

Gender, identity and women's involvement in tractor work: A case study of the Australian sugar industry

*Dr Barbara Pini and Robin Price
Queensland University of Technology*

ABSTRACT

This paper uses data from focus groups with eighty women involved in the Australian sugar industry, and draws on feminist post-structural theory to explore the construction of gendered identities in tractor work. The key focus is on the strategies women engage to negotiate their gendered subject positions while undertaking a role typically defined as 'men's work'. The majority of these strategies leave gendered on-farm identities intact, but some opportunity for disruption may occur as a 'farm as business' discourse is more widely taken up. This discourse reconstitutes the 'farm' as a 'business' and the 'farmer' and 'farm wife' as business partners. While this may provide a discursive space for women to be legitimate actors in all aspects of the enterprise, the paper concludes by drawing attention to the factors that make it unlikely that such a possibility will be realised.

Introduction

A social constructionist approach to gender identity formation, derived from a feminist post-structural perspective, invites explorations of the many and varied contexts in which masculinities and femininities are constituted. One such context is the workplace. While the work contexts which have been investigated by post-structuralist feminist scholars are diverse (e.g., Pringle, 1988; Hopton, 1999), it is the constitution of gendered identities on the family farm and the occupational role of farmer with which this paper is concerned. Of particular interest, is the question of how women construct feminine subject positions when engaging in a tractor work role which is traditionally defined as masculine.

Typically, farm women engage in a multiple array of tasks including domestic work, go-fering, financial management and information gathering (Sachs, 1996). However, tractor work involving tractors is typically viewed as the domain of men (Alston, 1995). In undertaking tractor work then, women have crossed the traditional gender division of labor. These women have seemingly further disrupted the gender order in that they are not just involved in on-farm physical labor, but physical labor involving the use of large machinery. This is critical because, as Strategaki (1988: 256) comments, within the farming enterprise machines are 'the main criterion' for differentiating work that is designated male and female. Examples from a range of agricultural sectors such as poultry farming and dairy farming have demonstrated that as aspects of work on a farm become mechanised, they shift from being 'women's work' to 'men's work' (Shortall, 2000). Thus, those women who undertake on-farm tractor roles deemed to be men's work and engage in those tasks associated with the occupational role of farmer, represent a significant deviation from the norm. They are the metaphorical 'travellers' (Marshall, 1984) in the 'foreign country' (Follo, in press), in ways similar to their female counterparts also engaging in male-dominated work places and in work associated with the construction of masculinities. Therefore, how gendered identities are constituted, and furthermore, how they are negotiated in this work environment, is of particular sociological interest. Before embarking on this investigation to explore these issues, the following section provides a brief overview of the theoretical framework guiding the paper.

Theoretical framework

As stated, this paper engages a feminist post-structural framework to examine what West and Zimmerman (1987) called, in their much-cited paper, 'doing gender'. As such, it relies on three theoretical concepts which are outlined below.

The first concerns the fact that, as Judith Butler (1990: 24) succinctly states, 'gender is not a noun'. Gender is distinct from biological sex in that there is nothing pre-determined, natural or essential about one's gender identity. Rather, gender identity is produced or constituted through discourse, which is defined by Scott (1990: 135) not as 'a language or a text but a historically, socially and institutionally specific structure of statements, terms, categories and beliefs'. This is exemplified in the literature on women and farming in research undertaken by Ruth Liepins (1996; 1998). In this work, the author studied the agricultural media as a discourse and identified the ways in which it shapes the construction of farming as requiring masculine strength, control and action. Within this discourse men and masculinities are privileged and women and femininities are marginalised, thus creating the belief that it is men who are farmers and the perception that women contribute little, if anything, to agriculture.

The second point of theoretical significance to this paper is that gender identities are not singular, but multiple and varied. Thus, there is no homogeneous femininity (McRobbie, 1996; Liladhar, 2000). At the same time there are particular constructions of femininity within certain contexts that are dominant or normative (Bartky, 1990). For example, feminist rural sociologists have argued that within rural communities, feminine identities focused on a domestic role are particularly valorised (Little, 1997). This is not to suggest that 'farm women' or 'rural women' are fixed subjects conforming to a universal gendered identity, but within the discursive fields which make up the rural and farming sectors there is a hegemonic notion of femininity which emphasises women's appropriate place as being within the home (Little, 1997).

