the women themselves, rather than introducing men into the conversation to tackle hegemony at the source, which might explain their reticence of women-only groups for creating double standards.

Grace and Lennie (1998, p.352) found that rural women adopted an ambivalent feminist discourse which highlighted "the contradiction between the need for women to affirm traditional identities embedded in patriarchal rural cultures and their desire to take leadership roles which challenge patriarchal cultural values". In terms of dis-identification with feminism, they saw cooperation with their husbands as vital and knew that they respected them as partners in the business. This corresponds with Alston's (1995) argument that the urban bias of feminism and thus the reluctance for women farmers to identify with it, lies within its critique of nuclear family. The transition from private to public patriarchy outlined by Walby (1991) is complicated by the context of farming in which gendered divisions of labour within households cannot easily be separated from work. On the other hand, Grace and Lennie (1998) found that the women did pursue feminist aims in terms of participation in women-only farming groups. Following this logic, relatives within a farming family are not encouraged to attend the same meetings due to the separation of men and women which is viewed by Jenny and Rachel as detrimental for solidarity within their businesses.

Rachel and Jenny acknowledge that farming groups for women may facilitate the maintenance of binary gender differences whereby being a woman becomes the most salient identity. However, as noted in Chapter 6, the meanings attached to gender differences is re-appropriated in empowering ways by some of the participants, for example by viewing the caring nature of women as a key skill for leadership in farming to manage a team successfully. On the contrary, Shortall (2014) argues that women's

farming organisations may contribute to 'strategic essentialism' by emphasising women's difference to men because particular qualities deemed characteristic of women, such as motherhood, are focused on as barriers. Therefore, the existence of these groups does not contribute to the inclusion of women through the eradication of gender differences altogether akin to Lorber's (2005) notion of 'de-gendering'.

Three participants specifically made reference to the election of the first female president of the National Farmers' Union[13] (NFU) in February 2018, Minette Batters, as evidence that sexism is no longer prevalent in farming. Her status as a role model for the industry and specifically for women was deemed to show how the perception of women in farming has shifted away from the assumption of a 'farmer's wife'. Being 'articulate' was a common reason given by participants for the legitimacy of Batters' position which suggests that she does not fit the patriarchal norm which labels women as irrational. On the contrary, Batters is presented here as a reasoned leader who is an asset for a mainstream agricultural institution in order to reinforce the idea that women in farming are not outsiders.

> Jill: You've got the likes of the lass of the NFU and one or two like that. You've got head of the British Friesian Club[14] and women who are recognised as being the farmer and someone who is in a farming business like the NFU who is respected for their knowledge, whereas before there wasn't the respect there [for women in farming].

> Susan: I think it's wonderful that we've got a president of the NFU now who is a woman. It's marvellous. She's so outspoken and articulate. I think it's really… I'm really impressed by her.

> Rachel: I think it will be interesting if Minette Batters becomes president of the NFU, the biggest farming member organisation and the figurehead is a woman. There's some people with negative views of that but the majority think it shows that we are a forward thinking industry. She's a good speaker, articulate which I think will be good for the industry.

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[13] The National Farmers Union is a membership organisation for farmers in England and Wales. They represent member's concerns to influence policy and the future of farming.
[14] The British Friesian Club is a breeder's club which was set up to promote the British Friesian breed of cattle.

Jill outlines above that previously "there wasn't the respect there" for women and similarly Rachel indicates that current female role models represent a "forward thinking industry" which is becoming freed from the constraints of a masculine culture. The participants therefore situated themselves within the wider context of the farming community by considering role models as a benchmark for equality. Similarly, Brandth (2002b) concluded that the idea of progress, as shown by my participants drawing on the example of female leaders in farming, is an explanation for the reluctance of women farmers to identify with feminism. Such examples are deemed indicative of further equality than "before [when] there wasn't the respect there [for women in farming]" so they deem themselves not to be in a position whereby they are passive victims of a gendered barrier to success.

This section has demonstrated the ways in which the salience of gender to farming is muted by meritocratic notions of success and non-feminist identities. Firstly, by outlining individualised means to success, women farmers show that they are empowered on an equal level to their male peers. Secondly, they perceive that women (re)create inequality through preferential treatment, as shown by the gender specific thought inherent in #MeToo, research and networking opportunities. Therefore, some participants have indicated that they tend not to accept stigma and according to the women quoted, the female role models within the industry speak for themselves in terms of evidencing this.

4.4 Summary

This chapter shows how gender is made salient to farming as identities as a woman and farmer are constructed as visible and invisible respectively in interactions with men. Therefore, sexism is expressed by the participants in terms of being perceived as unequal to men. These perceptions assume that women cannot farm due to a traditional gendered division of labour (which places them on the periphery of farming) and biological essentialism (which positions them as having inferior cognitive and physical capacities). Visibility as a woman is viewed positively as special treatment by some of the participants, whereas others define generalisations about one's expertise to farm based on gender as an injustice. Either way, I argue that these experiences are examples of sexism because they are underpinned by assumptions about gender difference which situate women farmers as subordinate and results in their exclusion or protection by men. Women farmers may be subject to prejudice on the basis of their gender, yet they

may not recognise it as reproducing farming as male-dominated because they find ways to overcome the salience of their gender.

The sexism inherent to women not being perceived as equal to men, as expressed in section 4.1, creates inequality because as a consequence the women have to work longer or differently than men to reach equivalence. However, the women themselves do not view these experiences as manifestations of inequality because they use strategies to overcome sexism. For example, to construct their gender identity as invisible they assimilate to masculine culture by participating in banter with men. To the contrary, in the case of working differently to men, the women are able to assert visibility as a woman *and* farmer because they complete a task by using an alternative method which is often deemed 'better' practice. These strategies show that women position themselves as active agents in identity construction, often to the extent that their ingenuity is empowering. However, binary gender relations are maintained by viewing themselves in opposition to men as the default farmer and masculinity as the universal culture in farming.

The strategies used to overcome sexism on an individual level resonate with participants' assertion of the gender equality achieved in the industry more broadly. The participants tend to view equality as the cooperation between men and women and the invisibility of gender identity. As a result, they are critical of interventions based on equality principles, such as the #MeToo movement, women-only farming groups and feminist research, which are deemed to position them as victims and reproduce gender segregation. Relatedly, they assert notions of progress by citing examples of female leadership in farming organisations to signify a positive change for the inclusivity of women in farming compared to previous generations.

Chapter 5 Embodying an identity as a farmer

This chapter considers the significance of the lived experience of the body as women farmers describe presenting their bodies, and using their bodies and minds, at work. Specifically, the embodiment of gender and farming addresses the specificities of a masculine context in which bodies are not only central to the negotiation of identities, but also are tools for labour. Women farmers locate their bodies in relation to others, and make sense of how others locate their bodies, within the normative structures of what it means to be a woman and a farmer. However, they often position their gender identity along a continuum which differs from the binary standpoint that motivates men's perceptions of them. As a result, I argue that such practices and their symbolic meaning contributes to the construction of women farmers' in/visibility as explored in the previous chapter.

Firstly, in section 5.1 I consider the ways that body presentations are viewed by the participants as malleable to different circumstances and are used to negotiate their in/visibility as farmers as performed in interactions with strangers. In section 5.2 I discuss the less modifiable aspects of the body, such as shape and size, which frame the ways that women do farming. Gender is made salient to farming activities as normative work practices are viewed as unsuited to their bodies and therefore work is performed differently to men. Practices around hair, dress and body maintenance respond to norms of masculinity and show a readiness for conducting dirty, manual work. Simultaneously, there is a sense amongst the participants that they do not wish to be defeminised and thus they embody a female sensibility through a differentiated work practice to men which improves outcomes for farm work involving animals and staff. Therefore, femininity is 'played up' in non-farming spaces through dress and in working spaces through ways of doing farming.

The complexity of identity construction for women farmers, as shown by their varied gender presentations across work tasks and on/off farm settings, cannot be adequately captured by quantitative approaches. For example, Smyth, Swendener and Kazyak (2018, p.669) studied women farmers' perceptions of their gender identities by using "a gender measurement that asks participants to rate themselves on a masculinity or femininity scale" and concluded that women who farm are likely to perform a 'feminine apologetic' to compensate for doing 'men's work'. However, this assumes that femininity in its normative sense is aspirational for women farmers and underplays their potential to reconceptualise femininity within this rural setting. The authors cite long

hair and high heels as an example of the 'feminine apologetic' which focuses on gender presentation through bodily aesthetic without consideration for its relationship to the ways that farming is done which may allow women to reaffirm their femininity in other ways.

An awareness of the complexity of the embodiment of gender is shown by Sharon's reference, in the quotation below, to her son as "not really anything yet'' which suggests that his identity is in the process of becoming, much like de Beauvoir's (1997, p.295) assertion that gender should be distinguished from any biological basis. Sharon recognises that the colour of children's clothing reproduces gender polarisation which led to dressing her child in neutral ways in an attempt to subvert the status quo. It seems that she views dress as able to reinforce gender on the basis of sex, for example by following the normative assumption that blue clothes can sustain the masculinity of a child identified as male (Connell, 2009). However, Sharon presents the identity construction of her child as a choice, rather than as determined by an enactment of socialisation that conflates sex and gender. She perceives roughness as 'boyish'; an identity which she also identifies with herself and challenges the determinism that masculinity is only performed by men.

> *Sharon: I'm sure when I was at school growing up, boys and girls*
> *wore the same clothes. There wasn't all this pink thing there is now. It*
> *really disturbs me. I try and dress my little boy not as a boy or girl but*
> *in children's clothes and people are like 'is he a girl' but he's not*
> *really anything yet! I'm not pushing him in any way, but he is really*
> *boyish, rough and physical. But perhaps I was like that.*

This insight from Sharon gives a sense of the reflections that emerged about the relevance of the body as a combination of the biological and social in identity construction. Therefore, the subsequent discussion will explore how gender is made salient to farming through the ways the body is maintained and used to farm.

5.1 Marking the body

'Marking the body' resonates with Skeggs' (1997, p.83) theorisation that "women do see and invest in their bodies as a form of cultural capital". Work and gender identities are lived through the body which means that the body is a marker of distinction (Skeggs, 1997), for example women farmers dress to distance themselves from the normative femininity of a farmer's wife or the hegemonic masculinity engrained in the

stereotypical notion of a farmer. I will show the ways that femininity and farming, as negotiated aspects of identity, are embodied by women farmers through their hair, nails and dress. The participants positioned themselves, and others positioned them, in relation to normative expectations of what a woman or a farmer should look like which tend to be perceived as conflicting representations. As a result, the extent to which one's body presentation fulfils characteristics of womanhood may arise in social interaction as an indicator of one's ability or character. Therefore, the participants situate their appearance within the meanings it poses for their identities and the management of them.

The advice to the Women's Land Army of the 20th century was that "just because she was wearing trousers, she need not abandon her femininity" (Kramer, 2009, p.8). Therefore, in extension of demure and practical outfits for farm work, this suggests that femininity can manifest at other times, such as 'dressing up' when women famers are off duty and in other ways besides clothing, such as through the likes of hair, as well as the behavioural dispositions which will be outlined in section 5.2. Correspondingly, the forthcoming data show that in contemporary farming, the navigation of femininity continues to be a source of tension which reveals the negotiation of gender across working and non-working spaces as expressed through body presentation.

5.1.1 Malleability of the body in farming spaces

Hair may seem a mundane phenomenon that is taken for granted, but it is significant for discussions about the relationship between the body and identity. For example, sociological studies have explored the construction of a feminine identity through body hair removal (Toerien and Wilkinson, 2003), the role of hair loss in cancer identity (Trusson and Pilnick, 2017) and greying hair as a signifier of ageing (Ward and Holland, 2011). Therefore, social order can be reproduced through hair practices which are positioned with binary categories, such as femininity and masculinity. Similarly to dress, they can act as a social signifier, but also are reflective of personal identity (Entwistle, 2000). Accordingly, for some of the participants, farming and femininity are embodied and negotiated through meanings and practices of hair.

The quotes below show that Ida and Jill have been mistaken for men by their male colleagues at a livestock market and in the milking parlour respectively because they have short hair which is assumed to denote a masculine identity. Both participants comment that they have 'always had short hair' which underemphasises the malleability

of hair practices to show that they are not a means to converge to the masculine majority in farming. However, it is clear that it is a source of tension for them in relation to navigating constructions of what it means to be a proper woman and/or a proper farmer. Being a 'proper woman' would adhere to the typical characterisation of femininity to have long hair and may also be linked to heterosexuality (Weitz, 2004).

> *Jill: I've always had short hair because obviously when you're in the milking parlour and you get covered in cow you-know-what all you want to do is put your head under a tap and wash it off. You don't want long hair to be messing around with. When you're chopping out sugar beet by hand and someone says 'who is that boy down the field?' Mmm yeah OK [laughter].*

> *Ida: Being on a farm and a young woman then and you go to the livestock market with your overalls on selling your lambs and I've always had short hair. I'd be called 'right boy, are you going to bring those lambs up?' I'm going 'no!'*

Women's negotiation of hair practices across work contexts has been recognised as a complex issue as "long hair isn't professional but short hair isn't feminine" (Weitz, 2004, p.224). However, professionalism can be construed differently in the case of farm work, with regards to safety and cleanliness, as hair comes into contact with manual labour. The construction of an identity as a woman and a farmer is contradictory, as shown by Jill, who emphasises that adhering to the practicalities of a farming identity creates the risk of being labelled a "failure of femininity" (Weitz, 2004, pp. 72). Hair, like other practices such as dress, facilitates belonging to cultures of work and gender which in this case is disciplined through comments from Jill and Ida's peers.

Similarly to Jill, Ida spoke of how short hair caused her to be mistaken for a boy. These instances show that hair can mediate the self and society by symbolising gender and sexuality (Weitz, 2001). Similarly, in the historically male-dominated domain of the police, Kringen and Novich (2018) suggest that the status quo of men is reinforced by women's commitment to short hair. However, police women viewed it as a means of acceptance which helped them gain respect from male colleagues. On the other hand, Ida takes offence for her mistaken identity, as shown by her response which was prefaced by the incorrect gendered identifier. This response may be reflective of her pride in establishing her career as a farmer, despite her father's disappointment that he

did not have a son as a male heir to the farm. Jill justifies her short hair based on the practicalities of being a proper farmer who participates in manual labour, as exemplified in the context of 'chopping out sugar beet', and may be viewed in contrast to work conducted indoors which is often characterised as the role of a 'farmer's wife' (O'Hara, 1998).

The type of spaces and work drawn upon by Jill and Ida in their accounts is meaningful for understanding their negotiation of gender and work identities. A livestock auction market is a distinct space and event for the trade of livestock which tends to be orchestrated by men with men in mind (Pilgeram, 2007, Rowling, 2015). For example, Pilgeram (2007, p.582) conducted an ethnography of a US livestock auction and found that "the safe, clean jobs, are reserved for women", such as the administrative work of an auction's clerk. However, the imagery of Jill 'chopping out sugar beet' or getting covered in manure resists this stereotypical division of labour as she describes tasks which require physical exertion and dirty work. The example which Ida draws upon of 'bringing lambs up' is usually construed as a feminine task of animal husbandry, but it is suggested that the space in which this practice is situated, namely a livestock auction, aligns with the assumption that she is a 'boy'.

In addition to hair practices, according to Entwistle (2000, p.323/4), dress forms an interface between the individual and society because it "transforms flesh into something recognizable and meaningful to a culture". Therefore, dress may reflect and shape the roles, relationships and institutions that we participate in. It is a communicative tool that can be used to show affiliation or detachment from a group and might (re)produce or challenge expectations of self-presentation for a particular time and place. As a result, it is not a neutral expression but embedded within the power relations of social divisions such as race, class and gender (Twigg, 2013). Following this, the interview discussions with women farmers illuminated the navigation of gender through clothing worn whilst conducting farm work traditionally coded as masculine.

Feminist literature has engaged with patriarchal cultures of dress at work in the context of the service industry whereby dress codes for women are surveilled and disciplined (e.g. Freeman, 1993, Dellinger, 2002). However, the apparel of manual occupations has been neglected in contemporary life, despite historical studies acknowledging the gendered costume amongst mining workers during the nineteenth century (John, 2006) and the women's Land Army in First World War Britain (White, 2014). As a result, in the context of the current study, it is relevant to discuss the extent to which dress

contributes to the negotiation of gender identity and the embodiment of farming. Women use their dress to communicate a farmer identity in attempt to avoid the judgements of incompetence based on the visibility of their gender.

Similarly to the emphasis that Ida places on her short hair being suitable for the practicalities of farming, Alice downplays femininity through her choice of dress to appear professional. She justifies her position as a farmer by comparing her apparel to the other women in attendance at the auction mart. For example, miniskirts are viewed as feminine and impractical which obscures the visibility of a farming identity. Given the incongruence between their dress and a readiness to work, these women who wear skirts are identified by Alice as accompanying a farmer for a 'social visit', rather than being a lead farmer who is there to do business. Therefore, Alice distances herself from farm women whose presence is deemed of frivolous concern and is symbolised in the presentation of their bodies.

> *Alice: You get a few girls who go up there [to the livestock auction] who are sheep or cattle farmers wearing miniskirts. I think – you obviously haven't done a day's work in your life! There I am walking around in waterproofs, a hoodie and a coat. Half the time I look like a tramp, but it's not a social visit! My boyfriend's learnt that I do not look nice.*

Alice refers to herself as looking like a 'tramp' due to the practicality of her dress, namely 'waterproofs, a hoodie and a coat'. Consequently, she implements her cultural capital as a farmer through her clothing which resonates with preparation for the weather and manual type of work to be undertaken, such as moving around and getting dirty when handling sheep. Similarly, Pilgeram (2007) found that women farmers presented themselves in opposition to farmer's wives at livestock auctions. The choice of one's outfit can reproduce a power differential, for example, work boots and the absence of a handbag signified that a woman was a farmer herself, rather than accompanying a male partner. Therefore, the strategies that women farmers use to navigate their gender and work identities, such as dress, may be shaped in response to characterisations of a farmer's wife who is not assumed to control economic activities, such as buying and selling livestock (Sachs, 1996).

Ida suggests that her experience of getting mistaken for a boy from onlookers at the market is because she wears overalls and carries the tools which facilitate livestock

work, such as string and a knife. She justifies her outfit choice in relation to being a 'working girl' which constructs herself as a 'proper farmer' in contrast to those who are dressed for a social visit, as Alice mentioned previously.

