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September 1998
In a field of their own:

Farm transfer and farmers’ ‘sense of place’.

Craig Chapman.

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment
of a Bachelor of Arts with Honours in Geography
of the University of Otago,

Dunedin,

New Zealand

November 1998.
Abstract.

This dissertation focuses on the 'sense of place' of farmers and the way this shapes the farm transfer process. Three main bodies of literature are used in the forming of a conceptual framework. These are writings on conceptualising the farm, 'sense of place', and the process of farm transfer. An interpretive approach is taken to explore the farm transfer process, focusing on farms in the Hook area. A qualitative methodology was used, and accordingly data was collected through interviews and a map drawing exercise. A self reflective study on the author's family farm was also undertaken.

This study shows there were two main senses of place shown by farmers. These were a business focused sense of place, and a lifestyle focused sense of place. Farmers holding a business oriented sense of place treated the farm as an economic unit first and foremost. Accordingly they treated farm transfer as an economic decision. Alternatively, lifestyle focused farmers valued the farm as a family place. Consequently retaining the farm within the family was their highest priority in the farm transfer process. Several limitations constrained this study, however this dissertation concludes that analyses of farmers' sense of place supplements current knowledge on the farm transfer process.
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Chapter 1: Introduction.

"Although farmers may value family transfer of their farms, the transfer process can be long and somewhat difficult. The decision as to whether there will be a family successor and the process by which that successor is chosen or eliminated, will have an influence on the future structure of agriculture."

(Keating and Little, 1991: ix).

The process of farm transfer is one that requires much thought and involves a lot of emotion for farm owners. The above quote from Keating and Little (1991) describes just some of the variables involved in the transfer process. Previous studies on the transfer of farms have tended to be statistical (see Eaton 1993, Keating and Little 1991 and 1994). Unlike such empirically dominated studies, this dissertation is concerned with the feelings and reasons behind farm transfer decisions.

A farm is more than just land. As well as being a spatial entity, the farm is also home to the people who work and live on it (Gray 1998, Whatmore 1995). It is an economic unit, used to produce income for its owners (Fairweather 1992). However people also attach meanings, emotions and feelings to places, creating a 'sense of place' (Cosgrove 1995, Daniels 1992, Relph 1976). The sum of different conceptualisations that farmers have of their farm as a space, a ‘family’ farm, a business and a meaningful place, can be understood as the sense of place. The focus of this study is to examine farmers’ sense of place, and the way in which it shapes the process of farm transfer. Considering the farmers’ sense of place may allow a greater understanding of the transfer of the farm. Transfer of a farm is not a simple sale of property. It reflects the feelings and attitudes that the farmer has of their farm.

This study will look at the different conceptualisations that farm owners have of their farms, revealing how the sum of these conceptualisations may be seen as the farmers’ sense of place. This dissertation argues that the way in which the farmer views the different elements of their farm - the spatial
landscape, the family, the business and so on - will shape the plans that they have for the future transfer of the farm.

1.1: Definitions.

For the sake of clarity, two terms must be defined early in this dissertation. The first is the concept of ‘transfer’, and the second the concept of ‘farmer’. In this study, transfer refers to the process of selling the farm. This does not necessarily dictate that the sale will be to a family member. Transfer can be as direct as a sale between two unrelated farmers, or as complicated as a partnership between parents and child (Eaton 1993, Keating and Little 1991, 1994). ‘Farmer’ refers to the farm owner or owners. Therefore if the farm is owned by a husband and wife then both are considered to be farmers.

1.2: The scope of the study.

This study is based in the Hook area, north of Waimate in South Canterbury. This area was chosen for two reasons. The first is that it is my home area, and I have an understanding of the patterns and processes regarding farm transfer in the area. The second reason is that the area represents a community that has relatively homogenous farming histories and conditions. As will be seen in this dissertation, it is the differences in these conditions that indicate shifts in farm transfer patterns. The Hook area is generally rolling hill country. It has fertile soils, but like most of South Canterbury has irregular rainfall, with a dry summer spell (Keating and Little 1991). The area is quite homogenous in terms of agricultural production, with most farms producing a mixed combination of sheep and grain crops. A large proportion of farms in the area have been handed through the family.

My theoretical approach to the study is an interpretive one. The reason for this approach is that in this study it is assumed that farmers are the creators of their social world. It is assumed that the farm is a space that is shaped by the owners of the farm. A farmers’ sense of place is seen to be the sum of the ways in which they conceptualise the farm. It follows then that the farmers’ sense of place will
shape the transfer of the farm, spatially and as a social creation. The interpretive paradigm also assumes that academic study is subjective. This is important as the present study is in my home area and deals with issues and people I know, and my interpretation as a researcher will be subjective (see Eyles 1985, Kearns 1997).

1.3: Research question, objectives and methodology.

The key question for this study is:

"How do farmer's sense(s) of place shape the process of farm transfer"?

This key question leads to three objectives, namely:
1) To identify the ideas which create the farmer's sense of place.
2) To investigate how the farmers' sense of place shapes the farmers' use of the farm.
3) To examine the planned transfer process through the application of the farmer’s sense of place.

The majority of my field research was conducted via fourteen interviews representing twelve farms from the Hook area. Interviews were conducted with one or more of the farm owners. Interviews were focused to a group of questions designed to fulfil the objectives of the study. A semi-structured interview format allowed for the farmers' narratives to be discussed rather than simply collecting empirical information on farm transfer. The interviews were supplemented with a map drawing exercise conducted after the interviews, designed to show spatial representations of the farmers' sense of place. The combination of these two forms of primary data allowed me to form ideas and conclusions regarding the ways in which the farmer's sense of place affects farm transfer.

1.4: The structure of this dissertation.