The final theoretical construct relevant to this paper is that of agency. That is, feminist post-structuralists emphasise that while discourses may be limited to them, women have the capacity to position themselves within discourses, choose from discursive positionings or indeed resist and create new discourses (Weedon, 1997). The capacity of rural women to do just this has been well articulated by Mackenzie (1992; 1994) in examining documents from the Ontario Farm Women's Network (OFWN). In this work, the author demonstrates that through new rural women's groups, farm women are reconstructing notions of 'farmer' and 'farming'. The so-called reverse discourses being produced by these women's groups represent a considerable challenge to the masculinised notion of farmer dominant in mainstream agricultural discourse. In a different study, Oldrup (1999: 356) also emphasises the importance of the concept of agency arguing that the Danish farm women in her study are 'actively and creatively' engaged in identity construction as they undertake new roles off-farm.

In summary, farm women are presented in this paper as subjects actively constructing their gendered identities from a range of discursive positions available to them. How knowledge about these farm women was obtained and produced is outlined below.

Methodology

This paper is based on a doctoral study which examined women's contributions to the Australian sugar industry. The study was undertaken in partnership with the agri-political group, CANEGROWERS, which represents the interests of the 6000 cane farming families in the Australian state of Queensland. CANEGROWERS' interest in the research was motivated by the concern that women held none of the 181 positions of elected leadership in the organisation. Thus, a key focus of the research was exploring why women were not represented in industry leadership. To address this question it was necessary to examine firstly women's on-farm roles and identities. It is this, specifically in relation to tractor work, which is reported in the following sections of the paper.

In total, eighty women participated in both initial and follow-up focus groups of two hours' duration in two different cane growing case study sites. While I have described the design of the focus groups and the rationale for their use in detail elsewhere (Pini, 2002), three issues about the focus groups need to be emphasised. Firstly, women involved were selected according to the principles of theoretical sampling described in the qualitative methodological literature (Miles and Huberman, 1994). Given the large number of women who could be involved in the focus groups it was decided to select participants who had demonstrated some willingness to participate in industry forums and politics. CANEGROWERS' staff provided assistance with this process. Secondly, given that the women were all involved in the same industry there was a degree of homogeneity in social class amongst the women involved in the focus groups. There

was as well, a degree of sameness in the age profile of the women involved in the research. While I did not specifically ask women their ages in the focus groups it was apparent that most were over forty. Six women identified themselves as being under forty, and while there may have been others in this age group, the majority of women involved were older. This perhaps occurred because of my desire to involve women who had attempted to be active in industry politics, as recent literature argues that women typically become more involved in agri-politics later in life (Alston, 2001). Thirdly, further informing focus group findings was data obtained through descriptive, analytical and reflective journal comments I made as a participant observer during three visits to each of the case study locations (Glesne and Peshkin, 1992). All of this data – focus groups and participant observations were analysed thematically using the qualitative software package Nvivo (Qualitative Solutions and Research, 1999).

Women's participation in on-farm tractor work

Of the eighty women who participated in focus groups, thirty-nine undertook no tractor work, thirty a limited amount of on-farm tractor work and eleven almost all tractor work. A proportion of the women not involved in tractor work said that this was a matter of personal choice, while for others it was because they said they were not permitted to do so because of the views of their husbands or their in-laws who farmed in partnership with them. In explaining why, both these groups of women highlighted what they believed to be essential differences between men and women which, in the words of one participant, meant there are 'places for men to work and places for women to work'. The clear delineation between 'female work' and 'male work' articulated by a number of focus group participants rested on beliefs about biological differences between the sexes. The most commonly cited difference, physical strength, was used to explain why women were not suitable for tractor work. As one woman explained, 'It would be ridiculous for me to go out and drive a harvester and my husband stay home to look after the kids. Women aren't built for it'.