> *Ida: People assumed that I was a son. 'What's your boy doing?' My Dad would say 'no it's my daughter'. You got looked at differently because I was in my overalls and had my string in my back pocket and a pen knife. I was a working girl. OK I'm not a voluptuous hourglass with a C-cup, and to be perfectly honest they've been hopeless and would get in the way when I was feeding the cattle in the hoppers, but I thought don't treat me any different [to a male farmer].*

Overalls are a symbol of working-class masculinity which can be worn as a form of protective clothing during manual labour (Varney, 2002). However, recently they have been subject to appropriation by women's high-street fashion. Television presenter Holly Willoughby was ridiculed for wearing blue overalls from her Marks and Spencer collection due to the affiliation with the uniform of a farmer or mechanic (Roberts, 2019). In this case, she was subject to informal social sanctioning which understood the meaning of overalls as masculine and thus able to defeminise the individual. Similarly, Ida was mistaken for a son due to her dress, yet embraced her choice on the basis, as Peter et al. (2006) note, of getting dirty as a rite of passage for a farmer. However, the discourse that overalls signify someone ready to farm is situated in opposition to 'feminine' adornment which is deemed to indicate an individual who is not serious about farming.

Within the context of corporations as it was originally coined, 'power dressing' refers to women establishing power in a male setting through their sartorial choices. As Entwistle (1997, p.320) notes, "power dressing' did not set out to rock any boats, its main aim was to enable women to steer a steady course through male-dominated professions". For example, wearing suits was a means of distancing from femininity, in order to be taken seriously as a professional. Therefore, Ida's overalls and Alice's waterproofs may represent a form of power dressing as it symbolises their readiness for work to assert a farming identity. Their dress situates themselves in contrast to women who are not farmers, according to Alice, and in likeness to men farmers who are normatively accepted; as Ida affirms "don't treat me any different [to them]". The presentation of the self is done in relational terms by upholding 'tomboy' ways of looking as superior in farming. To "dress for success" (Entwistle, 1997, p.318), may equate to following

normative standards of farming through a masculine image which signal the "ability to do her job" (ibid, p. 320).

In order to do farming well, women present themselves in ways that are practical for their work. However, given such a presentation is coded by others as masculine, they risk being mistaken for a man. Therefore, Jill, Ida and Alice show that visibility as a farmer is achieved through practical dress and hair at the expense of invisibility as a woman. They do not necessarily wish to be invisible as women, but to be recognised as a certain type of woman as they view themselves in relation to subordinate forms of femininity discursively constructed as a 'farmer's wife'. For them, being seen to be a masculine woman is a symbol of achievement in their professional status as a farmer. However, the complexity of gender presentation is shown through the case of small-scale fishing in the UK, a similarly rural, manual and family-led occupation. The dirty bodies of fishermen were deemed to legitimise the exclusion of women and reinforce the hegemonic form of masculinity which similarly to farming rests on physical strength (Gustavsson and Riley, 2020). Arguably women farmers occupy a liminal identity as 'the third sex', as referred to by Pini (2005a) because they navigate between constructions of femininities and masculinities, such as by being known as a tomboy. Following this reluctance to be defeminised, the subsequent section explores the ways in which femininity is constructed outside of farm work.

5.1.2 Malleability of the body in non-farming spaces

The respondents refer to fluidity in the presentation of the self across space and time which draws attention to the inadequacies of theorising gender under a binary paradigm. In the case below, Helen reflects on the varied tasks during her day that warrant different styles of presentation to accommodate both her identities as an interior designer and a cattle farmer. For example, when I arrived for the interview, I came across her outside. We then went into her design studio on the farm for the interview where she proceeded to untie her long hair and change into a dress. It became clear that dress was used as a practice of boundary-making to mark the transition between her roles as we crossed the threshold.

> Helen: That's another thing I wanted to do on my Instagram because I didn't want to be stereotypical. You can look like a normal girl. That sounds bad. You know what I mean. You can have long hair and you

don't have to dress in tracksuits all the time. You can be girly and into
different things like painting and drawing.

Helen presents an image of herself on social media which challenges the stereotypical appearance of a farmer as masculine, as shown by the construction of a 'girly' identity through her style of hair and dress. Helen views herself as looking like a 'normal girl' due to the construction of a normatively feminine appearance in contrast to women in farming who might wear 'tracksuits all the time'. In the same way as the overalls, tracksuits have a loose shape which Helen attributes to a masculine appearance. This shows that she has made an active choice to construct her appearance using dress and hair as resources for the presentation of the (gendered) self, specifically to prevent 'losing' her femininity. Therefore, she resists the stereotypical portrayal of a farmer but constructs herself as a stereotypical girl, by assuming that there is only one type of woman who engages in feminine hobbies and dress.

According to Black and Sharma (2001, p. 114), "the female body is something to be worked on in order to produce a culturally recognisable product". By this, it is meant that the construction of femininity is linked to the project of upholding cultural standards of beauty, such as through grooming practices. Therefore, bodily abandon may be sanctioned in interaction, as found by Toerien and Wilkinson (2004) in the case of women who resist body hair removal. They found that femininity equates to a norm to actively improve the body so uncleanliness is treated with disgust and is stigmatised for being 'manly'. In accordance with these discussions, women farmers reflect on the compatibility of fashioning themselves as 'girly' and farmers which shows that the meaning of the body is accomplished in one's choices and interactions as an active process.

Following Helen's willingness to maintain a feminine appearance with her dress, Kate is known as the 'glamourous farmer' amongst her peers because she wears make-up and colours her hair. As a result, she is able to distance herself from the typical characterisation of a farm manager which she considers to be a "short and scruffy person who doesn't bother with her hair". She is flattered by the title of 'glamourous' as it draws attention to being a woman in attempt to address the status quo, as the data in other chapters show that she aims to inspire the next generation of young women to enter farming. Similarly, in a study by Pini (2005a, 2005b)**,** gender management strategies, such as wearing earrings and pink clothing, were used by farm women to resist the current gender order whereby masculinity is most prominent in farming.

Unlike the convergence of women engineers to behaviours deemed masculine to gain respect (Powell, et al., 2009), there is a tendency for participants to present themselves between categories of masculinity and femininity at different moments, as shown by Kate and Helen's accounts.

> *Kate: I suppose there's not many glamourous people in agriculture because they're all men. There was just me and the admin. That's the reason I was known as a glamourous lecturer because I was a female. In a way, it's quite nice to be known as glamourous as you wake up in the morning and think 'gosh I need to get my roots done again'. I suppose that I do put on a bit of make-up and mascara so I look with it. I'm not really into dresses and high heels and things. If I go out to a dinner dance sort of thing, I put my heels and my dress on. I suppose you can't be in the farm yard in high heels. The glamourous farm manager -That is me.*

> *Kate: Do they imagine a farm manager to look like a man or butch? Do they expect a rotund, short and scruffy person who doesn't bother with her hair? When the reps come in, they do think I'm the secretary.*

In interactions with those in the industry who she is not familiar with, Kate gets mistaken for a secretary (coded as female) due to the underlying discourse that farming and femininity, as shown by a tidy appearance, are incompatible. The reflections by Kate above identify the assumption that a secretary would perform normative femininity by being beautified, whereas a woman farm manager may be associated with 'female masculinity' (Halberstam, 1998), as shown by being 'butch'. Therefore, as a result of her 'glamourous' appearance, Kate has been categorised by others based on the assumption that a feminine woman in farming must be a secretary due to a gendered division of labour. Sharon also makes reference to the existence of multiple femininities to the extent that "some women seem a different gender" to her, namely those who "put in so much effort to look tidy". Therefore, this shows that the gender presentations of women farmers are diverse as Sharon situates herself between constructions of hegemonic masculinity and dominant femininity.

Rachel, Sharon and Kate make a distinction between 'dressing up' outside of working hours and their everyday attire at work. The women explained making a special effort in constructing their appearance off the farm to show that they have maintained some

aspects of femininity. This resonates with Pini and Price (2005) who found that women farmers dressed 'lady-like' in the public domain to compensate for their involvement in tractor work. The fact that Rachel presents femininity as something which can be 'lost' and that Sharon views herself as previously more girly shows that gender is viewed as dynamic; subject to change dependent on place and time, such as across non/farming spaces.

> *Rachel: You do lose a bit of femininity by doing a man's job, but you would in anything that you did. I'm not as girly girly as my sisters but I still like to get dressed up.*

> *Sharon: Sometimes I feel that I'm a different gender. Even though I enjoy dressing up. I've done my tailoring and I like clothes. I'm going out tonight and I'm quite looking forward to what I'm going to put on! I do like dressing up, but some women seem a different gender to me because they put in so much effort to look tidy and they wear high heels. I like to be able to run around the yard and get things done. When I first became a farmer, I was probably girlier.*

These accounts correspond to the social construction of gender as the women become women through the malleability of their body presentation. Gender is viewed by the participants as a project which resonates with the argument of West and Zimmerman (1987) that men and women 'do' gender in interaction. The specificity of the male-dominated context is taken into account by these women in their decision to construct themselves as 'girly' or tomboy' depending on the situation. Similarly, Goffman (1969) stressed that identity may be malleable across time and place. In alignment with his dramaturgical approach, dressing up may represent the back stage of an individual's performance of the self "where the suppressed facts make an appearance" (Goffman, 1969, p.69). Therefore, the performance of the self varies between encounters in work and in non-work contexts which are not governed by the embodiment of the cultural capital of a farmer through preparation of the body for dirty, manual work.

5.1.3 Maintenance of the body

In addition to Rachel's emphasised femininity away from the farm, she also identifies the opportunity to paint her nails during working hours. It seems that the automation of machinery has offered new possibilities for the construction of gender identity for Rachel. The technological development which allows the coordinates of a field to be

mapped by satellite means that her tractor 'drives itself' and has led to a shift in labour type and time. Therefore, femininity and farming are enabled within the clean confines of the tractor where attention is directed away from manual work.

> *Rachel: There's this assumption that you don't do anything because the title of a farmer doesn't fit with a woman. I laugh about it that during harvest my tractor drives itself - I'll put the GPS on and paint my nails. People look at me as if I'm mad.*

> *Sharon: I think people forget I'm a woman. I'm not very girly. I never have my nails done or anything.*

> *Alice: You can tell the ones that work and the ones that don't. Usually the ones with their nails done don't do much! I'm lucky to do my hair, let alone have my nails done.*

In contrast to Rachel, Sharon does not identify with having feminine nails and Alice suggests that she does not have time for manicures unlike women who attend livestock markets with their male partners. There may be an assumption that investing time on the body, such as a beauty routine, is a leisure or economically unproductive pursuit which represents the identity of a farmer's wife who is involved in farming for the lifestyle (Sachs, 1996). In celebrity culture, such time investment creates economic capital, whereas for the women farmer it is seen to undermine their work. An explanation for this contrast may lie in the nuances between rural and urban femininities which can be traced to the association between being well-groomed and a 'city girl' which was made apparent by the Women's Land Army of World War One Britain. An article in *The Land Girl* (1943, p.6), a magazine written by the Women's Land Army for the Women's Land Army, shows that soft hands and well-groomed nails were associated with the "cushy hours and a well-ordered life" of a woman living and working in the city. Therefore, the scruffiness of one's appearance was viewed as a marker of the transition from urban to rural woman and, similarly for Sharon and Alice, may be a way of legitimising their position as farmers, as well as rural women.

In addition to hair length discussed in the previous section, hair maintenance is also concerned with the construction of gender and farming identities. For example, Kate associates brushing her hair with being seen as glamourous, but Alice does not typically have time for this practice which she justifies as a result of being a working farmer. Therefore, women's hair may be mediated by beauty expectations as normative

femininity positions hair as part of a 'body project' (Shilling, 2003) to "devote time, money and energy in styling it" (Weitz, 2004). In conjunction, unruly hair may be classified as a masculine presentation and associated with a farmer identity which reproduces the idea that the identification of a farmer and a woman are in tension. The body is therefore understood to be unfinished and shaped with desired goals in mind (Shilling, 2003), as shown by women farmers downplaying or emphasising femininity through beauty practices. More generally, Twigg (2013, p.25) notes that this unequally affects women whose bodies are "regarded as deficient in its natural form, unsatisfactory, requiring constant vigilance and repeated beauty work for it to be made acceptable".

The study of the embodiment of gender by women in construction work has also shown disinterest in nails due to the notion of hands as "tools for labour, not for polish" (Smith, 2013, p.866). Similarly, Julie and Kate recall below that working with their hands has led to them being dirty and rough which also may situate themselves as 'hands-on' farmers in contrast to the expectation of a farm woman to be indoors and therefore clean. Peter et al. (2006, p.35) recognise the binary oppositions at play which reproduce the privileging of masculinity in agriculture; "dirtiness versus cleanliness, outside versus inside, danger versus safety, farmer versus nonfarmer, male versus female". Julie's self-definition as a tomboy accounts for this combination of seemingly contradictory masculine and feminine traits.

> *Kate: People have said she's the glamourous lady in agriculture and I think to myself that my hands are very rough like a crocodile. Today they are quite clean but usually I sit on my hands! I am quite feminine I suppose. I wear make-up. I brush my hair. I have it coloured. I wear feminine clothes. I suppose I do.*

> *Julie: I was always very much a tomboy when I was younger and I think I've still got elements of that now. I don't bother waiting for somebody to do something but then again that's part of being my mother's daughter; she always got things done. I do like to feel feminine at the same time. I don't like to appear grubby so I think there's room for both. I like mucking in and I like cleaning up afterwards. That's always been quite enjoyable – coming back covered in muck knowing that you can wash it all off and start again.*

Julie takes a nuanced approach to her gender display as she refers simultaneously to being a 'tomboy' and 'feminine' which are aspects of her identity that manifest in different ways. For example, the admission that "I don't bother waiting for somebody to do something" is seen as a masculine trait, whilst the will for a clean appearance is constructed as feminine. Therefore, masculinity and femininity are not viewed as discrete entities, which supports Renold's (2008) account of tomboyism which recognises that the flexibility of gender performance does not necessarily mean rejecting femininity altogether. Likewise, Pini (2005a) showed that women farm leaders avoid appearing too masculine or too feminine by acting between and across gender categories. The implication is that the male body is not expected to adapt or masculinity to be reconfigured, as Kvande (1999) identifies in the case of women in engineering, but the female body is. Similarly, in the current study, it is women farmers who are tasked with accommodating an appropriate gender performance because it is their bodies that are viewed as in the wrong place.

The practices discussed in this section have shown that farming is embodied by women through hair, dress and nails which become relevant in social interaction as an indicator of one's ability to farm, as well as a gendered sense of self. Cultural practices, such as dress, have a social purpose to imbue femininity onto the body as a visual signifier of the self. The 'looking glass self' (Cooley, 1998) is apt to consider here as the women express an awareness of themselves in social interaction which is both the source and outcome of the active construction of identity. The participants present 'gendering practices' (Martin, 2003) as a means to negotiate the ambivalence of being a woman who undertakes work which is coded as masculine by others, especially men.

Ida and Jill had a problematic experience whereby their appearance and work seemed to communicate to others that they were a 'boy', yet this did not align with their identity as a woman. They were not actively performing masculinity but their hair and activities were interpreted as such. The prevailing patriarchal discourse in farming undermined their ability to be taken seriously as a woman and as a farmer. However, Julie, Alice, Sharon and Rachel position themselves as 'tomboys', as shown by an affinity to dirtiness and resistance to beauty regimes. They have shown that farming is embodied in normative (masculine) ways and in doing so, feminine elements of identity construction are often resigned to non-work settings. However, Helen and Kate do embrace femininity through bodily techniques during work to resist the notion that someone who is girly must undertake feminised forms of work, such as the clerical role

stereotypically assumed by a farmer's wife. Therefore, for them, gender and farming identities are performed through the body in empowering ways to contribute to equality by communicating that success is possible as a woman and farmer.

Gender is made salient to farming through the body as others make assumptions about one's role based on being seen as recognisably masculine or feminine. However, it seems that the women themselves view their gender identities as more complex than the ways that they believe others see them. Farming is embodied by women as they experience their bodies as symbolic of hard work, such as through hands, and a readiness to work through dress which both enable the construction of professional prowess; visibility as a farmer, but at the expense of femininity according to their interactions with others. Following this, women farmers emphasise femininity by maintaining the outward presentation of the body and by the way that the body is used to labour, as discussed in the next section.

5.2 Embodying a female sensibility

> *Julie: I think women do bring a different sensibility and it's not*
> *pretending you've got the strength of a bloke, it's knowing that there's*
> *a smarter way to do it.*

This section charts a female 'sensibility', leading out from a quote from Julie, which expresses respondents' capacity to incorporate being ingenious, being smarter and being strategic into their farming practice. It was noteworthy that women farmers view themselves to be more rational than men. Simultaneously to the emphasis placed on rationality, this 'female sensibility' also incorporates a compassionate nature which the women explain characterises their difference to men. However, for women farmers, emotion is part of their rationality and contributes to a positive identity as a woman and farmer because it is framed as emotional *intelligence* that is necessary to succeed in farming.

The denigration of women for their perceived irrationality can be traced back to the philosophical tradition of the 18th century (Lloyd, 1984). For example, Rousseau (1979) argued that the character of men and women was complementary and should be reinforced by educating men and women differently. Reason and emotion were not necessarily viewed as mutually exclusive, by being associated with men and women respectively, but as harnessed in different ways across the public and private spheres.

The subjugation endorsed by Rousseau (1979) reduced women to child-rearing based on the view that their character constitutes, and is constituted by, fulfilment of their role within the family as mother and wife. Therefore, as Fuss (1989) and Lloyd (1984) recognise amongst others, the basis of exclusionary social practice is an essentialist dichotomy which situates women's character as emotional and inferior compared to the rational and superior characteristics of men.

The main challenge for women farmers in their work is that farming infrastructure and normative ways of doing farming are premised on male bodily strength. To negotiate this, they seek alternative means to bodily labour, such as by using machinery. Therefore, women justify their positions in farming through their contributions to people or animal management which show a different, but more valued approach, compared to men's. For example, they suggest that femaleness, as shown by rational thinking, is an asset that allows them to establish ways of farming that challenge patriarchal relations. However, essentialist ideas about gender difference are reproduced through the justification of tasks on the basis of the complementary skills of men and women as 'brawn' and 'brains' respectively.

Women farmer's understandings of their selves and work patterns are shaped by discourses about the biological basis of gender, to the extent that farming is embodied by women through doing work differently to men. However, stereotypically feminine traits, such as compassion, that the women felt they embodied were seen as strengths in the context of contemporary farming practice. Gender is made salient to farming activities as women construct their competence in relation to "gender binaries lived through the body" (Huppatz, 2012, p. 18) which Julie aptly refers to as a different 'sensibility'. It seems that women perceive their gender as a resource which may advance their position in farming as a working culture with changing demands. This aligns with McCall's (1992) interpretation of gender as a cultural capital; a way of being that can manifest as an asset.

5.2.1 Assuming a masculine physique

The assumption that a farmer should have a masculine physique means that if women are to farm, then they must look like men. Following this, strength is one of the participants' main points of reference because this is what is emphasised by others as the problem for women farmers. Strength is reflected in women's body size as smaller than men which is often seen as preventing them from doing farm work (Saugeres,

2002c). Following this, as we see in the following interview extracts, Catherine's height and weight has been met with surprise from male colleagues and Jenny views herself as weaker than men. The comparison between working on the breeding unit and fattening unit given by Jenny indicates the gendered coding of farm work on the basis of the strength necessary for the activities within these spaces. A breeding unit can be a sedate environment in which farmers tend to expectant pigs so the 'light-handed work' she refers to may involve gentle care. In contrast, the pigs in the fattening unit are monitored for their growth rate so may be bigger animals which demand physical control.