This dissertation is organised in seven chapters. Following this introduction, Chapter Two discusses past literature to position this study in relation to past theoretical frameworks. This will include the
differing conceptualisations of 'the farm' held by past authors. Previous study on the concept of
'sense of place', and of the process of farm transfer will also be discussed. The research method will
be discussed in Chapter Three, including my experience of the research process. Chapter Four
examines the transfer experience of my home, a property that has been farmed by my parents and
paternal grandparents. This will provide a chronological 'case study' of the transfer process on one
farm. Also, as this study focuses on my home area, this chapter provides a methodological way of
discussing the senses of place of myself and my family, as these senses of place will affect my
reasoning as a researcher in regard to the the farmers' sense of place. Chapter Five considers the
ways in which the farmers in this study conceptualised their farms, including the ways in which their
senses of place were developed. Chapter Six looks at the transfer experiences of the interviewees and
applies the senses of place found in the preceding chapter to evaluate the transfer process. Lastly,
Chapter Seven concludes with a review of the study, a critique of the methodology and suggestions
for directions of future study.
Chapter 2: Forming a conceptual framework.

In addressing how farmers' concepts of place shape the process of farm transfer, this study builds on a diverse range of literature. This chapter reviews literature which explores the issues of the conceptualisation of the farm and sense of place, together with theories relating to the process of farm transfer. The first concept to be discussed will be the conceptualisation of the farm. The second concept discussed will be sense of place. The idea of 'place' is one conceptualisation of the farm, which draws from the other conceptualisations, hence its positioning in this chapter. The first two sections will aid greatly in understanding the way in which farmers treat their land. The third section, regarding farm transfer, will deal with previous studies on patterns of farm transfer. Cumulatively, this review indicates ways to study how farmers' sense of place can be used to explore the farm transfer process.

2.1: Conceptualising the farm.

This section will firstly discuss general conceptualisations of the farm found in previous literature, then more specific parts of conceptualising 'the farm' will be discussed. In general terms the farm can be divided conceptually into a social entity and an economic one. Benediktsson et al. (1990), for instance, use this definition, as do Moran, Blunden and Greenwood (1993) and Moran, Blunden and Bradley (1996). Moran et al. (1993: 26) state that a farm is at "the intersection of household and enterprise". The farm is a social unit because it is the home for the farm family (Benediktsson et al. 1990). As an economic unit, the farm is a unique form of enterprise which uses family labour for production. The farm also operates within a national and global economic framework (Voyce 1996). Apart from the
basic split between economic and social dimensions, farm owners operate the farm within different realms. The farm is part of the natural world, and is itself a biological system, as well as being within a larger ecological system (Blunden et al. 1995). So too, a farm is subject to the politics of the country it is in (Gilling 1997). Finally, a farm is also subject to the laws of the nation it is within (Bridge 1983, 1985 and Voyce 1993). This section will deal firstly with the social and economic conceptualisations addressed in previous literature. Then the farm within the realms of the environment, politics and law will be discussed.

The concept of the ‘family farm’ is rooted in the social and economic workings of the farm. Gassen and Errington (1993) attempt to provide a framework on which to define the ‘farm family business’. They argue that the farm is a business, in which the people who own the capital and work on the land are also tied to kinship relations. This means that the issue of ownership is important to clarify in the present study, due to the relationship between the farm as owned space and the family relations within that space.

Gray (1998) provides a recent reevaluation of the way in which family farms are perceived by farm families in Scotland. This is in response to Gassen and Errington’s (1993) framework, which Gray argues is perhaps not a reflection of the way farm families work. This stance is aligned with Djurfeldt (1995) who argues that Gassen and Errington’s (1993) framework is unquantifiable. A family farm has what Gray (1998) describes as ‘cosubstantiality’. This, Gray (1998) argues, is “a spatial relation between family and farm, between beings and a place, such that the distinct existence and form of both partake of or become united in a common substance” (Gray 1998: 345). In essence, the family farm is a synergy between the family and the farm, in that the family and the running of the farm are interdependent. This has implications for the current study in that the closeness of the relationship between farm and family must be addressed.

The link between the family and the farm has also been discussed by Whatmore (1994), who has written on ‘family farming’, and more specifically on the farm as a social unit. Whatmore
(1994) argues that a farm is influenced by a familial ideology. The farm family involves ‘kinship’ or the blood ties within the family on the farm. (Whatmore 1994). The farm is also a household, in Whatmore’s (1994) definition a ‘socioeconomic unit of livelihood’. The intermingling of family and business is Whatmore’s (1994) idea of familial ideology: the farm as a social unit of both family and production. This means that there is a distinction between the social roles of the family itself, and of the family involved in production.

The family as producers, as mentioned in Whatmore (1994) is a distinction raised in Hill (1993). Hill (1993) argues that the definition of the family farm is not based upon ownership but on the “operation of the farm and the part played by the family in providing the labour for the agricultural processes which take place there” (Hill 1993: 361). Therefore a family farm is defined not by a farm owned by family members, but worked by them. Djurfeldt (1995) concurs with this stance by arguing that the labour relations of a farm family are quantifiable, while the concept of ‘farm family’ is not. Kritzinger and Vorster (1997) also discuss the concept of the farm family in relation to labour on South African fruit farms. They argue that as labour shifts more to workers from outside the family the concept of the ‘farm family’ weakens. This may have implications for the present study, as who works on the farm may indicate the degrees to which the farm is conceptualised as a family farm.

At a wider scale, a farm is also a construction and an expression of cultural ideas (de Haan 1994). This means that the farm is a representation of wider social ideas. de Haan (1994) argues that the farm is a representation of society, which in the case of Western farms is the materialism of capitalist culture. This means that it is important for the present study to discuss the wider social networks within which farms in Hook operate. It is important to realise that as the concept of the family farm is culturally influenced, a definition of ‘the family farm’ may not be appropriate in other areas (Kasimir and Papadopoulos 1997). The conceptualisation of the farm by Pakeha farmers in Hook may be different to that of Maori farmers in Hokianga for example.
The farm is an economic unit, and “dominated by economic structures” (Fairweather 1992). It has inputs and technologies, and the land is employed to produce goods. A farm is part of the market and must therefore buy and sell goods to make a profit (Fairweather 1992). Looking at the farm within the market is what Fairweather (1992) describes as a ‘macroeconomic’ approach. Voyce (1996) argues that farming has always been part of the capitalist mode of production. This has implications for the present study in that the farmers’ conceptualisations of the farm as an economic production unit will be linked to wider market forces.