What is of interest is the fact that women described having a greater role in farming agricultural products which required more physical labor and was less capital intensive than sugar cane farming. At the same time they argued the contradictory position that the physical work of cane farming is too difficult for women, given their lesser strength. One of the participants involved in grape growing, for example, as well as cane farming stated that, 'Women are not involved in cane because of the nature of the physical work. Women can pick grapes, plant grapes and do anything, because there is not a big physical side to it as there is in sugar'.

Similarly, reflecting on the dairy farm she and her husband had owned prior to the purchase of the cane farm, another participant described missing her high level of involvement, but accepted that 'sugar cane farming seems to be more of a man's thing than the dairy'. Again, she and another participant, Constance, emphasised that this was related to differences in men and women's physical capabilities. The contention from Constance was that 'there are a lot of things that men can do' on a cane farm that 'women are not physically built to do'. As she owned both an orchard and a cane farm with her husband she compared work on each of these enterprises. While her husband had almost sole responsibility for the former, she undertook almost all the latter work. This, she said, was because the machinery involved in cane farming made it more 'men's work'. Elaborating on this theme she said, 'I mean you very rarely see a woman driving a cane harvester. I don't think I have ever seen one carting or anything like that because women physically are not capable of doing that kind of work'.

These comments from Constance provide an insight into how men and machinery are often connected in discourses on farming, just as machinery and men are conflated in other discursive sites (e.g. Cockburn, 1991; Wajcman, 2004). According to her view, women can work more in an orchard because it is more labour intensive rather than capital intensive. When I asked Constance why women would not be capable if there were actually less need for physical strength with highly mechanised processes she agreed, but referred to her own lack of mechanical skills and the fact that 'women wouldn't want to drive cane harvesters and things like that'. She reiterated the view expressed in the extract above that because she has not seen women driving harvesters or carting cane it means that women are not capable of doing it.

What is clear is that it is the use of large machinery which leads many to believe that an on-farm physical role is inappropriate for women in the sugar industry. Thus, while many, like Constance, were involved in tractor work for other agricultural crops, they had limited or non-existent involvement in the cane farming enterprise. Furthermore, while thirty of the eighty women in the focus groups were involved in some tractor work, the boundary which marked their degree of participation was typically the extent to which a task involved the use of large machinery. For example, one said that she had, in the past, 'helped with carting cane but that was when the bins were little things not like they are now'. Another, who did cart cane, said she would 'draw the line at driving a harvester'.

Constructing tractor work as requiring toughness and strength meant that women were not just unsuitable for the role but needed to be 'protected' from it to retain their femininity. Asked why she was not involved in tractor work, one woman, for example, replied that her husband was 'like most men wanting to protect her'. Another who expressed a similar sentiment explained what she meant when she said men wanted to protect their wives from the work. This meant, she said, 'not to rough them up because physical work is a man's job and women shouldn't have to get their hands dirty'. A further participant claimed that her husband wanted to 'treat her like a princess' and this meant not involving her in tractor work.

In summary, few women in the Australian sugar industry are involved in tractor work. This work is simultaneously constructed as masculine and unfeminine. All of the eleven women involved in the great proportion of tractor work as well as some of the thirty women involved in a limited amount of tractor work, cited examples of being subjected to criticism by family, friends and neighbors for undertaking this role. Two provided illustrations of pressure from immediate and extended family who had been told them that people were 'talking' about their on-farm work, that this was 'not a lady's job' and that they would be 'seen as blokes'. In sharing these examples of being sanctioned for deviating from normative roles ascribed to women, participants described strategies they used reassert feminine identities while undertaking on-farm physical work. These are outlined below.

Negotiating feminine identities and undertaking tractor work

One strategy used by women involved in tractor work as a means of negotiating their gendered identity was simply to minimise or even hide their on-farm contributions. For example, in one group two women explained that while they had been engaged in tractor work since the early years of their marriages over twenty years ago, they needed to keep it hidden from the public. One said that when she first started she was 'allowed to work on the farm, but only out the back' so that she would not be seen. The women said that opposition came from their brothers-in-law and fathers-in-law with whom they were then working in partnership. Remembering the initial interaction with her in-laws about her on-farm involvement, the second woman reflected that her offer of 'giving a hand' was met with the comment, 'I don't bloody think so'.