> Catherine: The owner of the estate, when I met him for the first time, he walked into the room and his first comment was 'oh, I was expecting a big girl'. I thought it was hilarious. I think they were expecting a German Olympic shotput thrower. A lot of people are surprised that someone my size, 5 foot 3 and 7 ½ stone, can actually deal with the cattle like I do I suppose.

> Jenny: From a physical point of view, some women would struggle to do the manual work on a free-range fattening unit. The breeding unit would be fine as it's more light handed work. Certainly, I've struggled working on the free-range fattening unit. I'm not going to beat around the bush. It is a fact that men are stronger than women in most cases. We had a bigger woman and she could do the work.

The data show that Catherine is able to "deal with the cattle" in contrast to essentialist expectations that an inferior ability to farm is inscribed on women's bodies. Catherine and Jenny recognise that some women are bigger than others, by referring to a "big girl" and "bigger woman" respectively, and as size is deemed a signifier of strength, they are able to do the work. This resonates with the expectation that a woman must have a strong and muscly stature, as shown by the example of a "German Olympic shotput thrower". Therefore, women's body shapes and sizes are positioned as diverse, with bigger ones constructed as embodying masculine norms and therefore the physicality to do manual work. However, in their discussion with young men farmers, Coldwell (2007a) found that women's bodies were viewed as unnatural if they could manage manual farm work, so they were referred to as 'big' or 'butch' to signify their atypical status. To clarify, the interview data from Jenny and Catherine show that being 'big' is typical for a farmer but atypical for a woman.

Despite Catherine and Jenny suggesting that 'bigger women' are perceived as able to do farm work due to the association with strength, Alice revealed an opposing experience. Her bigger physique was not viewed as advantageous in farming but was equated with being unfit. Therefore, her body shape and size are used by others, such as her brother, to denigrate her status as a 'girl' and farmer. It shows that women's bodies are policed in respect of their capacity to undertake manual labour. In interviews with male farmers, Saugeres (2002c) found that women farmers who were 'sturdy' were viewed as unnatural because they did not align with heteronormative ideals of femininity.

> *Alice: I normally say I'm a sheep farmer. If they don't know me, they look at me and think 'how the hell do you do that?' I'm not very tall and I used to be a lot skinnier, people used to think I wouldn't be able to do it. I said I was going to learn to shear sheep and my brother said 'I've never seen a fat person shear sheep before.' So I learnt. People seem to think that because I'm a girl, I shouldn't be able to do things so I like to prove them wrong.*

The 'big girl' and bigger woman' are positioned within a liminal space as neither normal women nor men. However, Birke (1999) argues that scientific data show an overlap between the physique of men and women, contrary to dichotomous understandings of two kinds of bodies. This endorses Jenny and Catherine's understanding of the variance within women, despite the tendency to over-determine differences between men and women as "gendered dichotomy is etched deep into narratives of our biology" (Birke, 1999, p. 41). Taking this critique of universality into account, it would be interesting to explore to what extent smaller men may struggle with farm work and whether they may be greeted with the same suspicion that resonates with women because the participants identified difference among women but not men. Women's bodies are viewed as a variety of sizes, but men's bodies are all viewed in the same way; as stronger. However, women's strategies for doing farming shows that strength is an attribute of rural masculinity that is becoming devalued because machinery can be used to complete tasks that they may not otherwise be able to.

According to Saugeres' (2002c, p.643) study of embodiment in farming families, women tend to be responsible for less physically demanding jobs on the farm because "their bodies and biologies are seen to be preventing them from doing the work". Similarly, in discussion with agricultural students, Bryant (2006) found that men farmers perceive women's unsuitability to farm to reside in them having less physical

strength. However, I found that a gendered division of labour was not always present in my study as women undertook manual tasks, such as moving animals or equipment, that were deemed to exceed their bodily capacity. Despite the participants recognising the restrictions of their bodies, to challenge the discourse which dictates them as unable to farm they are able to renegotiate practices in a way that shows that women have preferential qualities. These methods to accommodate their work practices included techniques and technologies which were considered as alternatives to normatively masculine practices.

5.2.2 Finding a way around masculine practices

The participants identified restrictions in their farm work due to the normalisation of physical strength associated with men which manifested in farm infrastructure or techniques. However, they found means to adapt farm practices and therefore overcome exclusion from them. As a result, farming is embodied differently by women, but not necessarily in inferior ways, as their ingenuity is the enactment of 'female sensibility' which enables them to assert their farming and gender identities.

Bryony and Julie show an awareness of biased infrastructure on the farm, but note that both female and male colleagues are unwilling to make changes to enhance women's accessibility to manual farm practices. For example, Bryony draws attention to the status of the farm as "designed with men in mind", as shown by sticky shed doors which are difficult to open, given her self-identified limitations in strength.

> *Bryony: I think that a lot of that [gendered division of labour] could*
> *be changed if you had reason to make it more accessible to women.*
> *It's things like big barn doors. When they're really sticky it is so*
> *awkward to get open. I don't think I'm particularly weak but I'm*
> *obviously not as strong as most of the men here as they've been doing*
> *it a long time so they've built up that strength and the facilities are*
> *designed with men in mind and not with women in mind. So I think*
> *yes, at the moment the roles that women take they are naturally more*
> *suited to but actually if you just made a few changes, you could make*
> *those traditionally male jobs slightly easier for women as well just by*
> *fixing the door so you can open it and not have to be so strong.*

Bryony suggests that there is an assumption that farm work is undertaken by men, so space is organised in a way that is conducive to the display of toughness. In accordance,

writing about gender and farming identities, Shortall (2019, p.333) acknowledges that "the issue is not size or strength [of a woman] but how the farmyard is designed". As a result, Bryony would like to see facilities adapted, whilst Julie, Alice, Judy and Rachel resort to adapting their particular method to achieve a task. The former approach would address gendered space and thus the embodiment of work for men *and* women, but the latter adopts an individualistic approach whereby any token women are expected to deploy strategies to reach the same goals as men. It seems thus far that women colleagues have not challenged the status quo, as according to Bryony, they take farm administrative roles "they are naturally more suited to".

The reference to women's natural position made by Bryony contrasts with her orientation to strength and the design of the farm as socially constructed as masculine. In doing so, she has shown that the unsuitability of facilities has not been challenged so women tend to be constrained to types of labour which are stereotypically viewed as more suitable for women. Bryony views her strength as inferior to men's, but it is not presented as the essential outcome of sex because she refers to it as a disposition to be 'built' through experience on the job as an active process. Therefore, this might suggest that she has the potential to reach equal bodily capacity once she has more than her two years' experience in farming and thus engages beyond an essentialist understanding of the body.

Similarly to Bryony's example of barn doors signifying the bias of the farm towards men, Julie suggests that a lack of bodily strength excludes her from the usual farm practice of carrying a "big pail of water". Therefore, the compromise of "doing lots of small trips" may mean that the task takes longer, but it is made achievable. However, she suggests that an inclusive way that work could be organised is by installing a hose pipe, but her male colleagues are unable to recognise the way that gendered power relations manifest in taken for granted practices.

> *Julie: Physically I can't lift the big pail of water so I'm doing lots of small trips. I'm like 'let's just get a hose pipe'. If I was doing that job every day, just getting a hose pipe would make it easier. They [men] can lift a 20 kilo pale. They don't even see it as something you shouldn't be doing but actually 40 years later you're worn out. I think women do bring a different sensibility and it's not pretending you've got the strength of a bloke, it's knowing that there's a smarter way to do it.*

Julie reflects that women must be 'smarter' in order to navigate the normative arrangements which assume farming to be undertaken by a man. Therefore, a woman's body is constructed as a non-farmer's body, through the design of the farmyard, thus subjecting them to unconscious gender bias (Shortall, 2019). As Shisler and Sbicca (2019, p.881) recognise, "the necessity of modifying essential equipment illustrates the masculine-coded nature of agriculture".

Julie echoes that women also must use a strategic approach, which is part of the female sensibility, to work with livestock. She recalls a scenario which involves moving a down cow; one who is unable to stand on its own. The management of this situation in a safe manner for the cow and farmer involves moving the cow off concrete to avoid an injury.

> *Julie: Because men have physical strength, they use physical strength.*
> *If you don't have physical strength, you have to be smarter about*
> *what you do. In particular, a classic example is managing down a*
> *cow. She will struggle, she will go through a shock phase[15]. If you're*
> *a woman, you won't drag her during the shock phase as she weighs a*
> *tonne. You'll wait. Whether it's labour or injuries. Just wait and she*
> *will help you. A guy says he's strong enough to do it and will do it.*
> *'We've got a forklift and haven't got time.' Because you have to think*
> *about things differently, those things can make the workplace a safer,*
> *better and more relaxed place to be.*

Julie views her labour, namely waiting with patience for the animal to respond, as representative of a different way of thinking to men who may use their strength to "drag her". Therefore, men and women are viewed to conduct farming activities in different ways with a woman's approach being valued for its contribution to the wellbeing of both the animal and farmer. Similarly, Alice finds an alternative way to get a ewe to milk which she suggests can be done unaided by someone taller than herself by using a halter as a technology to manoeuvre the animal. As Alice discusses in the following extract, others presume that she has a passive role of 'looking at sheep' but she emphasises her ability to undertake manual labour, such as fencing, despite the expectation that it requires the strength of a man.

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[15] The shock phase is when a cow is in trauma, for example, when their blood circulation is failing.

> *Alice: You can find ways around things. I'm short so it doesn't help but you can just find a way. If you've got a ewe you want to milk out and you can't lean against the front end and milk out of the back end so just grab a halter and make life easy for yourself. Other than the people in farming who understand I can do it, people outside think I drive around and look at sheep. I do all the fencing and sheep work, but they see me as a girl.*

In contrast to the participants' activities discussed so far in this section which are performed in distinction from men, Rachel constructed a building in the *same* way as her male colleagues. However, in trying to prove herself as a competent farmer, she injured herself.

> *Rachel: So for instance, I've built a building by hand. I would carry four breezeblocks at a time just because that's what the men did and I felt as though I had to do it. I ended up breaking my back because of it – I had two ruptured discs. I just carried on. For about 18 months, I had horrendous back problems. Physically that's probably the downside. Physically there are some things that men find easier and women don't. I was putting a PTO shaft on the back of a tractor which was really heavy. I thought why am I struggling – just ask someone to help you!*

Similarly to the scenario that Rachel describes, Shortall, McKee and Sutherland (2019) found that women farmers lifted objects that were too heavy for them in order to achieve assimilation with men because risky behaviours are normalised as demonstrative of masculinity. Therefore, this supports the point made by Julie that if women foster a different approach to farming to men, it can "make the workplace a safer…place to be". When Rachel lifted the Power Take Off (PTO) shaft that transfers power from a tractor to an implement, she reflects that it would have been easier to ask for assistance. However, this may have undermined her position as a farmer by symbolising a weakness in her ability to farm. Rachel's perseverance contrasts with Young's (1980) well-known argument that the social construction of gender reproduces the idea that women are weaker than men and leads them to underestimate their bodily capacity. Rachel's strategy also contrasts with Julie's recommendation that it is ill-advised to "pretend you've got the strength of a bloke" because the endorsement of a female sensibility can help to resist the hegemony of men.

In what follows, Judy, Catherine and Jill recall instances where they could not carry something on the farm without the assistance of machinery. This meant that they were not excluded from these tasks but performed them in a different way to men as they use machinery to transform their bodies from unable to able (Virillio, 2006 [1977]). Therefore, the tractor remains a symbol of a farmer identity for some of the respondents who re-appropriate it, rendering farming as inclusive, contrary to the studies which outline the association between machinery and masculinity (Saugeres, 2002b).

> *Judy: There's nothing that I can't do in this job but I might not do it the way they [men] do it. You just might have to get a trailer for something rather than carrying it.*

> *Catherine: There's way around it because we have machinery. You just have to do things in a different way [to men] – rather than being the strongest person, you can find other ways to do it. You have machinery to help you on that side of things.*

> *Jill: OK, we're not as strong [as men] but there are times that I've hung gates and things and people have said 'how on earth did you lift that?' I didn't lift it. I used the equipment I've got to do it for me. If you think about it, you don't need to be as strong. You've just got to use your brains a bit better….*

> *…My son said 'I'll set up GPS[16] for you so you're straight' so you have to get used to modern technology but with that sort of modern technology there's no stopping girls from coming into the industry.*

In her account of the gender implications of the spatial division of labour on the farmyard, Shortall (2019) asserts that women who use machinery seek other ways to emphasise their femininity because they become defeminised. However, Judy, Catherine and Jill did not construct what they called a 'girly' presentation as some of the other participants did by marking their bodies using dress, make-up and such like. This could be explained by the elevation of status as they are proud to "find other ways"

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[16] GPS refers to the Global Positioning System used in precision agriculture which enables automated field navigation of a tractor.

to farm which harness cognitive traits they consider belonging to a 'good' farmer, such as determination, initiative and resilience.

On the other hand, unlike Judy, Catherine and Jill, Flo is limited in the tasks she undertakes on the farm because she has not been taught to drive a tractor. The loader[17] she uses is deemed suitable for her because it is smaller and simpler to use than a tractor.

> *Flo: Obviously I'm limited to what I can do. Although I can drive the loader, I can't drive the tractor. It's something I haven't learnt to do and it's [husband's] pride and joy. He says, 'I paid £64,000 for that so you're not going to learn in it' which is fair enough. If I break anything on it, then it's a lot to repair, so he weighs up the cost of driving it himself! The loader is a lot smaller than the tractor. The tractor has so many buttons and levers – it is very complicated and a lot bigger! It's gateways he worries about really. The jobs that I do tend to be more like halter training cattle or halter training sheep. Jim[18] does all the machinery work. There's always plenty to do in both departments. I'm not as strong as he is so there's certain jobs that he has to do. We do work very well together.*

In order to justify this division of labour, Flo views halter training livestock as her "department" on the farm which is complementary to her husband's control of machinery work. However, the idea that women lack the embodied skill of hand-eye coordination may be perpetuated by Flo's exclusion from tractor work. It is not a lack of strength that is excluding her, but her own and her husband's belief that she is not skilled enough. Therefore, the perception by others of women's inferiority in farming can lead to underestimation of their capabilities, as recognised by Young (1980), so the meanings attached to the body are constructed to align with the oppositional characteristics of 'tough men' and 'caring women' (Liepins, 1998, p.376). This resonates with the findings of Shortall (2019, p.330) who argues that "the tractor is a symbol of male power" and Bryant (2003) who found that men can be gatekeepers of farm knowledge. As a result, women may be subject to the unequal transfer of information, such as about the workings of a tractor. Accordingly, the appropriation of

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[17] A loader is a type of machinery used to move objects on the farm.
[18] Jim is Flo's husband

farm technology by men is historically prevalent, for example when practices for milking cattle became advanced, it led to women being excluded from this work which they previously carried out by hand (Kaarlenkaski, 2018).

5.2.3 Performing care

Following women's strategies for accommodating physical farm work, which is premised on masculine practices, farming is also embodied differently to men in terms of work styles and priorities. Many of the women framed themselves as distinct to men through their embodiment of problem-solving and patience as advantageous skills for success in farming which they attributed to a natural 'female sensibility'. Similarly to farming, mining was considered as a gendered occupation in which men dominated due to the coding of physical labour as masculine. According to Mayes and Pini (2010), in the shift from manual work to management, women mining managers were seen to 'do things differently' to men, but in a superior way, due to their interpersonal skills. However, this ingenuity is experienced as the result of individual success, as opposed to intrinsic qualities of womanhood. Despite their textual analysis showing this 'feminine advantage' (ibid, p.234) as naturally held by women, the empirical work with women mining managers found that they conceptualised communication skills in gender neutral terms. On the contrary, in this study, it seems that women farmers draw on a 'female sensibility' which informs their positive sense of self and work practices.

By situating their skills in relation to normative femininity which defines women's strengths as emotional support, they risk reproducing a gendered division of labour. However, the status of work, such as caring for livestock, is elevated as they are empowered by the embodiment of womanhood. It is explained in Chapter 4 that men *do* marginalise women farmers as helpers, which is confirmed by Saugeres (2002c, p.646) who found that the "otherness of the female body still serves to undermine women's work". Women are seen to be unable to farm on equal terms to men as their bodies are defined by a lack of strength. However, in the data extracts which follow, women see themselves as having different, but not inferior, ways of working through their affinity with animals and ability to be a team player.

According to Alice, women are better than men at working with sheep because a "girl vet student" who she worked with showed that women are more caring. She attributes this difference to biology because women "have the mothering instinct" as child bearers so nurturing skills are derived from being a woman. When applied to her own character,

Alice shows that she has a more caring side than her brother by using the example that she will keep an orphaned lamb inside the house. Therefore, the animal shares the space of the family where reproductive work typically takes place, thus reproducing the idea that women are suited to care work, whether it is with children or livestock.

> *Alice: I've had boy vet students and they're a waste of time. If I had the option of a boy or a girl vet student, I'd go with a girl any time. They always come at lambing time and they are always more attentive with the sheep. The girl will chuck the straw in and lay the lamb making sure they get up. They are a lot more caring because they have the mothering instinct, don't they. I've got sheep living in my kitchen at the moment! I haven't got another orphan for it to live with so I think that it can't go out in the cold. My brother says 'why is the sheep in the house?' I say 'why not?'*

A less deterministic application of Bourdieu's (1986) model of capital is relevant here as although gender binaries become naturalised through their reproduction in interaction, the women understand themselves as agents who relate to their gender as a barrier or resource at different moments. For example, in section 5.1 of the chapter, Alice dismissed a feminine body presentation as frivolous and representative of a helper in farming such as a 'farmer's girlfriend'. However, here she draws upon aspects of a feminine character as advantageous for work success within a normatively masculine environment.

> *Ida: You often find that the most successful flocks have usually got a female shepherdess because it's that care and attention and a man would probably say 'that will probably live or die' which sadly is true but it's going over and above and doing that extra hour's work to check that number 35 has suckled or something or to make sure a ewe has cleaned OK or the milk has come down – that stockmanship that sometimes I think men don't have. I'm not anti-male because of it but I think it's vital.*

Ida uses two gendered words to refer to what she does, namely stockmanship and shepherdess. While she argues that the gendered division of labour embedded in the language is inaccurate, she still uses them to describe her own practice. For example, 'stockmanship' signifies a masculine practice, yet she argues that men are not proficient

in the skills which it presumes. She goes on to defend her position as "not anti-male". By this, it seems that she considers women to embody preferable dispositions which foster animal welfare. The title by which she refers to herself, namely a shepherdess, allows her to reconcile her identity as a farmer and a woman by exercising the skills that "men don't have". For example, she demonstrates care through her thoroughness in checking the wellbeing of ewes and their lambs.