A macroeconomic approach means that farms can be viewed as being affected by wider market forces. Fairweather (1992) argues that the economic viability of farming has dropped since 1984 for two reasons. The first is that subsidies were dropped by the Labour government, therefore decreasing the direct income of farmers. The second reason Fairweather (1992) argues that viability has dropped is due to an increasingly competitive free market. References to these trends in this study must be noted as an indicator of the way farmers conceptualise the farm as an economic unit.

The effects of the free market are closely linked to farming becoming increasingly part of global economics (Fairweather 1992 and Voyce 1996). This affects the way in which farmers conceptualise their farm. Farmers now compete in an increasingly global market and must strive to succeed in this atmosphere (Fairweather 1992). A global view also means that farmers identify less with farming as a way of life. (Voyce 1996). In other words, farmers become less concerned with ‘the farm’ and more concerned with ‘the economy’ or ‘the global market’. The economic effects of this could be marked, with a farmer no longer conceptualising their farm within the local micro economics of their area. In regard to the present study, this could perhaps mean that farmers are more likely to transfer the farm with wider economic processes in mind.

The farm is also a spatial entity. As such, the use of a farm is controlled by its owners.
Blunden et al. (1995) describe the use of the farm as a space as its ‘biological’ use. The farm is identified biologically in three ways by Blunden et al. (1995). Firstly, the soil and natural resources are used to produce biological outputs, for example crops, grasses and animals. Secondly, the farm is part of an ecosystem, and is therefore not closed to animals, insects or weedy plant species. In contrast to this however, the third factor is one of control, where the farm owners work to ensure the ‘resilience’, or sustainability of their property. This has implications for the present study as the way in which the farm is used for agricultural production, and the ways in which the space is altered for that production must be addressed.

A farm also operates within the framework of the politics of the country in which it is situated (Gilling 1997). This means that it is subject to the policies and laws of the state in which it operates. According to Gilling (1997), policy regarding farming “is or can become an ideological government tool” (Gilling 1997: 18). This means that the attitudes of governments to farming or to the economy in general can impact upon farms. The most striking example of this was the bankruptcy of ten percent of New Zealand farms after Labour’s ideological shift to Neoliberalism in 1984 and the subsequent removal of subsidies to farming (Russell 1996).

As well as being affected by politics, a farm is also a legal entity in itself (Voyce 1993) and therefore must be treated and transferred as such. In legal terms, the farm is a piece of land like any other. Under the Land Trading Act 1954, the owner has a title to the land and may use it in the way they see fit, within legal boundaries. When the farm is owned by more than one person the legal entity of the farm is more abstract, but in general a partnership is agreed to. In the case of a husband and wife partnership the farm is considered in its legal form under the Matrimonial Property Act 1976. This means that the farm is legally the joint property of both husband and wife (Bridge 1983). In both the cases of a husband/wife or intergenerational partnership, the ownership of the farm is divided according to the inputs invested in it as an economic unit by the partners. The accepted legal scenario for this (which assumes the farmer is male) is that “farmer has carried out the bulk of physical work, while
the farmer’s wife has normally been engaged in the care of the children, the running of the household, and participating generally in work around the farm” (Bridge 1983: 20). The implications of this is that ownership of the farm is influenced by both domestic and farm labour, rather than solely on inputs into the farm as an economic unit.

As well as deciding ownership, legal frameworks play a part in deciding continuing bloodlines (Voyce 1993). This has implications in looking at the transfer process in the present study. As discussed in Bridge (1983 and 1985), farms are generally passed down from father to son, and this is often done through family arranged partnership agreements. The focus of New Zealand law in regard to the division of the farm is to ensure equality in the division of the farm assets after the retirement of the parents (Bridge 1983). This means that intergenerational partnership agreements must also be fair to the ‘farmers’ wife’ and other siblings. In cases where the female partner’s contribution is greater, their share of the farm as an assets is deemed to be greater. Legal conceptualisations of the farm concur with literature on the ‘family farm’ (Gasson and Errington 1993 and Gray 1998), in that the two main features of ‘control’ are indicated by ownership and labour inputs. This means that the establishment of ownership patterns in the present study is important from a legal standpoint as well as a family one.

Trusts are another legal conceptualisation of the farm. In the situation of a trust the farm will be seen as a separate legal entity. This means that the farm is in fact owned by a trust, but the profits are controlled by the executors, usually the parents (McGuckian et. al. 1995). The problem with farms being placed into trusts is that the parents have less control of the assets and the transfer process (McGuckian et. al. 1995).

The conceptualisation of the farm adopted for the purposes of this study is summarised in Figure 2.1. The farm is conceptualised as a social unit, because it has a family living on it. The family is involved in the farm in three ways. First, the farm is where the family lives, and is therefore their home. Second, the farm is owned by family members, usually the parents.
Figure 2.1: Conceptualising the Farm.
This has links with the farm as a legally owned space. Third, the farm uses the labour of family members in production. A farm family is also involved in wider social networks. The farm is an economic unit as it produces goods, has inputs and technologies and operates within the wider networks of national and global markets. A farm is a physical space, and operates within the physical environment, and can be treated as a sustainable resource. Lastly, the farm is operated within national politics and law, and is therefore subject to decisions made at a national political and legal level. This study will view the ways in which farmers conceptualise their farm within the framework provided by the literature.

2.2: A sense of place.

Sense of place is a central notion for this investigation because it is a concept that allows the ways in which humans operate in space to be understood. In general terms a sense of place is deemed to be “distinctive or memorable through their (places) physical characteristics or association with significant events” (Cosgrove 1995:549, parentheses added). In everyday life people develop attachments to places (Cosgrove 1995). The sense of place therefore includes the feelings that people attach to the significant places in their lives. There is a distinction between ‘place’, which refers to an actual spatial area, and ‘sense of place’, or the feelings attached to a place by humans. It is my contention that the conceptualisations that farmers have of their farms will lead them to create a sense of place about the farm.

In recent times the idea of ‘place’ has been used to try and understand social relations and constructions in space. Examples of this type of literature are Dunn et al. (1995) in the study of Newcastle, Australia, and the changes the city has gone through. David Harvey (1996) uses a murder in Guilford, Baltimore to begin a discussion of the meaning of place. These studies draw from the idea that a place is the creation of the humans within it, and that the humans within a space will shape and be shaped by it. This idea is useful, in that it allows the farmer to be viewed as the ‘shaper’ of space in that the farmer has a sense of place about their farm, much in the same way that Dunn et al. (1995) argue that the space of Newcastle reflects
the sense of place of the people residing within it.