In explaining why their involvement was resisted although it was clearly needed, and then once accepted, hidden to the public, both of the women and other focus group participants explained that they believed men were concerned about being labeled lazy and inefficient if they were seen to be reliant on female labour. This same point was also highlighted in three other focus groups. In these discussions women emphasised the importance men gave to what 'other men' think. What is apparent is that masculinity is demonstrated by men to other men through involvement in tractor work, and deviations from this are monitored and policed from outside the immediate farm gate. Thus, it is not just women who may be censured for undertaking what is appropriately believed to be men's work, but men who may be sanctioned for allowing them to undertake the work. There is something lacking in men and their masculinity if women are seen to be doing their work. Thus, these women performed their on-farm physical roles in ways which did not publicly undermine the men's position as the farmer. By hiding their contributions 'out the back' women ensured their husbands' and brothers'-in-law public constructions of themselves as masculine remained intact.

The second strategy engaged by women involved in tractor work to assert their gendered subject positions was to emphasise the importance of their domestic and household role. This is a role which almost all of the eighty women in the focus groups said they were primarily responsible

for undertaking. It is clearly then, a role which is considered to be exclusively female. For the on-farm physically active women, ensuring that they met this role was important. When describing their on-farm roles, it was typical for women to return to the issue of domestic duties to remind participants as well as myself that this was their first priority. One explained that neither she nor her husband bothered what people thought about her involvement on-farm as 'long as I get all the housework done'. Others told stories of how they managed to 'keep the house clean' and 'get the jobs done' while undertaking their on-farm roles. This was, for one participant a matter of 'getting sent home from the paddock at six, half an hour early' to prepare the evening meal, while for another it was a matter of washing clothes before she went to the paddock in the morning, taking them off the line at lunchtime and folding them at night. Given the inextricable connection between domestic duties and hegemonic femininity, it is not surprising that these on-farm physically active women emphasised the importance of a household role to emphasise their gendered identity.

A third strategy used by women to negotiate their identity as feminine while undertaking work deemed masculine involved distancing themselves from men who also worked on the farm or other male farmers, as well as from the men's performance of masculinities. There were a number of ways in which women achieved this aim. For example, one woman, Kim, described consciously and deliberately setting herself apart physically and conversationally from the men to accomplish this objective. Commenting on how she conducted herself when working on the farm with a group made up solely of men, she said, 'I never tried to be part of them. In smoko times I never sit with them. I never try to be one of the boys. I keep my place'. Kim may have been considered by some to be 'less' feminine because she did the same work as men, but because she separated herself in this way, she was still 'different' from them. This strategy of separating oneself from the masculinities pervading the on-farm context was also evident in the stories two women told about swearing in the paddock. These women said they insisted on no swearing when they were working with the men. One explained, 'If men do swear, I would say to them that's \$10 a swear word and add it up and say that they owe me \$60 or whatever. They would get the message and you never had no more hassles'. A further way in which women distanced themselves from the masculinised space of tractor work was by minimising the degree of strength and expertise required to use large machinery. One commented that 'the new six tonne bins are a lot easier to fill' and another said that driving the harvester was the 'best job', as the cabin was air-conditioned and so she ended the day 'cool and clean', unlike the male carters.

The fourth way in which women involved in tractor work negotiated their femininity concerned how they presented themselves when they entered the public domain. They described always being 'lady-like in what they said' or 'acting like a lady' in their dealings with people. Further to this were descriptions of the use of dress to emphasise feminine identities. It is a sentiment expressed by one of the participants who said that women like her who were involved in tractor work 'always go out dressed up and we look as good as any other women so it doesn't really degrade us doing physical work'. Another participant, Janet, commented that she too always 'got dressed up to go to town'. She felt the other women in the area 'were funny about' her tractor work but was unable to say 'why or how or put my finger on it. Just that you knew you'd crossed the boundary'. While Janet may have been viewed as crossing this unseen but powerful gender boundary in terms of her involvement in on-farm work, her attention to dress and speech when 'in town' provided another boundary for her to mark herself as feminine. Like the other women, she engaged 'ladylike' dress and speech as important symbolic indicators to reinforce a feminine identity which had been otherwise compromised through involvement in tractor work.