Susan also considers that women have a 'sixth sense about stock' which aligns with Saugeres' (2002c) observation that animal-rearing is allocated to women on farms on the basis that it is an extension of a woman's natural role as a mother. As a result of this disposition being viewed as characteristic of women in general, Susan then questions her own achievements. This may suggest that if all women are seen to be naturally intuitive with care work, it downgrades one's personal accomplishments. Having a 'sixth sense' as a trait fixed at birth is therefore not perceived as empowering compared to active acquisition through hard work.

> Susan: A lot of farmers like women looking after their stock because
> they're a bit more intuitive than a lot of men. That's probably why you
> get more women in livestock farming than you do arable. You do have
> this sort of sixth sense or a lot of people have a sixth sense about
> stock so I don't know whether I've had any achievements or not!

Gender is made relevant to experiences of working with animals due to the expectation of empathy as a feminine position "taken to be intrinsically associated with women's reproductive role" (Birke, 1994, p.139). For women farmers, their identities are justified by emphasising their ability to bond with animals. Similarly, in Wilkie's (2010) research about working with farm animals, women were perceived as gentle with baby animals, susceptible to making an animal feel comfortable and having a superior understanding of expectant animals compared to men. Treating gender as relational, Alice, Ida and Susan differentiate themselves from the masculine stereotype of a farmer as 'emotionally aloof' (Wilkie, 2010, p. 60). Therefore, there may be a reciprocal relationship between understanding one's self as shaped by natural competencies in emotion work which are reproduced in the performance of work and gender identities.

In addition to having an affinity with animals, four of the participants felt that their communication skills with people originated from being a woman. In comparison to women's dispositions, Danielle and Rachel emphasise that the biology of men is

detrimental to farm work because testosterone is viewed to make men argumentative. Rachel therefore elevates her position by stating that she is not a testosterone fuelled son, as the tradition of patrilineal inheritance would dictate, and therefore her working relationship with her father is cooperative.

> *Danielle: When I was full time shepherding a few years ago the manager himself was male and he used to employ all women and there was jokes. At the end of the day he said that women don't argue back at him and they had care and compassion and I think he's right in a lot of ways. There wasn't that level of testosterone flying around – everyone got on and it was a good team.*

> *Rachel: Luckily, my father and I work really well together and have the set things that we look after. We will discuss various business issues and I think that works really well. I look at some father-son relationships and there's this testosterone. The son comes back from university and wants to implement lots of changes so the father gets frustrated as it's his baby. I've not had that at all because my father's been really open to pulling on my strengths to build a good team. If I get asked to do something that's not a nice job, I'll still do it, there's no question about it.*

The extracts from Jenny and Kate below show how women's "care and compassion" that Danielle outlines manifests in farm practice, namely by being a confidante for colleagues' problems. Their perception is that colleagues feel comfortable with them because they are women which reinforces the idea that women are attuned to emotions and are therefore better at building working relationships than men. Similarly, Pini (2005a, p.85) notes that "in describing themselves as communicative, relationship builders and people-oriented, the majority of agricultural women… marked themselves as distinctly different from hegemonic definitions of masculine management". As a result, the reconceptualisation of farm management offers new opportunities for women in farming. The participants identified that rationality is now central to the role of a farmer, given the industry faces increasing financial pressures and fierce competition within a global market.

> *Jenny: I know certain staff members that will come to me with problems that they don't feel comfortable talking to men about.*

> *Kate: Even the cowman said, 'I feel I can talk to you because you're a female. I feel I can open up to you'.*

Little and Leyshon's (2003, p.263) assertion that "the notion of the good farmer still centres, for men, on conventional attitudes of strength and power" is called into question by the way that women construct a farmer identity. Moreover, Saugeres (2002c) situates farming as a "manual occupation" without acknowledgment that in a contemporary context, physical labour is combined with managerial roles which may contribute to the reconfiguration of gender relations. As similarly found in the context of engineering (Faulkner, 2009), this resonates with a shift towards communication skills in contemporary agriculture which the participants suggest are dispositions that are held by women. This focus on people management aligns with the women's ambitions which were expressed in terms of business goals, such as having happy employees. Saugeres (2002c) found that women in farming are often viewed to occupy a liminal position as neither a man nor woman. However, the experiences discussed here show that they do not consider skills they associated with femininity, such as being empathic, to be problematic in a typically masculine context.

The women farmers emphasise that doing farming aligns with doing femininity by caring for the staff and livestock they work with. Similarly, women nurses view their work as feminine due to the emotion and care work involved (Huppatz, 2012). However, by understanding these competencies as instinctive from being a mother, rather than acquired, it may legitimise their work as undervalued and underpaid. As Lloyd (1984, p. 86) recognises, "the status of manhood has been seen as itself an attainment, in ways which femininity is not". In other words, irrespective of men's bodily strength being viewed as natural in farming, it is valued and reproduced, as shown by the normative arrangements of the farmyard and farm practices that women farmers must negotiate.

As Fuss (1989, p.65) notes, "women's lives have been thought to be dictated by 'natural' bodily rhythms" which undermines the agency and value of their actions. However, in contrast to philosophical tradition, in the context of nursing, women do not view themselves as flawed because their bodies make them less rational than men. Their difference is viewed as an asset and "provides these women with confidence in their capacities" (Huppatz, 2012, p.88) much like it does for the women farmers in this study. In contrast, the one quote from Rachel shows that men's hormones are counterproductive in farming as they are viewed to determine *men's* behaviour as

irrational which challenges the expectation that women have unruly minds due to the volatility of their hormones. Generally, it is articulated that women are cleverer or more patient, as shown by Flo and Alice below, so men are defined by what they are not. Unlike the difference articulated between men and women's physical bodies in terms of strength, women see themselves as having better minds, but the specific attributes of men's do not tend to be outlined.

> *Flo: I have patience with them [animals] that perhaps my husband doesn't have. I think for that reason we work well together.*

> *Alice: There's probably more women than men at the shows. Women have more patience to stand there trimming them [sheep] up. Men don't have the patience.*

It is interesting to note that reference to women's biological processes emerged in the interviews in terms of the ways that pregnancy may or may not affect embodied experiences of farming. In the work of Saugeres (2002c), it was stated by men farmers that a woman's reproductive capacity can be a burden due to their inability to do farm work whilst pregnant or caring for a young child. However, the women that I spoke to challenge this misconception through determination to carry on with farming whilst negotiating such bodily changes and caring responsibilities. For Julie, the fact that the majority of her farm work is conducted indoors and does not require physical exertion, means that it was accessible whilst pregnant and after giving birth.

> *Interviewer: Do you feel there have been any barriers to you in your career in farming?*

> *Julie: Absolutely. It's an interesting point about the physical requirements of childbirth. If I had been physically working on the farm that would've been harder. Being involved in a business on the farm meant it was a lot easier because I carried on doing emails and sales. I went back to work after a few days of the kids being born. If that had been yard work, for example tractor driving, I couldn't have done it. But because it was running a business on the side, food processing, it allowed me to carry on.*

Similarly to Julie, Catherine could continue with farm management, such as delegation to staff despite changes to her mobility, as shown by "I could hardly walk and was like

a beached whale", making the manual labour of "yard work" or "getting in with the cattle" difficult. Not only did the pregnant body present barriers to capability, but also safety, as Catherine and Mel were "protected" by their colleagues by not being "allowed" to participate in livestock work due to a risk of infection and the unpredictability of animal behaviour.

> *Catherine: Yes [remained working] up until I was eight months pregnant. Obviously the company I work for were very understanding as they made sure I was there to check things and then boss people around. I wasn't allowed to get in with the cattle. They made sure that I was safe. It was OK. This time around I could hardly walk and was like a beach whale so it was difficult. As you do in farming, you struggle on and try and keep everything going.*

> **-------------------------**

> *Interviewer: You said that when you were pregnant you were fully involved, how was that?*

> *Mel: It was fine. It's not an illness, is it? People where very protective when I went in with the pigs. When I was heavily, heavily pregnant I didn't go in with the bacon pigs as you have to look after yourself but I mean I just got on with it.*

> *Interviewer: It was more the risk of the pigs?*

> *Mel: Yeah, the risk. I was still jumping gates! They thought I was mad. I just got on with it.*

In the above extract, Mel downplays the relevance of pregnancy to her work by highlighting that "it is not an illness". Therefore, the biomedical model which constructs pregnancy as a condition and thus women's bodies as objects of control is resisted (Gatrell, 2008). Nettleton's (2006) work, cited by Gatrell (2008, p.29), indicates that "the maternal body is usually reduced to its reproductive status and is seen as unreliable". In other words, subjecting women's bodies to essentialist discourse which views them as incompetent supports the idea that the male body is the norm for economic productivity. Yet, Mel emphasises that her everyday work was not disrupted and her pregnancy did not undermine her professionalism as she continued to be involved in physical labour, such as "jumping gates".

Jackie referred to altering her working patterns to accommodate the pregnant body, for example by sleeping longer. However, similarly to Mel, she worked until the day she gave birth. The distinct temporalities of farming may explain this pattern as seasonal rhythms and unpredictability does not easily align with breaks from employment, such as maternity leave. Self-employment allows flexibility around taking leave, as suggested by Mel below, without the extent of maternal legislation and expectations that apply to organisational contexts.

> *Jackie: At eight months pregnant I stopped foot trimming cows as I was worried about getting kicked. Nothing really stopped. In my final few weeks I would maybe go out after breakfast and have a kip as I struggled to sleep towards the end. I tended to have a morning kip but I was still doing the milking until the day I went to be induced.*

> *Mel: So I was at work when I was in labour. My husband had to tell me to go home. I worked up until half one on the day that I gave birth and I'm so lucky because it's our own business I maybe had a week [off]. I had her on the Tuesday and I was back in work on the Monday. Not full time or anything. I could bring my child with me and she'd lay in the cot upstairs. I wasn't outside as much.*

5.3 Summary

In this chapter I have shown that the salience of gender to farming is shaped by discourses of power enacted upon the body, such as that women are caring and men are strong. As manual labour remains a significant part of farm work, the farming body is taken by default to be male. As such, the female farming body is rendered invisible, with each individual woman having to find a way to manage their appearance. Despite the view held by themselves and others that the feminine body is unable to farm based on the normative organisation of practices, the respondents were able to find alternative means of doing farming in order to succeed. They explained that their bodies may be weaker than men's, but their minds are stronger in the sense that they are able to creatively adapt. Therefore, they are able to challenge the universality of a masculine culture of practice when undertaking tasks that require physical labour by harnessing a 'female sensibility'. This female sensibility takes the form of a rational mind enacted through ingenuity and emotional labour.

The construction of feminine dispositions in a traditionally masculine domain allows women to resist the dominant gender order which reproduces the notion that farming is an unsuitable career for women. The respondents deem their farming methods superior to men's on the basis that they are resisting tradition. However, this reproduces the idea that men and women have oppositional bodies and minds and obscures the transferral of knowledge and the design of the farm yard as patriarchal. The implications of these findings for the industry are that diverse, but not inclusive, practices are shown. Women are becoming recognised in their own right, but as a different type of farmer. This could be conceptualised as a division of labour as the opportunities of women farmers may be limited if they are perceived to assume narrow roles. In women farmer's lives, the utility of caring skills is apparent in their contribution to a positive self-concept and the success of the farm enterprise. They allow them to establish compatibility between femininity and farming, yet these differences may be constraining in securing equal opportunities.

Emotions lie within a dualism which have cast them in opposition and subordinate to rationality. However, my research has shown that resistance to dichotomous understandings is needed to consider the role of emotions in knowledge and therefore to deconstruct the gendered hierarchies of such relations which situate objectivity as masculine and subjectivity as feminine (Williams and Bendelow, 1997). The women farmers in my study deemed that their capacity as rational workers was expressed through emotion work with livestock and farm colleagues. Therefore, emotions are reframed as a work strategy which makes their gender identity visible in positive ways in opposition to men. They position themselves as addressing a skills gap in farming for safety and efficiency of the business, creating a niche for women in a traditionally male-dominated culture. However, the women deem their capacity for emotional labour as having a biological basis which reproduces prevailing patriarchal discourses, as shown by Birke (1999), that legitimise 'naturalness' as undeserving of recognition. Similarly, Shisler and Sbicca, (2019, p.875)'s study about women farmers in the US found that "performing femininity through care work in their farming practices" is empowering, but reproduces gender stereotypes given that concern for the wellbeing of communities, such as of animals and colleagues, is coded as feminine.

The stereotypes which cast women as weak, fragile or hysterical reduce their competence to their reproductive bodies. For example, the 'baby brain' is a justification for behaviour on the basis that women do not have control over their minds and bodies

(Hurt, 2011, Pownall, 2019). Specifically, it contributes to the policing of *women* because incompetency is not attributed as an outcome of the role and responsibilities of parenthood, but is deemed characteristic of specifically women's biology, as shown by pregnancy and hormones. Therefore, essentialising discourse legitimises patriarchal hierarchies which position femininity and competence in tension (Hurt, 2011, Pownall, 2019). This suggests that women naturally cannot be rational workers because their bodies are deficient, but as Birke (1999, p.27) notes, difference is inscribed on the body through social processes and is not untouched by culture. As some of the participants outlined, there is not a universal woman as a variety of body sizes exist which show the inadequacy of generalisations. Similarly, Fausto-Sterling (2000) problematises the idea that gender is the social expression of sex as the science used to justify biological differences is not conclusive and suggests a continuum of traits that are changeable in response to experiences.

This chapter has shown that the way the body is presented and used contributes to the in/visibility of women farmers. The women's experiences of their bodies mediate their self and wider societal expectations about what it means to be a farmer and what it means to be a woman. Firstly, as a result of interactions with men, women perceived that bodily appearances associated with a farming identity were construed as masculine in opposition to femininity. Identities are constructed through the body, for example by presenting the self as a tomboy for convergence to the dominant masculine culture and divergence from rural femininities such as that attributed to a farmer's wife or girlfriend. Whilst scruffy dressing or dirty hands shows work prowess but not femininity, sometimes these supposedly contradictory identities can be reconciled in the case of a sensibility. The women farmers I spoke to viewed themselves as embodying farming differently compared to the default, dominant, masculine practices. Despite appealing to biological discourses about women's natural abilities, they show agency in how they manage and interpret bodily presentation and bodily labour as expressive of gender on a malleable basis.

Chapter 6 Navigating tradition

The previous chapter has shown that gender is made salient to farming activities because marginalising interactions with men emerge at work, as shown by women farmers being ignored or patronised. Strategies are used to navigate their visibility as a woman and invisibility as a farmer, such as by working harder or differently to men. The discussion so far has indicated that the unequal experiences of women are based on the assumption that a farmer is a man which relegates women to the peripheral status as a helper and/or a wife. As a result, this chapter will address the notion of a farmer's wife as a construct which women farmers draw upon to make sense of their own lives. The 'farmer's wife' represents an ideal form of rural femininity (Little, 2014), but it is underpinned by traditions within rural life that glorify a gendered division of labour and reproduce the patriarchal culture inherent to the experiences outlined in the previous chapter.

This chapter recognises the extent to which participants draw upon tradition in order to navigate their identity as a farmer who has or has not had members of their family working in farming. By tradition, I mean the historically established practices and discourses within farming which draw attention to the relational nature of ideologies across space and time. It seems that women understand their lives in the context of familial farming structures which present constraints and choices for their identity construction. For example, the experiences of participants are underpinned by notions of gender and background which are compared and contrasted in relation to past moments in time to articulate progress or stagnation in attitudes. In particular, this chapter will discuss the relevance of women farmers having a familial connection to one of the aims of the thesis which is to understand the embodiment of farming by women. Following this, I will consider the double burden of being a woman and from a non-farming background. Finally, the relevance of a farmer's wife will be recognised, as an ideological construction within the rural idyll to which the participants often positioned their selves in relation to.

The family is a common means of establishing a farming career due to access to resources and experience from parents or grandparents who are involved in the industry. Typically, the ownership of a farm is passed through generations of the same family due to an emotional connection to the land (Villa, 1999). This became bound by gender relations due to the assumption that the maintenance of the family name is only achievable by transferral to sons on the basis that daughters would marry and change

their name (Shortall, 1999). By drawing upon Bourdieu's (1984) notion of capital, the embodiment of a farming background can be understood as a resource in conjunction with gender identity which informs one's sense of self. Embodiment of a farming background refers to the perceived inheritance of characteristics through family which may be expressed in one's talents and interest in farming. Building upon Bourdieu's (1984) class-based model, we can begin to understand how women farmers might feel disadvantaged or empowered by the extent of their social capital such as networks and/or their cultural capital in terms of tacit knowledge.

In previous feminist work, the concepts used by Bourdieu have been adopted within a theoretical analysis of gender. For example, Lawler (1999) draws upon Bourdieu's (1990) notion of capital to explore the cultural configurations of women's class mobility. However, Moi (1991) argues that capitals can be organised by gender as a hierarchy of dispositions are underpinned by mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion. Power is reproduced in everyday life so appears natural, for example, femininity equates to "negative cultural capital for its disassociation with intellect" (Moi 1991). As Lovell (2000) poses, women can adopt a masculine habitus, such as through participation in banter, due to its legitimation in a masculine domain. Others renegotiate their ways of doing and being to suit the valued dispositions of a contemporary farming context. For example, as discussed in Chapter 5, the 'women's brain' seems to be privileged by participants for the communication skills required to manage a farming business and/or to care for livestock.

Participants in this study viewed farming as a 'way of life', or a 'lifestyle' according to Jane, Paula, Susan and Danielle. Therefore, those who are not born into agriculture may be perceived as 'inhabiting life worlds separate from those as farmers' and thus contribute to an outsider status (Holloway, 2004, p.320). This study can illuminate the extent women identify themselves as able to accrue the 'cultural capital' as a woman and/or new entrant to achieve status as a 'good farmer'. The embodiment of farming has been referred to previously in literature which focuses on the negotiation of retirement. For example, in the work of Riley (2016), male farmers in the UK over 65 years old were interviewed about the complexities of negotiating retirement and maintaining an identity of a 'good farmer'. The blurred boundary between home and work often meant that more than a professional identity is lost upon retirement as farming is an all-encompassing lifestyle (Riley, 2016).

6.1 Familial connection

My absence in the succession of my family's farm is not gender-related, but as a result of my choice to channel an interest in agriculture elsewhere. However, as an only child and farmer's daughter, this means that I play a part in preventing the continuation of the farm. Therefore, my own position highlights that generational affiliations and inheritance shape identities in farming. The remnants of patrilineal inheritance prevail in the participants' stories of their farming trajectories as they must navigate the privileges of gender and family which are governed by the expectation that a farm should be inherited by a son. As Luhrs (2016) asserts, daughters of farmers tend to be overlooked in the transferal of farm ownership, despite them having shown an interest and contributed to farm work throughout their childhood. This often renders daughters as subordinate in farming, given that power is expressed through property (Shortall, 1999).