Relph (1976) provides a definition of place with three useful features. Firstly, a place will have a location, or a spatial area. Secondly, a place is a dynamic entity, and processes operate within it. Thirdly, a place has meanings characterised by "the belief of man (sic)" (Relph 1976). Place must involve a physical area. A place is not just a physical space, however, but also a reflection of the people who interact with that space (Dunn et al. 1995). Daniels (1992) argues that a place is at the intersection of society and space. Place is the creation and reflection of the humans that reside or interact within it. This means that it will follow that the farm is a reflection of the farm family, and therefore the transfer of that farm will be a reflection of the farmers' sense of place.

However, the definition of place as the creation and reflection of humans does not encompass the feeling that is attached to a farm, which is part of Relph's (1976) idea of 'meanings'. This deep sense of attachment to place has been discussed in various works (Harvey 1996, Massey 1991, Relph 1976, Daniels 1992). A sense of place can be described as a sense of rootedness (Massey 1991). This means that the people who interact with that place will have some attachments there, or even, as is the case with a farm, call it 'home'. According to Massey (1991), these roots are varied and each place will have multiple identities. This is important for the present study as the farmers' sense of place will be affected by the multiple identities of the direct family they share the farm with. Harvey (1996) and Relph (1976) describe a place as having spiritual qualities, ingrained in a person's consciousness. Overall then, a sense of place can be understood to be deeply meaningful to the people who experience it.

Spatially, a sense of place will often refer to 'nature', or the feeling of being part of the natural world (Cantrill 1998). An example would be having a favourite place in a forest. As the farm is part of a biological system, then sense of place may be strengthened by the farm's place in the environment. The concept of sense of place also has implications for the environmental sustainability of farming. Stewart et al. (1998) argue that understanding people's appreciation
of space as 'places' allows for an empathy toward the environment. This perhaps has implications for the ways in which farmers treat their farm as a resource, as they may regard it as a 'natural' space that should be maintained.

Sense of place also involves social relations, especially those of the family. Hay (1998) argues that a sense of place is developed on three levels. The first of these is residence in the place. This can be linked to the conceptualisation of the farm as a 'family farm' in that an important part of this conceptualisation is living as a family on the farm. The second stage of sense of place development is the 'age stage'. This refers to how long someone has been linked to a place. Third, Hay (1998) states that the sense of place is heightened by the 'adult pair bond', or creation of the family unit. This definition has strong links to the conceptualisation of the sense of place in regard to the family, in that it involves the use of 'home', and also refers to the actual family unit. The idea of 'home' has close links to the concept that people's sense of place is affected by their position within it. Hirsch (1995) argues that people who have a deep sense of place feel themselves to be 'insiders', or operating as part of a place.

Sense of place in regard to the family also has implications in regard to the preservation of a place as a 'family place'. Stewart et al (1998) argue that the use of sense of place can lead to understanding of places in regard to heritage. This idea has implications for the farm transfer process, in that there may be a desire to retain the family heritage of the farm as a place.

Places are not just social constructs, but economic ones too. Harvey (1996) and Massey (1991) both write of economic features of place. Harvey (1996) argues that place is capitalistically driven and is a reflection of the investments of capitalism. It follows that it is inescapable that places will in some way be involved in the market. This can be applied to the farm, in that it is an economic unit, and (in New Zealand at least) part of a capitalist 'free' market (Fairweather 1992).
As Massey (1993) argues, places are affected by globalisation, and there is seen to be a compression of time and space. This means that a farm can be seen as part of the global economy. As Moran et al. (1993) argue, the farm is not a static enterprise, but is able to evolve. The way that farms have evolved in the face of global capitalism is to create links both between farms at a local level and also with agricultural industry further up the production chain (Moran et al. 1993). The evolutionary response of farming at a local level to global trends is aligned with Massey's (1993) argument that sense of place should be viewed as a 'global' sense of place. By this Massey (1993) means that the sense of place at a local level is in fact affected by other, wider senses of place. Therefore change at the level of the farm can perhaps be seen as a 'globalising' sense of the farm as an economic place.

Figure 2.2, which is closely aligned in structure with Figure 2.1, provides a summary of the concept of sense of place. A sense of place has at its root a physical space. The people who are 'insiders' of this space attach meanings to that space, creating a sense of place. People's sense of place is a rootedness to a place. Sense of place is also linked to the social networks of a place. Residence in a place, length of time in a place and the inclusion of family in a place will strengthen sense of place. Places are also economic constructs, and operate within a local and global market. A place may also be treated as a 'sustainable' land resource. It is my contention that the conceptualisation of the farm as a place will lead to that place being controlled according to the attachments given to it, and therefore farmers' sense of place will affect the way the farm is treated. This contention is reflected in the transfer of the farm.

2.3: Transfer of the farm.

The third main component of the conceptual framework is the actual transfer process. In this study transfer refers to the sale and handing over of the farm, whether it be an intergenerational transfer or transfer between people unrelated by kinship. Previous studies have often been descriptive of the transfer process, rather than linking it to broader social processes and feelings. Keating and Little (1991) provide a basic description of the 'life
Global Economics
Global sense of place.
Awareness of globality.

'Culture'
Social networks.

Social
Family ties. Residency. 'Home'.

Economic
Place as part of capitalist system, market.

Physical Space
'Nature'.

Sense of Place.

Sense of place affecting sustainability.

Part of Global Economics.

Figure 2.2: Sense of Place.
cycle' on the farm. First there is the entry into farming, and then a stage Keating and Little (1991) describe as 'being into it'. Lastly there is the retirement of the farm owners. This section will use the three point framework provided by Keating and Little (1991) to discuss the transfer process.