The two women who volunteered that they had attempted to hide their tractor work when first married said this was no longer the case. Instead, they said this 'no longer mattered'. Similarly, those like Janet who explained the importance of emphasising their femininity when interacting outside the farm-gate also stated that this was not really 'that important'. This shift is related to the adoption of a new strategy to negotiate tractor work and one's feminine identities. This strategy, the adoption of a farm as business discourse, is outlined below.

Farm as business discourse

The farm as business discourse highlights the difficulty of sustaining an income on family farms and the need for both husband and wife to contribute to all aspects of the enterprise. What the adoption of the 'farm as business' discourse is illustrative of, is the profound change that has taken place in agriculture in recent years. It is a change which has witnessed the decline of family farming (Lobao and Meyer, 2001), the movement of farming women into off-farm work (Leckie, 1993) and the restructuring and deregulation of agricultural industries (Gray and Lawrence, 2000). Women had been exposed to this discourse through government and agri-political leaders who, as one said, 'are always telling us we're business people not farmers'. The growth and development of this discourse can be seen in a range of government and industry publications (e.g. National Farmers' Federation, 1993). It is a discourse clearly articulated by one participant in explaining why she was not bothered about people questioning her femininity because of her involvement in tractor work. She said, 'I know some women have a problem with doing farm work because they think it's unfeminine, but those I know don't. They see it (engaging in farm work) as the survival of the family farm and they put it (femininity) in second place'.

Those women who drew on the farm as business discourse emphasised the farm as being a partnership between husband and wife. This partnership requires both members to contribute if it is to be successful. Again, however, the emphasis was on partnership in terms of a business enterprise. Thus, one stated, 'I have a great husband who's very supportive and we're working together. I'm working with him in the industry, the business, and we look at it that I'm doing my bit for our business. It's a joint effort'.

The on-farm physically active women provided evidence of invoking this discursive construction of their work and occupational role to counter a range of negative comments. One participant, Louise, for example, told the story of being visited on her farm by the local Australian Workers' Union (AWU) representative who castigated her for carting cane when she was, in his view, 'taking a man's job'. She replied to him, as she said she has to others who have made negative comments to her about 'the work being unfeminine', that this was of lesser importance compared to 'the need to make the business work'. In another case, a participant reflected on criticisms of her on-farm physical role saying, 'I've heard funny things, but that goes over my head. This is your business and you look after it'. Two others in this focus group also involved in tractor work agreed saying, 'we're just women looking after our businesses'.

The farm as business discourse has become the favored means by which women involved in tractor work negotiate involvement in a role deemed masculine and retain a feminine identity. The following discussion explores the potential this new discursive space might have for disrupting gendered on-farm occupational roles and gendered constructions of the occupational identity of farmer.

Discussion

Women on Australian cane farms are not typically involved in the highly mechanised on-farm work that is characteristic of the industry. One might assume that the capital intensive nature of this agricultural crop would mean that woman would be more inclined to be involved than in agricultural industries which continue to rely on physical labor and strength. However, this view fails to acknowledge the link between machines and masculinities (Game and Pringle, 1983). It is not, however, machinery in itself which marks the gender divide, but the purpose and nature of the machinery. Women in the focus groups indicated a high degree of competence in the use of machinery (computers, sewing machines, dishwashers). In contrast, many suggested that husbands had a corresponding lack of competence in using household machinery and computer technology. Clearly, machinery becomes connected with masculinities when it is large and powerful and utilised to assist with tractor work. Thus, the women involved in tractor work experience potential dissonance in constituting their gendered identities as feminine.