In the below extract, Ida suggests that her parent's preference for patrilineal inheritance was unsuccessful and consequently she positions herself in relation to what she is not; a son or 'Jonathan'. The implication for her sense of self is feeling that she is a disappointment to her family and that her position in farming is illegitimate. However, Ida asserts that this patriarchal norm is unjustified because a son "might not have stuck around…or have been interested [in farming]". Therefore, an awareness is shown that a farming habitus is not inherited as an automatic outcome of being a man, but is acquired, as shown by Ida's determination to make the continuation of the farm a success under her control.

> *Ida: There's a part of me, which sounds crazy, that I'll never feel good enough. I know for a fact that Dad wanted a son and he didn't get one. He had three daughters. Originally I was going to be Jonathan and then my sister was going to be Jonathan and then my younger sister was going to be Jonathan and then they gave up. To be perfectly honest, you don't know how things would have worked out if my Mum and Dad had had a son and they might not have stuck around. They might not have been interested. My sister and I work as hard as a rufty tufty guy at lambing time and some of these youngsters can't keep up with us!*

In the extracts below, Alice and Jackie echoed the priorities given to farmer's sons, despite their brothers choosing to leave the farm. In the absence of their brothers, Jackie

and Alice have adopted the position of farmer which shows the insufficiency of the assumption that one's gender predetermines an aptitude for farming. This evidences Ida's suggestion that her imaginary brother may have left the farm despite being 'naturally' predisposed to this position by being a man born into a farming family. Jackie refers to her brother's current position as helper on the farm which inverts the assumption that it is women who adopt a subsidiary role as they cannot be a fully-fledged farmer (Whatmore, 1991b). However, Jackie also notes that the dominant model of men having economic control withstands and has led to a slower rate of progression within the business than she would perceive a brother to have.

> *Alice: Yes I used to like the lambing aspect – I wasn't really interested in the rest. I think it's because I had a brother who was older and could do everything better so they always just took him. Now he's left and gone lorry driving so I'm just left to my own devices.*

> *Jackie: I think if we had been lads we probably would have been partners by now...*

> *My brother was [involved] because he was the oldest and he was a boy so he was destined to farm. He chose to leave about twenty years ago and works off farm. He still helps out as he drives a digger. He can do digging work for us on a weekend.*

Following the discourse of patrilineal inheritance, Alice and Judy also outline experiences which indicate that access to resources is easier for men. For example, Judy alludes to the pattern identified by Pilgeram and Amos (2015) that the typical means of farm ownership for women is through a husband or father. Given that her family gave up the farm, Judy suggests that marrying a farmer seemed the only option to access land but did not align with her aim to *earn* the privilege. As a result, she maintains an identity as a farmer in her own right in a self-employed capacity for an estate, rather than being defined and constrained at work by a relationship with a man. Similarly, Alice highlights that the ownership of land is governed by men and the allocation of land for rent is competitive with farmers who are men.

> *Alice: I'm lucky that my Grandad lets me hire here but the other fields I have to hire are expensive. There's such a fight for land. There's four big farmers in the area so if land comes up for rent , they get*

offered it, although one of them is my father so little people like me don't get the opportunity to get it. You're always fighting against the big boys.

Judy: There was no way I would be able to have my own farm. I was not prepared to marry someone to get that shortcut.

At the start of each interview, questions focused on early experiences of farming and entering the industry. Some of the women in the study have been brought up on a farm and view farming as in the blood which prompted their return to the farm for a career change. For example, Jenny and Rachel worked away from the family farm in the legal profession and an allied food industry respectively but decided to return to pursue farming for the sake of the viability of the family business. They both realised their commercial experience to be transferable and crucial to the farm; in Jenny's case this manifested as a new opportunity "to create a brand and sell more directly to butchers and farm shops" and for Rachel this meant revitalising the management of the enterprise. Although fluidity in one's working life is not uncommon in an era of 'liquid modernity' (Bauman, 2000), the character of farming in particular may account for this pattern. Farms are usually passed through generations of family so as farmers get older, it may be appropriate to implement a succession plan for transition of ownership to their children in order to maintain the business for the future.

Flo, Julie, Jenny and Rachel position farming as an inherited way of being, irrespective of a historical assumption that farming is a man's domain. All four women suggested that farming was an engrained passion or destiny, as expressed by notions such as 'in me', 'my heart' and 'in the blood'. According to Noble and Watkins (2003, p.520), "social relations are internalized and experienced as 'natural'" which might explain the tendency of participants to treat the farming habitus as inherited, rather than as cultural knowledge and belonging which is acquired from participation in farming from a young age.

The significance that Flo attributes to her involvement in farm activities during her childhood indicates that socialisation into cultural practices can help reinforce something 'in' her, as it is suggested that an interest in farming is inherited. However, elsewhere she shows how her passion or interest does not necessarily translate into aptitude as when she recently joined her husband full time on the farm, she had reservations about her expertise.

> *Flo: My grandparents were farmers and as a child my mum used to pack me off to the North West and I spent my school holidays helping my grandfather out on the farm. All their family were farmers around the borders. So it's very much in me.*

Similarly, Julie was culturally embedded in her family's farm from a young age. For Julie, the particular place of the farm was the attraction to return to the continuation of the family farming business. Therefore, it is suggested that internal qualities, such as a spiritual connection to the land as part of her family's legacy, manifests as passion for farming.

> *Julie: I was the one who was always interested in it and helped out from a very early age doing cattle work and yard work. Even once I had left the farm to go to university and to qualify as a solicitor down in London, I knew that my heart wasn't in building a life there and I wanted to find a way to get back working for the family business and to do whatever I could to participate in what was happening here.*

In accordance with Julie, Jenny and Alice are empowered by their decision to return to the farm by exercising agency in their career trajectories, yet also making sense of this in terms of responding to a destiny or calling.

> *Jenny: Dad encouraged me to try other things as a career so I took up tennis coaching for a year or so but then found myself on the farm again so I just admitted that it must be in the blood and that was what I was meant to be!*

> *Rachel: When I went travelling – I spent 3 months touring farms in Canada. I thought to myself that I love farming and it's in my blood so why am I not making the most of the opportunity I've got at home.*

Saugeres' (2002a, p.379) study of farming families in France recognised the complex intersection of background and gender as contributing to the inheritance of knowledge. She found that men "naturalised farming as being in the blood", but that women did not, which reinforced the idea that men are the natural farmers. My participants challenge this previous evidence regarding the natural dominance of men by referring to farming as embodied. However, it must also be considered that the association of this return to the farm with notions of home, family and heart may be regarded as emotional ties that

women have traditionally been deemed susceptible to. The imagery of blood relations "symbolizes [the] connection" of kinship ties according to Lawler (2014, p.50). In the above quotes, Flo and Julie relate to an inherited self by understanding their predisposition towards farming as both natural and reinforced by socialisation on the family farm during their childhood.

A consistency across three of the above quotations is that the participants pursued a short-term diversion from the family farm after leaving school, such as for a legal career, tennis coaching or travelling, but then returned to the farm at a later date. This seems to contrast with the tradition of 'family farming' whereby the oldest (male) child is identified from an early age as the successor. Chiswell and Lobley (2018, p.642-3) refer to a shift from duty to opportunity as young people exercise agency in their decision to farm as 'qualitative evaluators' who realise the benefits of farm life and the ways they can add value to the business after a period away.

On the other hand, the decision to farm can be prompted by impending retirement, or a sense of duty to continue the farm. In the cases of Paula and Flo, they joined their husbands in working on the farm where they live. For example, Paula constructs a sense of belonging as her contribution allows the land to stay in the family, whereas the pressure of the retirement of her in-laws is felt by Flo and is prompted by her husband's mother going into hospital.

> *Paula: I'm very lucky that I can ask loads of questions to my husband who has had a lifetime in it. He left school at sixteen and went into his family farm straight away. They have farmed here since the 1600s so there's a lot of history on their side. They've been farming for four or five hundred years. That's quite special so I feel an obligation in a strange way, no-one's forcing me, but feel I would like to carry on that tradition and it's an honour to be able to do so.*

> *Flo: That event sealed it really that Jim really needed somebody. I fell into it really and there wasn't a huge amount of time to think about what's best for me. It was 'sign on the dotted line. We need you to be a partner.' It worked.*

Participants such as Ida and Jenny are from a farming background, yet they distance themselves from a privileged position by emphasising choice in their entry. It seems that they do not consider themselves to have benefitted from an effortless route into

farming as a result of their family connection. They suggest a meritocratic means to success through hard work which orientates their sense of selves as independent farmers. For example, Ida draws attention to the interviewer's lack of awareness of her family background as refreshing as it allows her to be considered as a farmer in her own right. She does not consider her position as bound by a 'duty' to be responsible for the continuation of the farm.

> Ida: I think it's healthy to talk to someone like you who I've never met before because I've always been passionate about both of them [farming and teaching] rather than just doing it [farming] because I was born here and brought up here. I'm not just doing it out of duty. I love it.

Similarly, Jenny and Rachel disassociate from being given 'special treatment' or 'special priorities' respectively as a result of their family history by emphasising that they have had to 'work as hard as everyone else' to achieve legitimacy. The equity of opportunity is also highlighted by Rachel's participation in pressure washing to clean pig housing, which is a job considered to be menial and shows that she did not progress at a privileged rate as a result of her involvement on the family farm.

> Jenny: Like I said, my brother didn't want me to feel any pressure to go into farming so encouraged me to do other things. He wouldn't give me any special treatment – I had to work as hard as everyone else.

> Rachel: When I first started back on the farm, I've never been given special priorities. I started at pressure washing.

Further examples of the ways in which participants viewed themselves as deserving of their position were given by Jackie and Bryony. For example, the participation of Jackie in independent reading and her attendance at meetings was deemed to demonstrate that she showed the interest and initiative to acquire knowledge. In comparison to her sister who was 'forced into it', choice and independence are strong themes in Jackie's account. Bryony views herself as pursuing farming 'on merit' by referring to her aptitude in decision-making. Similarly, Paula refers to displaying knowledge in conversations which shows that she is a good farmer, as opposed to being in the position through obligation. She contrasts commanding respect 'because of a surname'

with being your 'own person' which again emphasises autonomy within the structure of family inheritance.

> *Jackie: She [sister] came back to the farm when she didn't really want to so she was forced into it. She's nine years older than me. Then I've come back because I want to come back and I do more research into stuff and read stuff and go to meetings to learn more stuff.*

> *Bryony: That's one of the awful things you hear about family businesses that the next generation mucks it up and they're only in that position based on the familial connection rather than on merit. I'd certainly like to be seen as here on merit rather than anything else. Although I'm different to him [her Dad], I still have the ability to do a good job and deliver the right performance for the business, the staff and the landowners.*

> *Paula: I can hold my own business conversation and it wasn't just handed to me on a plate. I went and got those jobs myself. I worked for other businesses outside of the family. I think that's good because people look at you in your own right. I think that's really important and I would want that for our boys – not just that they've left school and been given a farm. You've got to earn that respect be it your son or your husband or whoever. No-one just commands that because of a surname. It doesn't work like that so I'm a big believer in you earn it. You reap what you sow. That's how I feel. I'd like to think that people feel that I'm my own person.*

The data has shown the importance of a family background to those participants who identify as having one, before moving on to discuss the experiences of those without this relationship in the next section. Firstly, gender is made relevant to the experiences of entry into farming due to patrilineal patterns within the family farm which situate women as second best compared to a brother, which would seem congruent with the tradition. Therefore, this emphasises recognition for, and the implications of, the patriarchal structures which prevail in farming. On the other hand, women seem to be empowered by this because it means that they have *chosen* to be part of the industry,

rather than having entered by default as a taken for granted pathway for a male family member.

Despite the structural inequalities which originate from family farming practices and prioritise men, a passion for farming is deemed to be inherited by women at birth. Many of the participants expressed the meaning of returning to work on the family farm in emotive terms, for example as providing a homely environment to bring up their own family and secondly as a response to current decision-makers easing their involvement as they age. However, they tended to emphasise the effort they have invested in the farm business to assert the (non) privilege of family. This can seem contradictory because they emphasise independence in their entry, yet often it is informed by a sense of duty to continue a lifestyle and business belonging to their family.

6.2 Entanglements of othering

Both gender and family history may contribute to inequalities in information and/or asset transfer experienced by women farmers. As shown in the previous section, farming is embodied by women through drawing upon discourses about generational affiliation, so for those who do not have family members who have farmed, this can present dual inequalities. For example, some of the participants suggest that social connections, economic resources and cultural knowledge are taken for granted by those who have farming in the family, whereas they do not have this advantage to facilitate the construction of an identity as a 'good farmer'.

Sharon, Bryony and Kate compared themselves to those who grew up on a farm and/or have been farming all their lives. Bryony grew up on a farm but left to pursue a different profession and Kate and Sharon did not grow up on a farm. They found it difficult to discern whether their under-confidence and receipt of patronising comments, as shown from the previous chapter, arose from 'being a girl' or 'starting from scratch'. Therefore, the historical context of farming as passed through generations of families means that farmers who do not enter the industry via this means or engage with farming during childhood may feel themselves to be disadvantaged. Research to date tends to focus on 'the family farm' whereby women and men are responsible for different tasks based on normative understandings of gender and patrilineal inheritance (Whatmore, 1991b, Shortall, 1999). Such restrictions to women's control on farms may be less prevalent now, as shown by the leadership positions of the participants in this study, but the assumption that family background accounts for tacit knowledge may affect an

individual's identity. This resonates with intersectionality because gender represents "socially constructed categories of difference and inequality [which] interact simultaneously with other systems of power" (Collins and Chepp, 2013, p. 68). In other words, family background may act as the other system of power in addition to gender due to the hegemonic discourse of family farming.

Bourdieu's (1984) notions of habitus and capital are useful theoretical tools to examine these power relations involved in the accumulation of the symbolic and material resources which inform the identity of a farmer. In the context of fishing, a form of work which similarly to farming tends to be passed through the family, Gustavsson and Riley (2017) found that capital shapes access and success in one's work. Forms of capital are reliant on each other as economic capital, such as machinery, is unusable without the cultural capital of skills development to operate it (Gustavsson and Riley, 2017). Drawing upon Bourdieu (1984), habitus is the embodiment of capital which may arise from familial links with an industry, such as fishing or farming, so the profession is often framed as 'in the blood'. As a result, cultural capital can emerge in corporeal ways, for example through ways of doing farming. Sharon positions herself as an outsider to farming because she has not benefited from being 'brought up on a farm'. Therefore, she suggests that her under-confidence in business decisions is shaped by the relative lack of cultural experience and competence which is usually facilitated by exposure to farming through family.

> *Sharon: I always think that people who have been brought up on a*
> *farm and it's been handed over have more confidence with it whereas*
> *I was nervous to have it on paper that we'd make enough money.*

The 'inner circle' of 'family connections' referred to by Kate and the 'club in the agricultural sector' identified by Bryony may resonate with Bourdieu's (1984) notion of social capital due to its emphasis on the benefits of group identities. Bryony's opportunity to strike up business deals is inhibited by her non-participation in shooting, a setting in which networking can take place. In this case, she has a family background in farming but lacks the networks that are usually entwined with them.

> *Bryony: Well, it's definitely a club in the agricultural sector. You*
> *know, shooting is where you have a big opportunity to network… If*
> *we're looking for extra land to rent for potatoes, I need to strike up a*
> *relationship with somebody myself to access the land. If I was in that*

> *sort of set-up, it would be easier as it can be done in a less formal and direct way.*

> *Kate: I don't have any family connections in farming whatsoever. It has been an uphill struggle for me. I'm not saying it's easy for a girl whose parents are farmers but it's an inner circle that you are not in as you're not from a farming family.*

Kate seemed to articulate a double burden as her capability was questioned on two accounts; for being a woman and not from a farming background. She indicates that everyone is not treated as starting on equal grounds, as despite an agricultural education, the absence of tacit knowledge was judged. Similarly for Susan, it became apparent that peers who had been exposed to farming from a young age had the advantage of knowledge that may not be taught as part of a formal college education.

> *Kate: I did used to have the piss taken out of me [at agricultural college] because they didn't understand why I'd want to come into farming as a girl and not from a farming background. That made me more determined! I remember standing there one day and we were just worming sheep and a member of staff said that I wouldn't make it as I was a girl and didn't come from a farming family but when I got my degree and I was qualified to teach, I knocked on his door and said 'do you remember me?' and he was quite shocked that he'd done that to me.*

> *Susan: At college there were a lot of things that farming children or those from farming backgrounds knew because they'd been there all their lives whereas I didn't know. For example, when I first went on a farm, I didn't know the difference between hay and straw and I was in real trouble when I bedded up the cows with hay!*

In addition to the tradition of having family members working in farming, having grown up in a rural area is deemed to predispose one to farming culture, as illustrated by the accounts of Alice and Catherine. For example, Alice, who is from a farming background, admitted that she was initially suspicious about hiring a 'city girl'. Catherine outlines that she has been subject to similar prejudice due to the assumption that experience must lead to the decision to farm and that farming cannot be learnt as you are born with it. However, Susan also grew up in a city and illustrated above that

she *did* learn to farm by trial and error which meant learning from her initial mistakes, such as confusion about the difference between hay and straw.

> *Alice: If you don't come from a farming background, people wonder if you're going to be any good. I thought that about my apprentice as she didn't come from a farming background at all. I thought, are you just going to rock up and be a city girl who thinks you're going to make it in the sheep world but it turns out she can.*

> *Catherine: They say 'are your parents farmers?' I say that I grew up in the city centre nowhere near any greenery. Everyone's shocked. You didn't know anyone, so how did you decide that you wanted to work on a farm? Everyone in farming thinks that you inherit it or grow up with it. People just think that you have to be part of farming to get into farming. Like who you know. I suppose you can't learn what you need for farming. It's something that you have to be born with and not learn your way into it.*

The expectation that someone from an urban background will make an incompetent farmer may be underpinned by associations recalled elsewhere in the interviews, such as a lack of understanding about food production and/or a commitment to veganism which are deemed incongruent with agriculture. Therefore, the distinction between rural/urban is made salient to identities and farming activities because these binaries (re)construct place-based knowledge which are shaped by different agendas and social relationships. As Hillyard (2007, p. 86) outlines, the countryside is a "contested space", as shown by the case of fox hunting which is symbolic of the shared values of communities residing in areas with a historical and geographic connection to the pursuit. Applied specifically to farming as part of the rural sphere, this premise highlights that a perceived lack of social and cultural capital may be shaped by identities formed through place, family history, as well as gender.

It seems that the above examples from the data indicate that women farmers position themselves as outsiders on the basis that they have not achieved the networks and tacit knowledge that would be expected of those who have farming 'in the blood'. One of the ways in which Jane negotiates the disadvantage of a non-farming background is through her full-time work. A by-product of her office job in an agricultural purchasing company is that it 'facilitates' her own farming business by building a rapport with

other farmers. Therefore, a relative lack of farming networks, compared to those inherited through family, is addressed by her off-farm work which qualifies an insider status to farming culture.