The first stage of transfer for a farmer is the entry into farming. Essentially, this involves taking control of the farm. There are two possible scenarios: gain of the farm through the family, or gain of the farm from someone unrelated by kinship (Eaton 1993). The most simple entry scenario is that of the farmers purchasing a farm in which they have no family interest. Gilling (1997) argues that in fact fewer and fewer farms are being 'kept in the family', due to the outgoing generation’s need for a lump sum on which to retire. This means that the direct sale to an ‘outsider’ is becoming increasingly common. In this case it is much like buying a house, and the usual scenario will be for the buyer to mortgage the farm and purchase it outright from the outgoing farmer. Once the farm is owned freehold, it is then possible to sell it and use the capital gained from the sale to move to another property (Eaton 1993). The biggest problem then is for the entering farmer to time the sale of their old farm to coincide with the purchase of the new one.

The most likely scenario of entry however is that a son will gain the farm from his parents (Bridge 1983, Gray 1998). Entry is often a complicated process (Keating and Little 1994). Firstly there is the matter of the outgoing generation’s decision on who is eligible to take over the farm. Gray (1998) found that the successor was most likely to be the eldest male. Gray (1998) also found that the parents of farm families valued the passing of a farm through kinship very highly. Once eligibility is decided, the receiving generation will often want control immediately (Keating and Little 1994), but this is often denied due to the gradual letting go of the farm by the previous generation. In such cases, the expense of the assets involved mean the land and resources of the farm will usually be bought incrementally by the incoming generation (Gray 1998). Usually the method of incremental sale is through a partnership.
The ‘partnership’ scenario means that there may be two generations with equally high stakes in the property, and each wanting to gain control (Monro et. al. 1995). The age of parents can in fact mean that the children will not be working the farm independently until their forties (Keating and Little 1994). In the case of an intergenerational transfer the maintenance of business and family continuity is easier because both generations of the farm family will be involved together at some stage (Monro et al. 1995). In general the final purchase and complete transfer of the farm will occur due to a critical event in the lives of the outgoing generation (Potter and Lobley 1996a). They may become sick or too old to operate the farm effectively, or even die (Keating and Little 1991, Monro et al. 1995). It is then that the opportunity to buy the farm is taken up by the incoming generation. As many of the farms in the Hook area are ‘family farms’, this literature on ‘kin’ transfer will prove valuable to the present study.

The experience of farm entry is different for women and men. Women are most often involved in the transfer through marriage (Keating and Little 1991). Marriage takes place in one of two ways in an intergenerational transfer. The first is when a woman is married to a farmers son, and is therefore involved as his spouse, and business partner, in the farm transfer (Gray 1998). The second is the case of the only daughter, or the daughter interested in the farm. Often it is not expected that the daughter will become a farmer in her own right, but will rather marry a man interested in farming and deemed worthy of carrying on the farming tradition of the woman’s family (Keating and Little 1994). Marriage extends the family unit of the farm from one family to an extended family involving two sets of ‘grandparents’ (Gray 1998). Gray (1998) identifies that Scottish farmers may try to ensure their future daughter in law has little claim to the farm. The implications of the difference in gender experiences of farm transfer will be noted in this study, but can not be developed in depth due to limited scope.

The second phase in the life cycle of the farm identified by Keating and Little (1991) is that of ‘being into it’. This is the period in which the farmers’ sense of place becomes increasingly
prevalent. This period essentially means becoming part of the farm, and having it be the ‘farmer’s place’. In the case of both men and women, this is where the hard work is done, creating a feeling of vested interest in the farm (Djurfeldt 1995, Hill 1993, Kritzinger and Vorster 1997). The farmer will work the land and feel that through this work his or her ownership of the farm is strengthened (Keating and Little 1991). The farmer will often become a part of the local farming community during this stage and feel in place in their local area (de Haan 1994, Potter and Lobley 1996b). Also, if a family is raised on the farm, an even stronger feeling of ‘home’ is established (Keating and Little 1991). This is an important point in regard to the present study, as it is my contention that the sense of place developed during the ‘into it’ stage will shape the planned transfer of the farm.

After the years of work that help to create the farmers sense of place, the time comes to retire - the third phase in the farm life cycle (Keating and Little 1991). According to Keating and Little (1991) this happens in one of two ways in intergenerational transfers. The first is the ‘clean break’, where the farmer ceases to work in the management and physical labour of the farm completely (Gray 1998). In an intergenerational transfer this break may occur while the outgoing generation is still involved in the incremental sale of the farm. In the case of a new farmer buying the farm, the retirement is simple, as the outgoing farmer ceases to work on the farm and to own it.

The second scenario is that of an incremental handover of power. Often this takes form in the farmer removing themselves from the physical labour of the farm, while maintaining managerial control (Keating and Little 1991). This has the potential to cause problems as the incoming generation wants to make decisions about the land they are working on (Monro et al. 1995). There is also the concern of the outgoing generation to try and maintain family ties in an intergenerational transfer. Because of issues of control, relations between generations may become strained (Eaton 1993). If in a male to male transfer the son is married, then his parents may take pains to ensure that their daughter in law is comfortable in her new position on the farm (Keating and Little 1991). However, as stated earlier, they will maintain the ties
of the nuclear family first (Gray 1998). This is perhaps a reflection on the argument de Haan (1994) discussed in the first section of this chapter. The culture of a society is reflected in the conceptualisation of the farm, and it can be argued that the way marriage of a son is treated by the retiring generation is a cultural construct.

As well as the continuity of family, the maintenance of the farm as a viable economic unit is important to retiring farmers. In this manner Eaton (1993) found that the most important aspect of the transfer of a farm to the retiring generation was the maintenance of its economic viability. This was for two main reasons. Firstly, the retiring generation still had capital interest in the farm and wanted to protect their investment. Secondly, the retiring generation perceived that the farm would not stay in the family if not looked after properly. This links to the economic conceptualisation of the farm described by Voyce (1996) in section 1 of this chapter, that farmers are becoming more concerned with the economic aspects of farming than the continuation of family lines.

Overall, everyone with an ownership stake, no matter how long they spend on a particular farm, will experience the entry, place making and retirement from that property. This farming ‘life cycle’ is summarised in Figure 2.3. In the case of a family farm the most common scenario is that the most eligible son will work with his father on the land, slowly purchasing the titles and resources, and taking on more and more of the management of the farm (Bridge 1983). A new farmer will find their entry more automatic, taking over the management and the ownership of the property at once. For both types of farmers the next period of finding their feet and working the land is essentially the same. By owning, working and living on the farm, and perhaps raising a family, a strong sense of home and place is developed. This is extended over time as memories and personal attachments accumulate and grow.