The reasons for this dissonance are three-fold. Firstly, in rural communities notions of femininity which assign women to a domestic setting are hegemonic (Poiner, 1990; Dempsey, 1992). Clearly, those cane growing women who are not involved in tractor work - the majority of those in this study - do not have to deal with challenges to their gendered identities. The

roles they do perform and those they do not conform to traditional definitions of femininity in general, and those definitions highly valued in a rural context. Women undertaking tractor work do not experience the same congruence between their gendered subjectivities and work role, and thus the engagement of negotiation strategies is understandable. The second reason why negotiating femininity is so important to these participants is because of the likely censoring of women in rural areas who fail to conform to dominant and prescriptive notions of femininity (Hughes, 1997). This is likely to come from women as well as men (Berlan, 1986). The women in the focus groups who are involved in tractor work had been criticised by immediate family, in-laws, farmers, neighbours, professionals associated with the sugar industry and other farmers. Some of this criticism was inferred through body language, while in other cases it was direct and publicly stated. The third factor which makes it important to women involved in tractor work to negotiate their feminine identities is because of the relationship between this identity and their husband's masculine identity. The women involved in this study were aware that their involvement in tractor work could undermine their husband's gendered identity. Thus, they needed strategies, not only to reassert their feminine identities, but also to ensure their husbands' masculine identities would not be subject to question by other males.

It is for these very understandable reasons that the women involved in tractor work in this study engaged a number of strategies to negotiate their gendered identities. They hid contributions, emphasised their domestic role as paramount, gave considerable attention to dress and speech when away from the farm and distanced themselves from other men with whom they worked and masculinist behaviors such as swearing. What is important about these strategies is that they offer little or no significant challenge to the gendered construction of farming as a male enterprise. In fact, they reinforce and sustain such a construction.

This apparent anomaly can be explained by examining other studies which have considered the construction of gendered identities by men and women engaged in work which is considered atypical for their gender. This research provides evidence of the way in which women engaged in masculinised occupational roles and men engaged in feminised occupational roles may adopt what are respectively referred to as feminising or masculinising strategies in undertaking their work. For example, the fishing women studied by Yodanis (2000), justify their involvement in work typically undertaken by men by emphasising that this is an extension of their roles as wives and mothers. Alternatively, Rouston and Mills (2000) note the masculinising strategies of male music teachers. These involve distancing themselves from feminised aspects of the role and emphasising in their teaching style, dress and involvement in extra-curricula activities, aspects of hegemonic masculinity. They therefore retain their sense of masculine identity while working in what is numerically a female dominated profession. What occurs in these instances, is, as Williams (1989: 6) claimed in observing male nurses and female military workers, a redefinition of gendered identities, it is one which 'reinforces' rather than challenges gender differences.

Thus, the women involved in on-farm work in the sugar industry, like the fishing women and male music teachers, clerical assistants and creative workers, have fashioned a new gendered identity. They are not the recognisable and traditional 'farm wives' whose definition of femininity is linked to non-involvement in tractor work. They have reshaped this identity to include some engagement with on-farm physical labor. At the same time, and importantly, like their counterparts cited above, they have not done so by abandoning the more stereotypical assumptions about gendered identities. In contrast, they have emphasised some of these assumptions. They have crossed some boundaries, by involving themselves in tractor work, but like the fishing women studied by Yodanis (2000: 282) they have created new 'gender boundaries' to mark their identity.

It is arguable that this may not continue to be the case if the farm as business discourse is more widely adopted. Engaging this discourse is quite distinct from the other strategies used by women involved in tractor work because it does not rely on enhancing aspects of one's feminine identity. It also actually renames the gender specific roles of 'farmer' and 'farm wife' as either 'managers', 'partners', 'business owners'. This is significant because while rural sociologists have described different shifts in agricultural identities throughout the latter part of the twentieth century, the construction of farming as a masculine endeavour has proved highly resilient (e.g. Liepins, 1996; 1998; Teather, 1998).