> *Jane: I've got some good contacts and it's opened the door to have*
> *conversations with them. If I'd just approached them out of the blue,*
> *they might not be willing. Whereas if you speak to them day to day*
> *anyway, they might say 'can I have a price for fencing?' and you start*
> *to have a conversation with me asking 'what's it for'? It goes from*
> *there.*

6.3 Generational shift

Having explained the significance of the family to the identity construction of women farmers, I will move on to discuss how they make sense of their selves in relation to the meanings attached to farmers' wives. Farmers' wives are deemed representative of women in farming during a particular time period, notably in the post-war generation of some of the participant's parents. As White (2013) professes, a generational lens is a means to identify social injustice, in this case women's peripheral position in farming, but also social change in terms of disassociation with the traditional attitudes which constrained women. Discursive forms of generation are used in women farmers' stories to indicate their part in a web of social relations embedded in a particular time and place (Foster, 2013). For example, what it means to be a woman is constructed in relation to what it means to be a man within the specific context of the rural, as shown by literature about rural masculinity which takes this into account (e.g. Brandth, 1995, Campbell, Bell and Finney, 2006).

The farmer's wife has been deemed the archetypal form of rural femininity (Little and Austin, 1996) and can be socialised through organisations, such as the Young Farmer's Club (YFC). For example, Edwards (2017) found that YFC training for women in the 1950s incorporated "proficiency in agriculture alongside domestic skills" (ibid, p.27), but that whilst "rural women were expected to take on farming duties, this was placed within a supportive rhetoric" (ibid, p.41). Therefore, historical understandings of farm women from within interwar to post-war ideology (e.g. Bourke, 1987, Sayer, 2013) indicate that farming activities were differentiated by gender and once areas that women controlled became industrialised, such as poultry-rearing, they were appropriated by men.

In the data, women show how they challenge the traditional division of labour on the farm and in doing so relate to the tensions between domestic and economic productivity. This tension arises from the conceptualisation of work and gender within the rural whereby womanhood is focused on domesticity and often contributes to the success of the farm as the "kitchen is the hub of the farm labour process" (Whatmore, 1991a, p.95). A man within a farming family is usually identified as the farmer and the woman is referred to as a farmer's wife who is largely underpaid and undervalued, given that they are perceived as the helper (Campbell and Bell, 2000). A woman might be expected to support the farmer and the business through her contribution to domestic life, such as raising the next generation of workers, feeding the workers or doing book work (Whatmore, 1991a). As a result, women farmers navigate these traditional positions and relationships in farming which promote patriarchy, by distancing themselves from the role and identity of a farmer's wife.

6.3.1 The influence of mothers: defying the helper role

According to Whatmore (1991a, p.87), the meaning of a farmer's wife is holding "responsibility for domestic labour" and any farm work undertaken outdoors is not self-initiated but a response to seasonal demand on a temporary basis. As a result, farming was traditionally not seen as a trajectory for women in a way that makes them accountable for the farm. In contrast, some women farmers relate to their mothers as role models who resisted the stereotype of the farmer's wife or embraced it without considering that they were doing the work of a farmer in their own right. For example, in the extract below, Julie frames the 'behind the scenes' work of her mother on the farm, such as administration and management as important, yet undervalued. Reflecting on task allocation today, Julie recognises that her father's role may be deemed replaceable due to advances in technology, compared to the business sense needed and shown in the farming activities of her mother.

> *Julie: All the time I used to have long conversations with my Mum. Without even realising it she would describe herself as a farmer's wife, but she was finance director and providing the managerial shove. Wherever I was, I spent a lot of time on the phone to her talking through farming stuff.*
>
> *I always say that it's Dad and it's Tim who run the farm, but actually it's my Mum and Tim's wife Jo who really have driven stuff forward.*

They're [Dad and Tim] going out kicking tractors and kicking wheels but to what extent could you replace them with a labourer? Who's been making the business decisions, who's been making the diversification decisions, taxation and long term financial planning; it's not my Dad. He's brilliant at farming but I do plan to replace him with a robot when he retires!

Julie refers to herself as her 'mother's daughter' to justify her predisposition to farming as inherited. By identifying herself as a 'tomboy', she positions herself in contrast to traditional femininity which she explains might involve "waiting for somebody to do something".

Julie: I was always very much a tomboy when I was younger and I think I've still got elements of that now. I don't bother waiting for somebody to do something but then again that's part of being my mother's daughter; she always got things done.

Jenny also refers to the influence of her mother's work on the farm. Jenny's mother defied the expectation of the time by doing the manual labour which was constructed as a masculine pursuit. She was the wife of a farmer but not considered to be a 'farmer's wife' given that her contribution was beyond 'putting food on the table'.

Jenny: I think it's come on a lot in the last 20 years. When I was a kid, the role of the woman was to do the book work and to put food on the table but it was Mum who physically set up the pigs and was out there doing the manual labour.

Ida outlined that her mother conducted work outside on the farm and inside the home. Ida recognises the quantity and quality of livestock work participated in by her mother, alongside her father. As a result, Ida refers to her mother as a 'working farmer's wife' to indicate that she was married to a farmer but also doing farm work herself. This role should not be prefaced by 'just' according to Ida because without her contribution, the business could not function so she is more than a helper. Gasson (1980, p.170) also refers to a type of farm women as 'the working farmwife who is not usually responsible for a major farm enterprise, her role being rather that of assistant'. This maintains Ida's mother in opposition to a farmer but provides a distinction from the likes of the 'farm housewife' whose farm duties might be limited to administration (Gasson, 1980).

Ida: My mum was very influential in her quiet way. She reared 600
cattle a year when my sister and I were little tots. I can remember
pushing my sister up the road in her pushchair. We used to have some
buildings at the top. We went up to the mare pens and did the water. I
thought that my mum works so hard. She does that livestock work and
then she still has to run the kitchen to feed dad because he's a
traditional farmer who can't boil an egg but can make a cup of tea.
It's that kind of job description I suppose of a farmer's wife but she's
a working farmer's wife. There's no 'just' about it.

Ida, Jenny and Julie situate themselves as daughters by outlining the significance of their mothers' farm work which defied the expectation for women of the time. As Lawler (2000, p.63) identified in a study of mother-daughter relationships, "the mother can become positioned as producing a particular type of (feminine) self within the daughter". Similarly, women farmers refer to their identities within the context of kin relations. It seems that for the women farmers whose mothers were farmers but not recognised as such, it is significant for their sense of self that they are visible to produce a change in attitudes from the assumption that a woman on a farm must be a farmer's wife.

The title of a farmer's wife defines a woman by a heterosexual relationship and emphasises the gender inequalities of task allocation. Following this, referring to oneself as a farmer's daughter can be an identity claimed to legitimise one's place within the industry (Pini, 2004a). Compared to a farmer's wife, it is unlikely to be used in place of a job title, but rather as a symbol of cultural capital. Therefore, having a mother or father who farms suggests that knowledge, interest and networks in farming may be inherited to the next generation, as shown by Ellen.

Ellen: ...when I was going to the markets, the sales and the shows
people knew that I was my Dad's daughter. Yes, I think there's a lot in
that. They knew where I was coming from. That obviously was a help,
yes.

Being a farmer's daughter does not necessitate working on the farm but emphasises a connection to the land and lifestyle which may not manifest in ways that are economically viable. As the researcher in this study, I negotiated access into the participants' homes to conduct interviews by identifying as a 'farmer's daughter' to

indicate my connection to and interest in the rural community (see Chapter 3 for further commentary on this issue). Defining myself in relation to my father may seem contradictory to a feminist position according to Price and Evans (2006, p.288) who suggest that for one participant "her socialisation as a 'farmer's daughter has evidently prepared her to accept the patriarchy inherent in such a [patrilineal] system".

6.3.2 Traditional attitudes: managing the stigma of the farmer's wife

As outlined in the previous chapter, women farmers tended to be mistaken for a farmer's wife. Following this, the participants accounted for traditional attitudes and recalled a shift as younger generations of men and women disassociate themselves from the reproduction of the default position of women on farms as the farmer's wife. What it means to be a farmer's wife was articulated as a limited construction by women farmers and used as a point of comparison to understand their identities. Therefore, women negotiate the stigma of a farmer's wife as it can obstruct their recognition as a farmer.

Flo refers to a particular cohort of men who believe in the patriarchal structure of the family farm and view a woman on a farm as a 'farmer's wife' responsible for domestic life. She justified these stereotypes on the basis of tradition - that they are *just* underpinned by the attitudes of the time. As White (2013, p.223) notes, "generations are evoked as historical explanations" to show that marginalising encounters are the outcome of socialisation within a particular period, rather than motivated by negative intention. The farmer's wife discourse is enforced by the assumption that women are not seen to be capable to take the role of a farmer – it is seen as a masculine identity. This may trivialise the reproduction of binary gender differences but ensures that the stigma is not accepted to inform one's sense of self in a debilitating way.

> *Flo: I think that's the tradition from people within that age group. There's always the farmer and the farmer's wife who prepares food, meals, bakes cakes, does WI and all the other stereotypes that go with the role. That's how men of that age tend to view women. They're not nasty or anything.*

Similarly, Rachel recognises that being a woman and a farmer are viewed as incompatible identities. The work of a farmer's wife is undervalued despite, as Julie

suggested, the management of the business being equally important to the physical tasks.

> *Rachel: I think women feel a lot more comfortable to say I'm a farmer's wife as people know what that job is rather than saying I'm a farmer and I run this business. Whereas if you talk to most farmers' wives, they probably run the business. They're not physically out on the farm but they're keeping that business going.*

However, since the time that their mothers were marginalised as a farmer' wife, women farmers today recognise change with regards to the treatment of women in the industry. Sharon suggests that colleagues who the business inherited are part of a particular generation who uphold the view that a woman's place on a farm is subsidiary and this was shown by their expectation for her to wash up the dishes. However, she considers that younger colleagues respect her authority as a farmer and their boss.

> *Sharon: When I started it was difficult because they [male colleagues] are traditional. One still says now that he never does the washing up or cooking at home. When he never does the washing up in the office it really annoys me. I don't see why I should do it. I've bought a dishwasher now to try and ease it. I'm not keen on cleaning anyway. A new person I've employed is younger and totally different. He enjoys talking about tractors and machinery with me. The people I've employed have been better. It's the inherited staff that are worst as they don't have respect for you.*

Susan uses a generation perspective by comparing different age groups, such as those older than herself and her granddaughter to show that the normative positions for women on farms has changed over time. Her granddaughter's interest in farming is deemed symptomatic of progress with regards to inclusivity of women within the field of farming.

> *Susan: The generation before us, a woman farmer had never been considered whereas it is now. In fact, one of my granddaughters says she wants to take it all over so it's all settled! She's seven and she's decided that's what she wants to do! I don't know what her brothers think. Times change don't they and people's attitudes are always evolving.*

Similarly to Susan's suggestion that "a woman farmer had never been considered', for this reason Jill delayed her farming career. Jill considers that she was "born too soon" which suggests that the historical context dictated that her passion for farming was misaligned because she was a woman. Such attitudes were enforced by her family who discouraged her from entering a 'male-dominated industry'. However, she found that ten years later there was a shift in attitudes and towards accepting women in farming on equal merit to men.

> *Jill: The attitude then of men, because I was probably born too soon for my time, was that farming was a male-dominated industry and women were thought of as most peculiar if they wanted to farm. I literally just thought I'd never get on the ladder whilst my grandfather and father have that sort of attitude so I just thought I'd do something else. I was going to be a PE teacher but being an outdoor girl going off to university or college didn't appeal at that point. I chucked it in and went to work in the bank [laughter]!*

The stigma of a farmer's wife arises from its association with farm work undertaken on a temporary and supplementary basis. Domesticity is often viewed as the expected outcome of womanhood or motherhood so professionalism is discredited. Therefore, farmer's wives' reproductive and conjugal relationships are seen as a determinant of their position on a farm. In contrast, Ruth referred to myself as belonging to a different age cohort to herself which Pilcher (1998) also found to be the case in her study of how time shapes the experiences of women. It seemed that Ruth included me within the age group of women she perceived to be currently at the start of their career and who are part of a time period in which there are wider opportunities and characterisations of women.

> *Ruth: There's always been a part for women but I think that the role has changed. In the past it has been a supportive role whereas nowadays you're doing [farming] as well as providing that support…That probably will change that 'oh I'm a farmer's wife'. I think that will give the opportunity to get rid of that stigma. It would be wonderful to be your age.*

Julie and Kate outline some of the connotations associated with a 'farmer's wife' and use those who would define themselves as such (Julie's mother and Kate's friend) as a

comparison to their own sense of self. They distance themselves from this identification because it trivialises their participation as circumstantial and as an appendage of a male family member.

> *Julie: It used to really annoy me when Mum said she was a farmer's wife as it doesn't describe what you do. But also it does because she provided this enormous supporting role for Dad and did all the paperwork and the farm accounts and made sure he had dinner on the table. It's a job description in its own right but vastly underpaid. It's the status of it as well. I would never say that – I would never define myself in the context of a partner. If I had married a farmer it might be different; a more logical role to have but as a daughter and an heir, it just works differently.*

Julie believes that her Mum's identity as a farmer's wife does not do justice to her contribution to the viability of the farm through administration and domestic work. The reason for this is that it positions her mother at the periphery of the farm as a helper and spouse, ignoring the responsibilities which she controls. It seems that Julie would not define her job 'in the context of a partner' or her father as it undermines her independence in the profession.

Kate argues that a farmer's wife is someone who is married to a farmer or "has no interest in the farm". Therefore, a farmer's wife is not necessarily a negative position, but must be used in a way which adequately defines a role. For example, she does not consider herself to be a farmer's wife, despite being married to a farmer, because they operate a partnership. Her friend lacks knowledge and interest in farm activities which is seen to qualify her as a farmer's wife. Therefore, Kate points out that being a farmer's wife can be desirable, but not as a substitute for someone pursuing farming as a profession in their own right.

> *Interviewer: What's your social circle like?*
>
> *Kate: I have lots of friends who are farmers. They're not farmer's wives. People always say to me 'are you a farmer's wife?' I say I'm a farmer. Before I had this job [as farm manager at an agricultural college], my occupation was a farmer. I share the workload with my husband…*

Interviewer: Why do you think some people assume you're a farmer's wife?

Kate: I think because my husband is a farmer but he's not known as a farmer's husband. I'm a farmer. It's unbelievable. That's engrained from hundreds of years. It's quite sad really. They get a bit taken aback that 'oh god, the little lady spoke out'. My husband says I'm a wife but definitely not a farmer's wife. He puts them right. He defends my honour. We're a partnership in business together. We're equal. There's some farmer's wives who are quite happy. I have a friend who's quite happy. She has no idea about the acreage; they've been married for twenty years with children. She has no interest in the farm whatsoever. She doesn't like the dirt and filth. She doesn't mind being known as the farmer's wife. She's quite happy to do that.

6.4 Women's temporalities: reconciling rhythms of motherhood and farming

In Chapter 4 it was shown that women farmers are reluctant to identify with feminism. I will outline two main ways that it may not be relatable to the particularities of rural life, following the discussion so far in this chapter which focuses on the significance of gender relations within the (farming) family for work identities and success. Firstly, the synergy of domestic and economic space which often characterises farming can present challenges for women as they negotiate child care and farm work which tend to be fixed and sporadic commitments respectively, due to rhythms dictated by the weather and seasons. Secondly, farming is a socio-political context which traditionally cast women on the periphery as 'farmer's wives'. The nuclear family is privileged, as shown by socialisation and succession practices in farming, and often supports a gendered division of labour (Hughes, 1997). However, any singular definition of a woman or farmer must be confronted to take into account women's experiences beyond entry into farming through a spouse. In the following section I explore how women farmers reconcile their identities as mothers and farmers, this includes those who are single in contrast to normative farming family structures.

In response to the increasing prevalence within the labour market towards working from home, Carrigan and Duberley (2013, p.94) argue that as a consequence the "division between work and non-work lives no longer seem bounded by clear time markers".

However, this does not seem to be the case for farming as its distinctive character remains shaped by the combination of home and work (Trussell and Shaw, 2007), as well as its temporalities (Machum, 2006). Farm work is shaped around daily, weekly, seasonal and annual rhythms in which particular tasks are carried out intensely, for example 'lambing time' in the spring or 'harvest time' in the summer. With relevance to the current study, this raised questions for women farmers in terms of their multiple positions, for example as homemakers, farmers and child carers, which at times marked conflicting rhythms. The participants tended to deem farming as flexible during a child's early years as they continued to farm accompanied by a baby. However, the demands of farming and school as space and time dependent posed problems which exposed the tensions of being a 'good mother' and a 'good farmer'.

Motherhood is made salient to farming activities, as shown by Judy and Jenny's refusal to work through the night at short notice due to their child care responsibilities. They note that the wives of male colleagues prepare dinner and manage childcare. In contrast, in their positions as single mother and working farmer, Jenny and Judy explain that they must be better organised than men farmers to accommodate these familial activities alongside the demands of farm work.

> Judy: I think that my organisational skills are second to none. I think it's probably because you're so used to juggling being a mother but I'm always a week ahead of everyone else with my planning and thinking. I think I do it mainly to protect myself as a lot of farmers who I work for, male farmers that their wives are hugely influential on the farm but have been lumbered, maybe that's a harsh word, to bring the children up. The farmer doesn't have to think one inch about school runs, getting home to cook tea, homework and bed times. They can spend twelve hours indulgently outside doing work whereas I have a select time from 9:30 – 3:30 where I have to fit all my work in.

> Jenny: I've tried explaining again and again to my dad and my brother that if I want to arrange a meeting, I have to look in my diary to see if I'm free and look at my little boy's schedule. I can have a meeting only when I've set all that stuff up. Every single decision that I make in business, I have to think about him first whereas my brother

doesn't have to worry about the kids because his wife is looking after
them and she does the tea.

According to Judy and Jenny, the basis for the unrealistic expectations of male colleagues is that they have wives to rely on for domestic and family duties. Judy makes sense of the role of men farmers by seeing them as farming 'indulgently' which draws attention to the fact that they can make choices on their own terms. In contrast, Judy outlines that she is used to 'juggling being a mother [with farming]' which resonates with Wajcman's (2008) suggestion that 'juggling' refers to temporal density and Dapkus' (1985, p.411) conceptualisation of time as a limit whereby "having a limited amount of time forces us to make choices". Therefore, it seems that within these multiple demands, Judy prioritises her son's needs before her own and similarly Jenny must firstly consider whether her work would interfere with the care of her son.

These instances point to a wider feminist issue of family power dynamics and the division of household labour as discussed by the likes of Hochschild (2012) who examined the 'second shift' of women undertaking employment and domestic work. Similarly, Daly (2002) argues that in dual earning heterosexual couples, inequality between spouses occurs as women take on the mental load of the organisation of the family to the extent that "men and women live with different socio-temporal experiences" (Carrigan and Duberley, 2013, p. 96). In the particular cases of Judy and Jenny, they situate their relationship with time as distinct from the priorities of men farmers on the basis that they are single mothers which leads to them undertaking the roles which would traditionally be characterised as that of the farmer *and* of the farmer's wife. The stereotypical role of a farmer's wife governs women's positions on farms as focused on "the cultural and biological reproduction of the family" (Cassidy, 2018, p.239) which is presumed to occur separately from the (economically) productive spaces of the farm.