Finally, the farmer will leave, either for retirement or for reinvestment in a new farm or new career. Either they will hand over the reins slowly to their own child, or sell the farm cleanly to a ‘new’ farmer. Of course the two paths of intergenerational and ‘new’ farmers are not
Family farm transfer.

- Common scenario: eldest son takes over property.
- Partnership with parents.
- Legal trust.
- Gaining of control.

Entry into farming.

Place making.

- Ownership.
- Labour on the farm.
- Family relations / 'home'.
- Memories and attachments.

Exit from farming.

- Retirement (old age?).
- Partnership with child.
- Legal trust.
- Letting go of control

Non family farm transfer.

- Direct purchase of property.

Figure 2.3: Patterns of farm transfer.
mutually exclusive. A ‘new’ farmer may pass the farm on to their child, as may a family farm be sold to an ‘outsider’. All farmers will pass through this cycle, although the experiences in the stages of transfer and the senses of place developed in the years of ownership may be different for individual farmers and their families. The patterns of farm transfer defined in the literature will be useful in the present study, providing a framework with which to discuss the transfer of the farm. It is my expectation that this study will concur with many of the patterns discussed in previous literature on the process of farm transfer.

2.4: Conclusions.

This study has drawn from three main bodies of literature in order to create a conceptual framework for data analysis. First, it is acknowledged that the farm can be conceptualised in different ways. A farm is often a ‘family’ farm, and is tied in with wider social networks. A farm is operated within wider economic networks, at a local, national and global scale. A farm is also a physical space. The final conceptualisation is the way a farm operates within politics and laws.

Second, the farm is a place with senses of places attached to it. It is my contention that senses of place are closely aligned with different conceptualisations of the farm. The mix of the farm as a space, a social unit and an economic unit is consistent between the sense of place and the conceptualisation of the farm. A sense of place is in essence a sense of rootedness or attachment to a place, within a spatial area. The feeling of ‘insideness’ is strengthened by social relations. Lastly, places are identified as economic constructs in the literature.

Third, previous farm transfer literature has been discussed. There are two periods in the transfer process of concern for this study. First, there is the experience of the farmers’ entry into farming. Second there is the ways in which the retiring generation experiences the farm. In transfer literature the maintenance of the farm as both a family and a business have been
identified. Once again this links to the two main features of conceptualising the farm and of the sense of place, that of the family and the business. It is my contention then that the farmers' sense of place, and the conceptualisations farmers have of their farms, will shape the process of farm transfer.

These ideas form a conceptual framework for the analytical work presented in Chapters 4, 5 and 6. The next Chapter will discuss the methods of this study, including the adopted approach, data collection methods and the analysis process.

Research in previous studies on farm transfer has been characterised by a variety of methods including local interviews and questionnaires (Eaton 1993, Keating and Little 1991, 1994). The results of previous studies have tended to be statistical. Although statistics are able to portray information in a clear and concise way, the need in this dissertation to gain a sense of the farmers’ experiences and perceptions steered the methods away from statistical analysis. This chapter will firstly outline the interpretive paradigm I chose to use for this study. Then the study area and my position within it is addressed. The third section of this chapter deals with the interviewee selection process, the interviews and the maps drawn by the farmers in turn, while the final section describes the analysis techniques employed in the study.

3.1: The adopted perspective.

The theoretical perspective adopted for this study is an interpretive one. This perspective assumes that reality is socially constructed and is subjectively experienced and interpreted by humans (Sarantakos 1993). People attach meanings to social processes and to their lives (Sarantakos 1993). For this study it is the opinions of the farmers that is important. The use of the interpretive paradigm acknowledges that the farmers’ feelings and opinions reflect their experience and interpretation of the farm and the farm transfer process. Human beings are assumed to be the creators of their social world (Sarantakos 1993). This is important in the study of farming, as a farm is something that can be shaped by the people that own it. The social and economic relations that are carried out on the land can also be assumed to be the creations of its owners. The interpretive paradigm also assumes that all thought is subjective. This is important on two levels. The feelings of farmers will be of their creation and will therefore be subjective. Secondly, as the study is in my home area and deals with issues and people that I know, my own interpretations as the researcher will be subjective. A self reflective investigation of this situation is required and is discussed methodologically (in the second section of this chapter) and substantively (in Chapter 4).
A problem with an interpretive approach is that decisions must be made regarding whom has the knowledge that is sought (Harding 1987). In the present study it could be claimed that the knowledge and meanings of everyone involved in farming in the Hook area has validity and value. Due to the scope of the study, however, such things as differences in interpretation according to gender and age could not be taken. As explained in the introduction, the people with ‘knowledge’ in this study are considered to be the farm owners. This is consistent with the interpretive assumption that people are the creators of their world. The people who have most control over the land, the farm owners, are the ones who are also considered to have ‘knowledge’ sought in this study.

This study has uses qualitative methods (as discussed in Eyles and Smith 1998) in order to gain the meanings that the farmers have attached to their farms. I wanted to allow the voice of the farmers to be heard in regard to the way they conceptualise the farm and the ways they plan to pass it on. This is a shift from previous studies (Eaton 1993, Keating and Little 1991, 1994) which tend to view the transfer process statistically. Although these studies do look at the reasons behind the transfer decisions shown in their studies, I believe that the use of ‘sense of place’ gives a more holistic view of the transfer process.

3.2: The study area and my place within it.

This study is based in the Hook area near Waimate in South Canterbury (Figure 3.1). Hook is an area of rolling hill country, in the lowlands seawards of the Hunters Hills (see Plate 3.1). The predominant climatic characteristic of the Hook area is dry summer period, although consistent rainfall outside of this period and fertile loess soils mean that Hook is a productive farming area. A typical South Canterbury farm is about 270 hectares and produces both sheep and crop (Keating and Little 1994). The Hook area is typical of this description, with most farms producing the basic mix of sheep and crops (see Plate 3.2). Variations on the predominant farm types include deer, beef and dairy production.