The likelihood that this discourse may offer the potential for reconstituting notions of farming and farmer as gender neutral is, however, limited. In the first instance, while the farm as business discourse is widely used by government and agri-political leaders (Halpin and Martin, 1999), the extent to which it has been taken up at a grass-roots level is unclear. Furthermore, even if the discourse is more widely adopted by farming families there is no likelihood that this would be in a gender neutral way. This is because notions of business, entrepreneurship and management are themselves gendered (e.g. Collinson, 1996; Baines and Wheelock, 2000). Bryant (1999) who has used interviews with forty-four male and female respondents to examine shifts in occupational identities amongst contemporary farmers has provided evidence of this phenomenon. That is, while she notes the emergence of new occupational identities in agriculture such as 'manager' and 'entrepreneur', which she says are 'chipping away' at more traditional occupational identities in agriculture, there is little evidence that this has led to any significant shifts in rural gender relations (Bryant, 1999: 254). For example, while the 'farm' has been replaced as a 'business' or 'enterprise', work is still divided according to stereotypical assumptions about gendered work identities. Overall then, while naming themselves as 'business partners' may appear to offer farming women the discursive space to reconstitute gendered on-farm roles and identities, if such a space is ever truly available, is likely to be re-colonised and re-gendered along traditional lines.

Conclusion

As agricultural Australia continues to change it is likely that further shifts will be evident in how farm men and women position themselves as masculine/feminine subjects. As feminist post-structural theorists have suggested, gendered subjectivities are constantly appropriated, challenged and transformed (Weedon, 1987; McNay, 2000).

In turn, these changes may further unsettle constructions of the occupational role of 'farmer'. Currently, however, while the identity of 'farm wife' of old may be in the process of being replaced by a 'newer' version which incorporates women's involvement in tractor work, the construction of 'farmer' as a male identity remains intact.

References

- Alston, M. (1995) *Women on the land: the hidden heart of rural Australia*, Kensington: UNSW Press.
- Alston, M. (2001) *Breaking through the grass ceiling*, Amsterdam: Harwood.
- Baines, S. and Wheelock, J. (2000) 'Work and employment in small businesses: Perpetuating and challenging gender traditions', *Gender, Work and Organisation*, 7, 5-56.
- Bartky, S. (1990) *Femininity and domination: studies in the phenomenology of oppression*, New York: Routledge.
- Berlan, M. (1986) 'Farmers' wives in protest: A theatre of contradictions', *Sociologia Ruralis*, 26, 285-303.
- Bryant, L. (1999) 'The detraditionalisation of occupational identities in farming in South Australia', *Sociologia Ruralis*, 39: 236-261.
- Butler, J. (1990) *Gender trouble: feminism and the subversion of identity*, New York: Routledge.
- Cockburn, C. (1991) *In The Way of Women: Men's Resistance to Sex Equality in Organisations*. New York: Cornell University.
- Collinson, D. (1996) 'Breaking the silence: On men, masculinities and managements' in Collinson, D and Hearn, J. (eds) *Men as Managers, managers as men*, London: Sage.
- Dempsey, K. (1992) *A man's town: Inequality between men and women in rural Australia*, Melbourne: Oxford University Press.
- Follo, G. (In press) 'A hero's journey: Young women among males in forestry education', *Journal of Rural Studies*.
- Game, A. and Pringle, R. (1983) *Gender at work*, Sydney: Allen and Unwin.
- Glesne C. and Peshkin, A. (1992) *Becoming qualitative researchers*, London: Longman.
- Gray, I. and Lawrence, G. (2000) *A future for regional Australia*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Halpin, D. and Martin, P. (1999) 'Representing and managing farmers' interests in Australia', *Sociologia Ruralis*, 39, 78-99.
- Hopton, J. (1999) 'Militarism, masculinities and managerialisation in the British public sector', *Journal of Gender Studies*, 8, 71-82.
- Hughes, A. (1997) 'Ruralities and "cultures of womanhood"', in Cloke, P. and Little, J. (eds) *Contested countryside cultures: Otherness, marginalisation and rurality*,

London: Routledge.