The experiences of single women farmers challenge the dominance of the traditional farming family structure which assumes the reproduction of heterosexual relationships through marriage (Shortall, 1999). In addition to the tensions between single parenting and farming, the negotiation of men's expectations regarding housework in romantic relationships often lead to a triple burden for women. Herron and Skinner (2012) refer to these as farm women's 'geographies of care' in the home, farm and community which mean that their multiple obligations and subject positions overlap. In Judy's case, romantic relationships had ended as a result of her partners' double standards. For

example, she was expected to provide food during his busy farming periods, yet during her busy periods she was also expected to do the chores. Despite viewing her partner as having more flexibility at work as an arable farmer, she felt that he did not contribute to domestic work on the grounds that women in farming should be responsible for domestic labour.

> *Judy: I think men don't like it that you're not here with a hot meal. I think that's the crux of it – you're not here waiting for them. Often on a Sunday, because my partner was an arable farmer, he didn't have to get up and go to work. On a Sunday I have to go shepherding. He didn't understand. I felt that responsibility to the livestock and thought that this human being would be able to understand that. They didn't take my work seriously but I had to take theirs seriously.*

> *I remember not finding time to get the shopping or do stuff like that but I still have to do it somehow, yet when he was harvesting at summer time, I had to go over with food for him but that wasn't reciprocated.*

Similarly to Judy, Rachel experienced an unequal relationship to her ex-partner which drew attention to her position as a farmer in her own right as posing a threat to his masculinity. She alludes to hegemonic forms of rural masculinity as underpinned by being the main earner who is in control of resources. Her partner did not work in farming so his home and work were not tied to the same place, yet he was not prepared to live on her farm because this would challenge the tradition "that the woman goes to [live with] the man".

> *Rachel: Another thing that is difficult is that from relationship point of view, men find it difficult to give up their life to come and live on a farm. It's like role reversal which people get quite uncomfortable with. It's normal for a girl to move in with a farmer and for her to move her job but when it's the other way, it's difficult. That's been a sticking point for the majority of my relationships. That's not within the industry but outsiders who can't figure it out.*

> *Interviewer: Why do you think that goes against the expectation?*

> *Rachel: I don't know. It undermined their masculinity and being the main breadwinner. I've had three relationships break down for that reason. 'I've got to give everything up to come to live with you'. It is a compromise but this is the situation! If it was the other way around it would be expected that the woman goes to the man.*

In addition to the implications of expectations of women's temporalities on romantic relationships, the participants also focused on how this shaped their experiences of family time. Machum (2006) notes that the rhythms of farming have influenced farm women's work as traditionally they were called upon in 'busy' periods. 'Farm woman' is synonymous with our understanding of a farmer's wife in such case but this can be extended to the women farmers in my current study as it means they are indisposed by their work at varying moments that implicates family time. Trussell and Shaw (2007, p.53) recognise an example of this by stating that "personal time [is] oppressively structured by the demands of dairy milking".

The specific nature of farm work is relevant to women's experiences as mothers as the temporality of their responsibilities are viewed as (potentially) opposing. Farming is governed by livestock feeding times, seasonal demands and the weather which may not align with fixed commitments, such as school events, as noted by Paula. Ruth and Paula emphasise that farming is reactive and this temporal specificity suggests that these findings may not be translatable to women who are self-employed in other types of businesses.

> *Paula: I'm passionate about my career and I want to do a good job but at the same time if you've got a child that is ill or you need to be at a school play or sport's day, particularly with farming, you are governed by the weather. You can plan what you want but if it rains that day you were going to do that then it's to do the next sunny day so that's very hard and I think that you learn to live with that.*

> *Ruth: Once upon a time farming was a way of life but it has to be a business now. The big problem with that is we have to deal with nature. Any other business you know literally what the job is but if him upstairs decided to give you flood or famine, there's nothing you can do.*

In addition to the unpredictability of farming, certain tasks have a fixed rhythm. Machum (2006, p. 53) identified that in dairy farming "the family becomes tied to the milk schedule" and similarly Julie cannot undertake yard work during the particular time of preparing and taking the children to school. Therefore, the division of labour on the farm is allocated around Julie's childcare commitments.

> Julie: Inevitably life brings you compromises and at the moment, I don't do any hands on yard work. Part of it is timing. Yard work starts at 7am and I'm not free until 8:30...
>
> You can't expect to care for a sick cow at the same time as a toddler; it just doesn't happen.

On the other hand, Julie outlines that the introduction of a milking robot provides farm work with greater flexibility. Holloway, Bear and Wilkinson (2014a, p.131) identify this technology as "replacing 'conventional' twice-a-day milking managed by people with a system that supposedly allows cows the freedom to be milked automatically whenever they choose". The machinery can be set to undertake milking which would usually be conducted by hand and the remaining maintenance work can be fitted more easily around family commitments, as she suggests, school sports day. Therefore, farming technology has the potential to reshape work and family time in compatible ways.

> Julie: It's hugely more flexible. If you want to clean the robot in the morning that's fine or if you want to do it in the evening that's fine. In theory, if it had been school sports day, you can just set the robot for later.

The emerging literature on the influence of technologies on the changing subjectivities of a farmer (e.g. Bear and Holloway, 2015) has recognised that the interactions between animals, technologies and farmers are not gender-neutral. For example, according to Saugeres (2002b), farm technologies tend to be appropriated by men due to their perceived technical expertise. However, the automation does not seem to pose a constraint for Julie. She does not view her position as farmer as undermined by this machinery for being exclusionary. It is empowering as it allows her to focus on child care at an important part of the day, and as she discussed elsewhere in the interview, she can focus on the business management which largely takes place indoors and thus is more flexible in line with her family lifestyle.

6.5 Summary

This study included participants who are not involved in family farming in order to investigate the diverse character of what it means to be a woman who farms today. However, it became apparent from the data, that the absence or presence of a family background in farming is salient to how farming is embodied by women. This chapter shows that the historically established discourses and practices in farming surrounding patrilineal inheritance shapes the identities of women farmers. Despite a family connection affording some women with visibility as a farmer, they tended to view their status in relation to the cultural baggage of women as farm helpers and tended to be viewed by others without consideration for the diversity of identities within womanhood.

Some of the women embodied farming through the family, as a result of viewing a passion or ability as inherited "in the blood". Therefore, the attributes which constitute an identity as a farmer may be deemed natural, as well as socialised through an upbringing which yields exposure to farming practices, spaces and people from a young age. A family background in farming can afford status and/or resources, such as tacit knowledge or land. Following this, a continuum of (in)equality exists based on multiple facets to identities, such as identification with family, gender and geography which I refer to as entanglements of othering in this chapter. The interviews revealed that combinations of these may intersect in a hierarchical fashion to produce nuanced experiences, as shown by the treatment of women who do not have a family history in farming as inferior. Therefore, the women who were first generation farmers could establish the social and cultural capital that facilitates a positive sense of self through other means, such as rural leisure pursuits or additional forms of rural employment.

Gender differences are made salient, even in cases where participants *are* farm partners or successors, by them making sense of their trajectories in relation to the tradition of patrilineal inheritance. The women from farming families tended to negotiate their identity as a farmer by viewing their status as acquired on an individual basis through hard work, in contrast to the default privilege experienced by some men. Therefore, drawing upon a meritocratic discourse to explain their return to farming as a choice seems empowering. The entitlement of men to ownership and control in farming is viewed negatively due to the lack of agency attributed to their involvement. The women challenge the legitimation of men as preferable farmers, by suggesting that they might not be the right person for the job, as indicated through their family experiences.

Finally, this chapter shows that women understand their identities in relation to time, in terms of both the everyday rhythms and the generational transferral of farming. The participants made comparisons to their mothers or children to illustrate trends in attitudes towards women in farming. By doing so, they situate their own position within the historical context of traditional constructions of rural femininity and disrupt the assumption that farming and motherhood are mutually exclusive. Despite the temporalities of farming and childcare presenting some challenges for single women, it was highlighted that the professionalisation of farming, as shown by management and technology, offers scope to reconcile identities as a mother and a farmer. This illustrates the significance of exploring the experiences of farmers beyond the focus on nuclear family structures found in early social studies of farming.

Chapter 7 Conclusion

This conclusion combines the main arguments of the thesis to highlight the empirical, theoretical and methodological contributions to knowledge. Through analysing the key questions of the study, the main argument is that women farmers make choices in their everyday lives to navigate tensions between normative constructions of their gender and work which allows them to succeed alongside patriarchal experiences and binary assumptions of gender. I will consider the implications for future research and practice to reiterate the significance and originality of the findings which offer an insight into what it means to be a woman farmer in England today.

7.1 Answering the research questions

The analysis chapters detailed findings which addressed the research questions and here I reiterate the embodiment, negotiation and gendering of women farmers' identities. This thesis has demonstrated that the study of identities is a messy practice, especially when in conversation with my own, but reveals that the ingenuity of women farmers allows them to legitimate a congruous identity and to negotiate the dichotomous thinking that casts women as non-farmers.

7.1.1 How is gender made salient to farming activities?

I argue that the ways that women farmers' identities are viewed and performed are gendered. Gender is made salient to farming as the participants' identities as a woman and a farmer are constructed as visible and invisible respectively in interactions with some men. Women tend to refer to farming as male-dominated, given that the numerical and normative prevalence of men is expressed in these experiences. It is assumed that women cannot farm due to a traditional gendered division of labour (which places them on the periphery of farming) and biological essentialism (which positions them as having inferior cognitive and physical capacities). Visibility as a woman is viewed positively as special treatment by some of the participants, whereas others define generalisations about one's expertise to farm based on gender as an injustice. Either way, I argue that these experiences are examples of sexism because they are underpinned by assumptions about gender difference which situate women farmers as subordinate and result in their exclusion or protection.

The participants recognise that being ignored or patronised shows that some men view women in unequal terms in farming. However, they draw attention to the fact that it is

strangers who imbue them with an inferior status and avoid, as one participant stressed, positioning themselves as 'anti-male'. Their relationships with male peers are usually experienced as supportive, compared to strangers who treat them on the basis of narrow definitions of a woman and a farmer. Therefore, appearance is signifier for being recognised as a farmer and may prompt women to negotiate their identities through presentations of the body that reinforce or resist normative gender expectations. The participants understand equality as cooperation between men and women, rather than the invisibility of gender differences. Gender differences are made salient through interactions with others, and by women's negotiations of their identities.

The judgements from others which construct what it means to be a farmer and what it means to be a woman as mutually exclusive are deconstructed and reconstructed by women as they actively situate themselves within a contemporary vision of farming. Gender differences are maintained as salient through women farmers working harder or differently to men which facilitates achievement in their work. In the case of working differently to men, the women are able to assert visibility as a woman and farmer by using alternative methods that are deemed better practice. This thesis showed that women farmers made sense of their experiences as meritocratic, whereby unequal encounters are not deemed deterministic to the extent that they become disadvantaged.

7.1.2 How is farming embodied by women?

As the answer to the previous question has determined, the idea that womanhood and farming are conflicting identities is reproduced in some interactions. However, these identities can be reconciled by women farmers viewing their work as shaped by a female sensibility which is conducive to the contemporary demands of farming. This sensibility comprises of both rationality and emotion work which is enacted by using their minds and bodies in different, as they perceive it, but not inferior ways compared to men farmers. Firstly, the characteristics of a farmer embodied by women are patience, care and communication which they deemed as necessary for work with animals and colleagues. The participants were empowered by harnessing these specialisms to legitimate their positions as farmers. They framed emotional intelligence as a form of rationality given it contributed to practices with the best outcomes for the farm business. Similarly, a different way of working was adopted, for example by using machinery rather than manual labour to overcome the privileging of farming practices and spaces towards male strength. They understood alternative ways of doing farming as demonstrative of rationality in order to challenge the established practices which

situate the dominant culture of farming as masculine. Therefore, the female sensibility is seen as a resource, or a form of cultural capital, which allows women farmers to navigate the construction of a woman's body as a non-farmer's body.

Following the female sensibility, the second way that farming is embodied by women is through the presentation of the body. They often made sense of their hair and dress as a malleable means to mark the body as prepared for dirty, manual work. Visibility as a farmer could be achieved by wearing practical clothes as demonstrative of cultural knowledge. However, this was often seen to be a masculine endeavour as to look like a farmer was equated with looking like a tomboy. Simultaneously, there was a sense amongst the participants that they did not wish to be defeminised and thus they embodied a female sensibility through a differentiated work practice to men and/or by adapting their appearance outside of work. Dress therefore allows identities to be negotiated across contexts, however, gender is done with reference to binaries as they often situated themselves in relation to the normative femininity of a farmer's wife and the hegemonic masculinity of a male farmer. Therefore, this thesis provides a nuanced account of the ways that the body mediates farming practices and reveals the tensions between assimilation and difference as women use gendered presentations of the body to negotiate their identities.

Farming can also be embodied through the family, as shown by the absence or presence in the participants' trajectories. Many of the women farmers articulated that farming is an inherited way of being which challenges the tendency of the literature to focus on the patrilineal transfer of assets. Kinship facilitated belonging that may have been otherwise absent due to the social construction of farming as masculine. By understanding farming as 'in the blood', they emphasise a symbolic privilege that their background affords. In addition to their will to farm being a natural part of who they are, they assert autonomy through periods away from farming and in contrast to the preference given to sons. Therefore, the family can structure tacit knowledge as well as economic resources, but not always in deterministic ways. For those without farming in the family, belonging may be obtained from rural social networks or its absence may contribute to an 'entanglement of othering'.

7.1.3 How do women farmers negotiate their identities?

The final research question brings together these findings to understand the means for identity construction which has been operationalised as 'negotiations' to account for

making sense of, and shaping, identities as an active process. This thesis has illuminated that women farmers can experience inequalities in status compared to farming men. As a result, in order to construct visibility and legitimacy, the main ways they negotiate their identities are through their appearance and work practices. The uniqueness of this study can be found in the fact that it examines how family and gender are entwined in the articulation of the relationship between identities and inequalities in farming.

Firstly, the identity negotiation of women farmers is relational because a marginal status is challenged with reference to ideal types of rural masculinities and femininities. By charting a generational shift in farming identities, the participants emphasised progress that challenges the significance of men's physical strength to modern farming and the idea that women cannot be farmers. Instead, the enactment of a female sensibility is perceived to suit the reframing of farming as a professional form of care work comprising people and animal management. Similarly, the participants tend to distance themselves from the assumption that women in farming are farmer's wives and assistants, by asserting their knowledge and showing a readiness for work through dress practices.

Secondly, the negotiation of women farmers' identities is contextual. Identities may not be wholly malleable in the sense that they can be abandoned, but the data has shown that different aspects may be emphasised across on and off farm spaces. For example, the participants from a farming family tended to view their farming identity as fixed, in the sense that it is naturally embodied as a result of the inheritance of tacit knowledge. However, they can be misrecognised in interactions for a non-farmer. To achieve recognition, cultural capital can be demonstrated through the display of hair and dress as suitable for physical and dirty work. As looking ready to farm is often coded as masculine by others, a feminine sense of self may be reinforced off-farm, for example in social settings. Therefore, women farmers negotiate their identities depending on the gendered associations of the people, animals and technologies with whom they interact.

7.2 Key contributions

I have produced new scholarship that makes an original contribution to knowledge about rural feminism, gender identities and in-situ methods as follows:

7.2.1 Rural feminism

This thesis shows the value of rural feminism as a tool for theorisation and methodology by revealing the nuances of the culture which shape farmers' lives, such as family and farming rhythms. The focus on women farmers offers an insight into rural experiences akin to Pini, Brandth and Little's (2015) understanding that place is central to the construction of gender identities. Therefore, this research has explored what it means to be a woman in the rural context of farming to develop a critique of the 'universal (urban) woman' which as Whatmore (1991a) notes, often applies equality principles to the 'corporation'. By this I mean the distributive inequalities in the corporate world with regards to rates of pay and progression. In contrast, I have examined the relationship between gender (in)equalities and identities as they are understood by farmers which reveals disparities in status that are negotiated so they do not become debilitating.

The early, but scant, attention given to the experiences of women in farming within sociology (e.g. Shortall, 1999) started from the assumption of patriarchy to uncover how farming was structured to make women, specifically farmer's wives, invisible. This thesis is novel not just because it focuses on farmers who are women, but because it adopts a participant-centred discourse that demonstrates their active negotiation of disadvantage even where they themselves reject the continued existence of gender-based inequality. Contrary to popular belief, rural women are not passive, incapable and uncivilized. Alongside such dichotomies, farming has been situated as 'backward' in terms of conservative values, but notions of progress are central to how the women farmers in my study understood their positions.

Consistent with previous studies concerned with gender in agriculture such as Whatmore (1991a) and O'Hara (1998), I found that family relations can shape unequal access to land and knowledge that limits womens' opportunities and visibility as farmers. However, despite these inequalities, the family remains a privileged form of organisation in farming akin to Bourdieu's (1986) model of capitals which highlights the embodied transfer of social, cultural and economic resources. I argue that kinship is appropriate to explain the relations that shape the lives of women farmers in a way that is inclusive to those who do and do not come from a farming family background. This framing recognises that allegiances with particular men, women and animals can facilitate belonging and constitute a legitimate identity as a farmer. Those without farming in the family can create success through alternative means and deconstruct the

simplistic family farming model which has legitimated the inferior positioning of women in farming as wives.

As noted in the commentary on my position in relation to the participants' and the rationale for observing agricultural shows in Chapter 3, farming is a cultural constellation in which the treatment of family structures as communities of belonging and exclusion cannot be denied. The interviews with women farmers suggest that farming is not conducive to the liquidity of relations that Bauman (2000) professes whereby collective identities are compromised by transience. Alongside the absence or presence of kinship as expressed through notions of farming being 'in the blood', individualistic paths to progress were highlighted. For example, Chapter 4 showed that the salience to farming can be muted in favour of a meritocratic understanding of one's position whereby effort is rewarded irrespective of gender. By viewing themselves in this way, women are afforded agency as a farmer in their own right, as opposed to success being bound by gender or family which they understood as determined at birth.

The analysis reveals the meaning of kinship to women farmers as it emerged from the data as relevant to gender and work identities. For example, in Chapter 4 women farmers view their relationships with other farmers as key to understanding their own positions as farmers and women. Chapter 5 considers the differences between womens' relationships with men who they are and are not familiar with in constructing their (in)visibility and Chapter 6 includes the prevalence of blood relations as a means to an embodied passion for farming, as well as the associated social, cultural and economic resources. Even when opportunities and constraints are viewed as an individual responsibility by women farmers, and therefore are viewed on gender-neutral terms, they tend not to be synonymous with the irrelevance of kinship altogether. It seems that a collective identity arising from positions as a farmer, woman and/or farming family, remain important in practical and symbolic terms for women farmer's sense of belonging.