The area has a history of family farming and many of the farms have been passed on from father to
Figure 3.1: Location of the study area.
Plate 3.1: The rolling hill country of Hook, looking up the road from outside the gate of the Chapman family home.

Plate 3.2: Sheep grazing on pasture, one of the main production types in Hook.
son. Hook was part of the Waimate Estate during the extensive pastoralism of the late nineteenth century, and descendants of families from that period still farm in the area. There is a homogeneity in the area with regard to the people as well as farming style. Almost without exception the farms are run by married couples, often with children. There are no single women farmers or Maori farmers in the area. The area has the community spirit of Pakeha families that have grown up together. Until 1997 the small Hook school operated, and events are held at the local hall such as a Christmas gathering. Overall then, the area is one of relative homogeneity, with the farms being mainly mixed cropping enterprises run by a family unit.

My position in the area is an involved one. I grew up in Hook, and attended the local school. Neighbours in the Hook area are firm family friends, and local events (such as the recent closing of the Hook school) are attended both by my family and others that have lived and grown up in the area. Therefore the interviewees know me and have watched me grow up. The knowledge I have of the area and the people within it were useful for selecting the interviewees and for interpreting the results of data collection.

The use of self reflection in geographical study is not without precedent. Eyles (1985) and Kearns (1997) have discussed their place in areas in which they are involved, while Valentine (1998) described her personal experiences in the context of her lesbianism and the ‘geographies’ of harassment she received as a result. The use of the interpretive paradigm means that I assume that ‘knowledge’ is subjective. As Rose (1997: 305) states, “all knowledge is produced in circumstances, and those circumstances shape it in some way”. The use of self reflection in this study is a way for myself, and the reader, to grasp the subjectivity with which I view my home area. Writing self reflective work is the attempt to gain understanding of the presuppositions one makes when viewing a topic that is close to one’s heart (Eyles 1985). For me, this is the area of Hook. The knowledge of these presuppositions allows the researcher to become part of the data, an understanding resource rather than an evaluating academic (Kearns 1997). This means that there is no ‘academic and other’ scenario: I am part of Hook, and will always be, and the acceptance of this allows for a deeper, although subjective, understanding of the people and processes in the current study.
In view of literature containing self reflection, I took methodological steps with which to review the data collected from my family and myself. Stanley (1992) has argued that bio, or 'the narration of everyday life' (Valentine 1997: 308) is the crucial element in discussing the self (auto) and ones writing (graph). The first purpose of Chapter Four then, is to provide the story or narration of the life of myself and my family. As well as discussing my family and myself, Chapter Four views the senses of place and transfer process experienced by my Grandfather, father and myself. It can be seen then that the writing of my narrative (bio) allows for the acceptance of myself as a subjective researcher, able to apply the bio of myself and my family to the writing (graph) and conceptualisation of an academic topic.

Although my place in the Hook community has served an academic purpose, there were concerns that my study would conflict with my place in the community, in that I was being told information that was not public knowledge in the community. This perhaps altered the information I was given in that some would have been too ‘sensitive’ to discuss with the son of a neighbour. With this in mind I made an effort to ensure the confidentiality of information that was given to me. This is further noted in section 3.3, in regard to ethical procedure. Issues of confidentiality aside, the fact that the interviewees knew me meant that they were, on the whole, helpful and interested in my study. The sum effect of my working within my home area was that I was able to gain a great depth of insightful and useful information for use in this study.

3.3: Data collection.

As this study focuses on the farmers’ sense of place it is important to first clarify who a ‘farmer’ is. As mentioned in the introduction the use of the term farmer refers to the farm owner or owners. In the case of four of the fourteen interviews, the farm was owned solely by the ‘male farmer’. The other ten had at their base a husband and wife partnership. An assumption was made that the male partner would do the greater share of outdoor farming work. This is in accordance with Clifford-Walton et al. (1997: 143) who state “The predominant arrangement on the farms was for the man to be the primary agricultural worker and the woman the domestic ‘paper’ worker”. Therefore letters
of introduction were sent to the male partner. This in no way means that I think that women cannot be farmers, or that their sense of place is not valid. In this study it was most important to gauge the way in which the land was shaped, managed and controlled, and for practical reasons this was completed by interviewing the partner assumed to have the greater share of outdoor farming work. Interviews where both partners were present were of great value and helped clarify the sense of place of the farmers involved. However the fact that the study had to be limited in size meant that I could not study gender differences or the fact that there was little ethnic diversity in the area.

I decided to use interviews as the main form of data collection as I felt that interviewing would be able to reflect the feelings of the interviewees. Due to my prior knowledge of members of the Hook community I was able to choose the interviewees purposefully in order to gain different ‘stories’ of farm transfer. In order to do this I constructed a matrix with various criteria (see Appendix A) and then chose interviewees to fit the various categories. I chose at least two farmers in each category, so I had at least two retired farmers, two males who owned the farm solely, and so on. Although this method of selection was not random, with the limited time and scope for the study it was more important to gain a sample reflecting the different types of farm ownership arrangements.

Following ethical approval being given in this study, I wrote a letter to twenty farmers (see Appendix B), and informed them that I would telephone in the Easter break to arrange a time for interviewing, if they were willing to be included in the study. The farmers contacted included my father and Grandfather, whose interviews I decided could be used in general results as well as for use in Chapter 4. When telephoned, one farmer declined to be interviewed, while five others were unable to be contacted as they were on holiday. Times were arranged with the remaining fourteen contacts. Twelve of these were interviewed at their farms while the remaining two were retired farmers and interviewed at their homes in Waimate. In August I sent out additional forms on which the interviewees were asked to draw a map of their farm. Thirteen of fourteen of these were returned, which provided a visual supplement to the information gained in the interviews.

The interviews were conducted in the interviewees’ homes and lasted from half an hour to two hours.
A semi-structured format was used, based around four main topic areas. Although conversation was allowed to flow, I had a list of focus questions which I aimed to have answered either directly or through conversation during the interviews (see Appendix C).