- Leckie, G. (1993) 'Female farmers in Canada and the gender relations of a restructuring agricultural system', *The Canadian Geographer*, 37, 212-230.
- Liepins, R. (1996) 'Reading agricultural power: media as sites and processes in the construction of meaning', *New Zealand Geographer*, 52, 3-10.
- Liepins, R. (1998) 'Fields of action: Australian women's agricultural activism in the 1990s', *Rural Sociology*, 63, 128-156.
- Liladhar, J. (2000) 'From the soap queen to the aga-saga: different discursive frameworks of familial femininity in contemporary women's genres', *Journal of Gender Studies*, 9, 5-12.
- Little, J. (1997) 'Constructions of rural women's voluntary work', *Gender, Place and Culture*, 4, 197-209.
- Lobao, L. and Meyer, K. (2001) 'The great agricultural transition: Crisis, change, and social consequences of Twentieth Century US farming', *Annual Review of Sociology*, 27, 103-124.
- Mackenzie, F. (1992) "'The worse it got, the more we laughed": A discourse of resistance among farmers of Eastern Ontario', *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 10, 691-713.
- Mackenzie, F. (1994) 'Is where I sit, where I stand?' *Journal of Rural Studies*, 10, 101-115.
- Marshall, J. (1984) *Women managers: Travellers in a male world*, Chichester: Wiley.
- McNay L. (2000) *Gender and agency: reconfiguring the subject in feminist and social theory*, Polity: Oxford.
- McRobbie, A. (1996) 'More! new Sexualities in girls' and women's magazines' in Curran, J., Morley, D. and Walkerdine, V. (eds) *Cultural studies and communication*, London: Arnold.
- Miles, M. and Huberman, M. (1994) *Qualitative data analysis*, Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- National Farmers' Federation. (1993). *New Horizons*, Barton, ACT: National Farmers' Federation.
- Oldrup, H. (1999) 'Women working off the farm: reconstructing gender identity in Danish agriculture', *Sociologia Ruralis*, 39, 343-358.
- Pini, B. (2002) 'Focus groups, feminist research and farm women: Opportunities for empowerment in rural social research', *Journal of Rural Studies*, 18, 339-351.
- Pini, B. (2003) The question of 'the Italians' and women's participation in leadership in the Australian sugar industry. *Australian Geographer*, 34, 211-222.
- Poiner, G. (1990) *The good old rule: Gender and power relations in a rural community*, Sydney: Sydney University Press and Oxford University Press.
- Pringle, R. (1988) *Secretaries talk: Sexuality, power and work*, Sydney: Allen and Unwin.
- Qualitative Solutions and Research. (1999) *NUD*IST VIVO for Qualitative Research*. Melbourne: La Trobe.
- Roulston, K. and Mills, M. (2000) 'Male teachers in feminised teaching areas: *Oxford Review of Education*, 26, 221-237.
- Sachs, C. (1996) *Gendered fields: Rural women, agriculture and environment*, Boulder: Westview Press.
- Scott, J. (1990) 'Deconstructing equality-versus-difference: Or the uses of post-structuralist theory for feminism', in Hirsch, M. and Fox, E. (eds) *Conflicts in Feminism*, London: Routledge.
- Shortall, S. (2000) 'In and out of the milking parlour: A cross-national comparison of gender, the dairy industry and the state', *Women's Studies International Forum*, 23, 247-257.
- Strategaki, M. (1988) 'Agricultural modernisation and gender division of labor', *Sociologia Ruralis*, 28, 248-261.
- Teather, E. (1998) 'The double bind: being female and being rural: A comparative study of Australia, New Zealand and Canada', *Rural Society*, 8, 209-222.
- Wajcman, J. (2004) *Tecnofeminism*, Cambridge: Polity.
- Weedon, C. (1987) *Feminist practice and poststructuralist theory*, Oxford: Blackwell.
- West, C, and Zimmerman, D. H. (1987) 'Doing gender', *Gender and Society*, 1, 125-151.
- Williams, C. (1989) *Gender differences at work*, Berkley: University of California Press.
- Yodanis, C. (2000) 'Constructing gender and occupational segregation: A study of women and work in fishing communities', *Qualitative Sociology*, 23, 267-290.