7.2.2 Doing gender

This thesis has contributed to the theoretical basis of gender studies by illuminating the application of 'doing gender' (West and Zimmerman, 1987) to women farmers' everyday experiences of identity negotiation. The ways they viewed themselves and were viewed by others showed the complex relationship between (in)equalities and identities to the extent that inconsistencies occurred within and between participant

narratives. It was found that the participants tended to view their gender identity as fixed in the sense that being a woman entailed naturally determined attributes. However, their experiences of identity negotiation revealed that gender display was performative. Identities are negotiated along a continuum whereby womanhood can encompass masculine aspects, as shown by the construction of a 'tomboy' position through one's bodily appearance. Therefore, gender differences are not always viewed as binary by the participants because they recognise differences *between* women on the basis of varied presentations in their bodily appearance.

West and Zimmerman (1987) refer to 'doing gender' as upholding normative cultural scripts. In the context of this study, these could be deemed norms for their gender (femininity) or work (masculinity). However, the application of the notion of 'undoing gender' (Butler, 2004) may account for women farmers' experiences as they frame a female sensibility as valuable in farming and 'undo' the inferiority attached to this identity. Gender differences, as well as gender equality are emphasised in order to achieve cooperation between men and women in farming. Deutsch's (2007) use of 'undoing gender' specifies gender irrelevance which does not apply because the women do not seem to advocate gender neutrality. One of the reasons for this is that biological differences were found to have a role in women's experiences of farming in terms of strengths in mind and body, as well as the impact of pregnancy.

The way in which farming is embodied by women through work practices and appearance do not necessarily disrupt inequalities. A binary gender system is reproduced through assimilation to masculine culture through the body and banter, as well as the endorsement of essentialism by viewing their skills as naturally different to men's. Women farmers outline experiences which highlight an unequal status to men farmers, but they do not perceive this to be indicative of gender inequality in farming because they are able to reach the same goals. However, I argue that the instances they have to work longer hours or in different ways compared to men to reach equivalence works around inequalities. The ways in which women farmers perform gender resists inequalities on an individual basis for belonging and demonstrates agency in identity construction. However, it does not challenge culture to disrupt ideas about farming as 'men's work'.

7.2.3 In-situ methods

Given the substantive focus of this thesis on identities, issues of categorisation are embedded throughout, including within the methodology where debates are raised around the positioning of the researcher and the criteria for participant recruitment. The former entails the examination of my affiliation with farming which prompted my interest in the topic and my relationship with the participants during fieldwork. As a result, my own identity was negotiated during the project alongside my investigation of the negotiation of identities. I related to the spaces that the women farmers occupied and in which the research took place based on the tacit knowledge acquired from my upbringing. The complexity of understanding myself as both an insider and outsider was enacted from the first contact with participants and included the rationale for the ethnographic elements of the fieldwork, such as observations at agricultural shows. Therefore, rather than simply acknowledging my position, awareness of its impact on the data was facilitated by observations and informed choices about the data collection, such as the inclusion of nonhuman animals and objects within the interview encounters.

From the beginning of the research, the relevance of animals to the identity construction of farmers was acknowledged, but its enactment became apparent during the encounters with participants and allowed animals to be incorporated. For example, the liveliness of the farming 'lifescape' (Convery, et al., 2005) was responded to as a mutual endeavour between the participants and researcher by using the presence of pets as probes for discussion. Similarly, on occasion, telephone calls occurred or family members passed through and provided a glimpse into the everyday lives that shape, and are shaped by, women farmers' identities. The ethnographic elements of this study situate the research within the rural cultures of work in which identities are negotiated and that have traditionally perpetuated gender inequalities. I argue that feminisms cannot only be adopted as advocacy through research dissemination, but through the emplaced experiences of the researcher in conjunction with the participants. Interviewing farmers in situ, namely at their homes and/or farms, developed co-constructed conversations that were receptive to their circumstances.

7.3 Future directions

This study shows that the body is made significant to identities as some women farmers often were viewed by others, viewed themselves and viewed other women on the masculine end of a continuum of gender. Following this, certain presentations of the self

were defined as 'butch' which may be seen to resonate with a lesbian identity (Halberstam, 1998). In the case of farming, heteronormativity is rooted within the expectation for the family to reproduce the next generation of farmers (Little, 2003). Therefore, the sexualities of women farmers may be viewed with suspicion if their "bodies and attributes do not conform to culturally constructed heterosexual norms of femininity" (Saugeres, 2002c, p.641). It would have been useful to collect information from the participants about their sexuality to understand the extent that this relationship exists in everyday experiences of farming. Although discussion about romantic relationships emerged, it was important not to make assumptions about identity categories for the same reasons that the recruitment of participants was based on their self-definition as women farmers.

The findings of this study have highlighted that farming is a 'natureculture' (Haraway, 2003) which requires a more-than-human approach. For example, it was found that farming may be embodied by women through relations with livestock animals as the subjects of their care. In addition, pet animals were drawn upon as probes in the interview encounters to establish shared meanings between the researcher and the participants. However, it would be timely to pursue an understanding of the significance of pets to farming identities as a substantive focal point. Farming as unaccompanied work did not emerge in discussion with my participants, given the interactions required with farm advisors and assumption of reference to a lack of contact with *human* colleagues. The research process has drawn attention to the salience of working and non-working pets which is worthy of interrogation to consider work alongside animal actors in farming.

In terms of methodological developments, photographs would complement the ethnographic approach of this study. For example, photographs from the orientating activity of the agricultural shows would help capture the sensory experience which led to the articulation of my position in the field. Similarly, the meanings attached to objects around the home acted as probes which emerged sporadically in the interviews, but there is scope to introduce photo elicitation, especially to decentre the conversation from a business focus. Photographs can serve as an extension of the self, especially in the age of social media according to Jurgenson (2019) and as shown by women farmers in their selection of content for Twitter, Facebook and Instagram to reveal certain aspects of their identities. The physical isolation often experienced by farmers lends itself to community-making online; ostensibly this seems contradictory in the context of

the 'situatedness' of identities as advocated in this study, but I argue it is a phenomenon that requires investigation considering the mediation of farming identities through digital and material culture.

The contributions of this research and future directions extend beyond academia through opportunities to positively impact social life. The channels of dissemination which I have pursued so far have involved sharing the research findings with a mixed gender group of farmers at a discussion group in Norfolk and with a rural community in Yorkshire during a question and answer session following a theatre production. Building on the themes within the performance, I explored the changing roles of women in rural life and farming since World War One in conversation with the creatives and audience. Both opportunities demonstrate the scope for engaging with the public to change perceptions and raise awareness about the gender stereotypes which the participants in this study have been subject to, such as that their bodies and minds are unsuitable to farm.

As a result of the interviews, some of the participants expressed that they were grateful to be able to explore aspects of their identities they had previously taken for granted, such as their farming achievements. The themes which emerged from these stories may have impact beyond the participants themselves given the scope to inform support or recognition for women working in the farming sector. The information of relevance to policy strategies resides in the understanding gained about the ways that women view gender as salient to their work. In addition, the findings may inform marketing of agricultural education by adopting case studies of role models in order to help widen the participation of women. By developing relationships with further education, institutional level structures that may reproduce a limited construction of women could be addressed, such as through staff training, to secure experiences in farming that are equitable, unlike some of those outlined by the participants in my study.

Some of the participants believe that women should not be identified as a minority in farming by being subject to segregated networks because it suggests that they require preferential treatment. Simultaneously, it was suggested that there are issues which disproportionately affect women in farming, such as navigating childcare or a lack of physical strength. Therefore, these findings align with the recommendations of Shortall, et al. (2017) who endorse women-only strands of mainstream organisations, such as the NFU or agricultural societies, rather than separate organisations such as 'Ladies in Pigs'. However, it would remain the case that individuals from the same family cannot

attend the same meetings if they are not exclusively women or men. Following these findings, I argue that meetings could be open to all farmers, but include topics of interest to women in order to challenge their categorisation as only women's issues. This thesis can shape a conceptual shift by reframing debates away from the discourse of 'barriers' faced by women in agriculture (without denying that gender inequalities in farming exist) and towards how they perceive their experiences to claim the unabridged 'farmer' identity in their own right.

The research problem stated at the start of this thesis is that a farmer has been historically constructed as an identity which refers to a man. Comparable to other occupational titles according to Rees and Sleigh (2020), women may consequently be identified in alternative ways that mark their gender, despite undertaking the same work. If these positions exist in opposition to the default of a farmer as a man, it reproduces inequality in status by the idea that women are inferior. However, given the findings of my research, neutrality may not be favoured by women who tend to view themselves as adopting different, or even superior, skills to men in farming. They are happy to be labelled as female if it is on equal terms to men and facilitates themselves as role models. For this reason, some of the participants self-identified as farmers alongside other identities, such as a shepherdess.

The question of whether the title of a farmer can be reclaimed is uncertain and new articulations, such as food producer, may be deemed preferable in the future. Given that some of the unequal interactions experienced by participants were the result of a lack of understanding from non-farmers, it may be an opportune moment to align the language of farming with changing roles such as management, practices such as technological advancements and people such as women that shape the work today. Therefore, the politics of identification is applicable outside of academia to farming contexts, such as within education to attract the next generation of farming professionals, as well as popular culture to reengage the public through contemporary representations. An agenda for neutrality may delete the lived experiences of women farmers and undermine the socio-historical nuances that continue to underpin rural contexts today.

Appendices

Appendix A: Recruitment Flyer

Appendix B: Interview Guide

Interview Guide

Career Background

- Can you tell me how you came to be involved in farming?
- What type of farm are you involved in?

A working day

- I'd like to get a feel for what your daily routine is like – can you talk me through what you did yesterday? Was yesterday typical?
- Do you spend most of your time on the farm?
- Do you have any favourite jobs?
- Can you give me an example of a particularly busy time for you?
- Can you give me an example of something that went particularly well/not so well in your work recently?
- What is your proudest achievement?

Professional identity

- How would you introduce yourself to someone who didn't know you?
- How do people react when you say you are a x?
- What is the attraction of farming for you?
- Do you think you look like a farmer?

Community

- What is the farming community like around here?
- Can you tell me about any farming activities you are involved in off the farm? (shows, auctions, networks, organisations) Why did you get involved? What does it involve?
- How important is farming to you?
- What are your ambitions for the future? Do you think your children will be farmers?

What is it like to be a woman in farming?

Is there anything that you would like to add or that I haven't asked that I should of?

Appendix C: Coding Scheme

Name of code	Description of code
Achieving visibility as a farmer	Being recognised not as an appendage
Ageing body	Bodily strength declines and shapes allocation of farming roles
Appearance	Positioning themselves, and others position them, in relation to normative expectations of what a woman or farmer looks like
Dirty	Uncleanliness of the body as a sign of hard work
Being a good mum	From pregnancy to childcare, managing the expectations of being a mother and farmer
Children's career	
Self-employment	
Being a good stocksperson	Knowing about illnesses and animals as a product of hard work and/or gender
Gendered stocksmanship	
Benefitting from novelty value	Receiving extra support or praise due to being one of few women in farming. Chivalry as supportive and/or unequal?
Constructing the farmer's wife	Positioning their self in relation to a farmer's wife
Domestic life	Negotiating expectations around the gendering of domestic chores and farming which often leads to a triple burden
Double standards	
Romantic relationships	Role reversal, undermining masculinity and triple burden
Familial connection	Constructing belonging through a farming background, the history of the place and involvement of family members
Carrying on tradition	Responsibility of farm continuation and negotiation of patrilineal inheritance
Entry choice	Positioning entry as an active choice against expectations of farming as a (male) gendered occupation
Fairness	

In the blood	Even when it is a career change, there is a moment that a passion for farming is realised as biologically determined
Not in the blood	
Fight for land	Navigating traditional structures of inheritance of assets is dependent on gender and family identities
Father to son inheritance	
Inferior assets	Relegation to hobby status
Gender flexibility	Negotiating along a spectrum of femininities in response to masculine context
Girly	
Not girly	Defines themselves against the expectation for a woman to perform femininity
Tomboy	
Gendering of character	Reproducing gender difference through their justification of tasks based on 'braun' or 'brains'
Physical strength	Women have an inferior body compared to men due to their smaller size
Generational shift	Seeing attitudes as a product of their time incites optimism about gender progress
Going hand in hand	Making sense of the relationship between multiple jobs
Knowledge	Gaining respect through displays of knowledge. Knowledge may be innate or learnt?
Career change	
Learning	
New to role	
Socialisation	
Male-dominated	A commonly used phrase to signify that farming is inherently biased towards men
Alienated	
Engrained but breakable	
In the wrong place	Contradictory position of being a woman and a farmer
Sexist	

Underling	Positioning their self as inferior to a figurehead, understating their contribution
Male embodiment	Women's perceptions of men's bodies
Marginalising interaction	Assumptions that a farmer is a man means women are seen as accompanying or not having sufficient knowledge
Banter	
Capability questioned	
Invisibility	A position behind the scenes without recognition
Plus one	
Muting gender	Equality is reached or gender is irrelevant - what matters is the individual and their personality
Non-farming background	Being treated as an outsider if not from a farming background due to a perceived lack of socialisation
Outsider	
Orientation to interviewer	The position of the interviewer is referred to e.g. as a researcher, farmer's daughter or young woman
Relating to a Sisterhood	Viewing one's sense of self in relation to the wider category of womanhood to derive legitimacy
#metoo	
Blame women	
Jealousy amongst women	When women work with men they get rumoured to be interested in each other romantically
Legitimate compared to others	Interactions with 'farmer's girlfriends' or imagining a farmer's wife, as supportive or detrimental for individuals
Woman role model	
Responses to male culture	Accepting or resisting gendered expectations in interaction with people or work
Adapt task to suit	
Prove them Wrong	
Resilience and resistance	
Works harder than men	Work above and beyond in their work to gain respect

Running a business	As the requirements of farming change, new leadership opportunities arise
Decision maker	
Exclusion from technology	
Paperwork farmer	Indoor farm work deemed best suited to women compared to manual labourers who are replaceable
People management	
Social capital	Farming is a social club where contacts of a similar kind are made - enhancing an 'insider' status of belonging
Community	
Work life balance	Farming encompasses more than work; it is deemed a way of life indicative of particular spaces and people
Tech inclusion	Empowerment through automated technology

Appendix D: Information Sheet for Interviews

THE UNIVERSITY *of York*

Department of Sociology

Participant Information Sheet

Interviews

Women Farming in the UK: Understanding Gender and Work Identities in the Field

You are being invited to take part in a research study which explores the identities of women in farming. Before you decide whether you wish to take part, please consider the information below.

Who is carrying out the research?

The research is being carried out by Bethany Robertson who is a farmer's daughter from Norfolk and PhD researcher in the Department of Sociology at the University of York.

What is the purpose of the research?

The purpose of the research is to explore women's experiences of working in farming and to understand in what ways they perceive their identities.

Why have I been invited?

As a woman working in farming, it will prove valuable to listen to your experiences. The location of the research is in Yorkshire and Norfolk so participants are being sought within these areas. The aim is to have a spread of women in terms of age, background and farming type.

What happens if I take part?

If you agree to participate, a face to face interview will be conducted in which the researcher will ask questions related to your experiences as a woman in farming. However, you can refuse to answer any questions and you can stop the interview at any time. The interviews can take place somewhere convenient to you, such as inside and/or outside the farm and may last up to 2 hours. The conversation/s will be recorded and stored securely to allow the researcher to capture the information discussed.

What happens to the information I give at the interview/s?

The transcripts will be made anonymous and password-protected. Access to the audio files will be restricted to myself and only made available to my supervisor and examiners if required. The information you provide will only be used for research purposes but this includes publications.

Will it be confidential?

All your information and input to this research will be kept confidential. While your words may be quoted in research outputs, your name will be removed to protect your anonymity.

Do I have to take part?

It is your decision whether or not to take part. You are free to withdraw from the research at any time without having to give a reason and all data relating to you will be destroyed.

Who can I contact for more information?

The lead researcher:

Bethany Robertson

Email:br602@york.ac.uk

The project supervisors:

Prof. Ellen Annandale

Email: ellen.annandale@york.ac.uk

Dr Amanda Rees

Email: amanda.rees@york.ac.uk

The chair of university ethics:

Prof. Tony Royle

Email: tony.royle@york.ac.uk

Thank you for your time.

Appendix E: Consent Form for Interviews

THE UNIVERSITY *of York*

Department of Sociology

Informed Consent Form

Women Farming in the UK: Understanding Gender and Work Identities in the Field

Please tick the appropriate boxes	Yes	No
Taking Part		
I have been given the opportunity to ask questions about the research.	☐	☐
I understand that taking part will include being interviewed and audio recorded.	☐	☐
I understand that taking part is voluntary; I can withdraw from the study at any time and I do not have to give any reasons for why I no longer want to take part.	☐	☐
Use of the information I provide for this project only		
I understand my personal details such as phone number and address will not be revealed to people outside the project and will be destroyed on completion of the research.	☐	☐

I understand that my words may be quoted in publications, reports, web pages, and other research outputs.	☐	☐
I understand that my real name will not be used in any work arising from this study.	☐	☐
Use of the information I provide beyond this project		
I agree for the data I provide to be archived at the UK Data Archive.	☐	☐
I understand that other researchers will have access to this data only if they agree to preserve the confidentiality of the information as requested in this form.	☐	☐
I consent to take part in this research.	☐	☐

_____   _____   ____

Name of participant   [printed]   Signature   Date

Contact details for further information:

Bethany Robertson (PhD researcher)   Professor Ellen Annandale (supervisor)

Tel: 07523953448   Tel: 01904 324561

Email: br602@york.ac.uk   Email: ellen.annandale@york.ac.uk

Appendix F: Information Sheet for Observations

THE UNIVERSITY *of York*

Department of Sociology

Information Sheet

Observations

Women Farming in the UK: Understanding Gender and Work Identities in the Field

You are being invited to take part in a research study which explores the identities of women in farming. Before you decide whether you wish to take part, please consider the following information.

Who is carrying out the research?

The research is being carried out by Bethany Robertson who is a farmer's daughter and PhD researcher in the Department of Sociology at the University of York.

What is the purpose of the research?

The purpose of the research is to explore women's experiences of working in farming and to understand in what ways they perceive their identities.

Why have I been invited?

The location of the fieldwork is in Yorkshire and East Anglia so professional settings in which farming women may frequent are being sought within these areas.

What happens if I take part?

Upon access, the researcher will describe the setting, participants, activities and interactions. This observation will involve the researcher being present for a few hours and taking notes to aid memory and accuracy at regular intervals on a notepad.

What happens to the information?

The field notes will be typed up and any names and identifying details will be removed to protect anonymity. Access to the data will be restricted to myself and only made available to my supervisor and examiners if required. The data will be stored on a password protected computer system to restrict access. The information you provide will only be used for research purposes but this includes publications.

Do I have to take part?

It is your decision whether or not to take part. You are free to withdraw from the research at any time without having to give a reason.

Who can I contact for more information?

The lead researcher:

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The chair of university ethics:

Prof. Tony Royle

Email: tony.royle@york.ac.uk

Thank you for your time.

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