First, as part of the planned ethics procedure the interviewees were shown a declaration of confidentiality in order to show them the steps that were taken to ensure confidentiality (see Appendix D). This was signed by both myself and the interviewees. I found this to be a useful icebreaker as it allayed some fears about confidentiality. I then gave a brief outline of the topic areas, and began interviewing. The interviews took a conversational form, and the fact that I knew the interviewees led the interviews to be relaxed and enjoyable. Most interviews were taped, however some interviewees did not feel comfortable with being taped and I therefore took notes. Overall the sum of the interviews being in the interviewees' home, the conversational style and the interviewee's familiarity with me led to openness from the interviewees and a relaxed interview process.

In order to gain a graphic supplement to the interviews a letter was sent to the interviewees along with a blank form they were asked to fill out (see Appendix E). The farmers were asked to draw their farm, including places of importance to them. The maps were sent to the male partner only to provide complete consistency with the interviews. The maps provided visual evidence of the spatial conceptualisations the interviewees had discussed in the interviews. Almost all of the maps were hand drawn, and all of the respondents had made an effort to draw places and meanings on the maps.

3.4: Data analysis and interpretation.

The analysis of the interviews followed the strategy set out by Miles and Huberman (1984). After transcribing the interviews, key words and phrases were identified by close reading of the transcripts, and reference to the literature. These key words, or codes, were then used to organise the information in the interviews. Following Miles and Huberman (1984), coding was then used to organise into relevant blocks of information. I could then look at these blocks across the body of data and begin to formulate an argument. Analysis of the maps was easier in that the information
contained on them related to the information gleaned from the interviews. Therefore the features of the maps simply had to be placed into the framework that had been established by coding.

Interpretation of the coded information was based on the conceptual framework. Different themes established in previous literature were used as a structure by which to organise the coded information. It must be noted here that my position in the Hook community and farming knowledge informed the construction of my argument. This study is designed to show the feelings, emotions and meanings held by farmers, but the way in which this is presented is obviously controlled by my interpretation.

I chose to use pseudonyms for the interviewees in order to ensure their anonymity when using direct quotes. Also, I felt the use of pseudonyms to be less confusing and less inhuman than using numbers.

The next chapter will discuss my family’s farm. Then Chapters 5 and 6 will look at the ways in which the farmers conceptualised the farm and the farm transfer process in the interviews and maps.
Chapter 4: The Chapman Farm.

I am the son of a farmer, as was my father and my Grandfather. The farm on which I grew up is located in the area under investigation: Hook. This chapter gives an account of the senses of place and transfer experience that my Grandfather and father have of the family farm, and also the sense of place I have regarding the farm. There are three reasons for the inclusion of a discussion of my family's farm in this dissertation. First, as discussed in Chapter 3, the evaluation of one's own sense of place can aid in the understanding of the sense of place of others (Eyles 1985, Kearns 1997). I have a close association with the Hook area, as it is the area in which I grew up. The ways in which I identify the senses of place of myself and my family will reflect the way in which I view the senses of place held by others. This means that reflecting upon the close links I have with Hook as an area will aid in the understanding of the senses of place of others in that area. Second, as discussed in Chapter 3 the use of an autobiographical study of one involved in an area is a valid source of information about the patterns and processes within that area (Eyles 1985, Kearns 1997). This means that the senses of place of myself and my family are as valid a source of information as the senses of place of the interviewees involved in the study. Third, the story of the Chapman farm is one that deals with senses of place and transfer over time. Therefore, this chapter is an opportunity to provide a chronological 'case study' of the way in which different generations of a farm have conceptualised the farm as a place and have experienced the farm transfer process. With these three purposes in mind, the chapter is structured as a discussion of the narratives of three people, my Grandfather, my father and myself. The telling of these narratives will be linked to the conceptualisation of 'sense of place'.

4.1: Narratives of the Chapman farm.

My Grandad was born in Gore, and spent his childhood on farms near Dunback and Purakanui (near Dunedin). He did not plan to be a farmer as a young man. He had an elder brother who was set to take over the family farm at Purakanui. Grandad then, had to find another profession. He trained to
be a teacher, and after serving in World War II, Grandad taught at Purakanui, where he met my Grandmother. After marriage my Grandad decided to become a farmer.

"I didn't have a lust for teaching, and I had always loved the life on the land, they were good times as a child".

Unfortunately he did not have much money and did not qualify for a veterans grant. So with the help of my Great grandfather and a 3% mortgage he bought a 62 hectare farm at Hook in 1946. Soon after the farm next door was bought by the government and divided for sale to veterans, and from that Grandad gained 88 hectares. Purchases were completed with two later additions totaling 77 hectares.

"My first memory of the farm was when we went to look at it with my father, and I realised that it was uneconomic, there was no electricity, but I had to start somewhere".

The original block was too small to be economic. It had no electricity, no telephone, and was not connected to the county water scheme. As a place then, it was hard for my Grandfather and Grandmother to call home. In time the problems with amenities were resolved, and as the farm grew in size Granddad had a new house built (see Plate 4.1). This gave the young family a place to live, and a real ‘home’. Grandad and Grandma also spent a lot of time and hard work on the property. This means that they had the strengthened sense of place that comes with labour on a farm (as discussed by Gray 1998, see section 2.3).

As an economic place, Grandad altered the landscape to gain a more productive farm.

"I put a lot of time into getting good pasture and putting fertiliser on the soil".

The farm at that stage was producing a mix of sheep and crops. Grandad could not have a great amount of crops however, as farming technologies were still labour intensive. It took three days to plough a paddock, and therefore the time spent to have more cropping would have been too great.
Plate 4.1: The Chapman family home, with sheds and silos.

Plate 4.2: Tailing lambs. Two generations of my family are shown, with my father, my sister Roslyn and myself.
Overall, the sense of place of my Grandfather was one of ‘love of the land’.

“I used to be terribly enthusiastic, and I would get excited if I saw a set of twins during lambing!”.

For my Grandmother and Grandfather, farming was their lifestyle. They brought up three children there, two boys and a girl. The middle child and second son, Roy, is my father.

“I have memories of the children growing up on the farm, terribly happy memories”.

In regard to his sense of place, Grandad identified more with the farm as a ‘family’ farm than a business. His family ties, and sense of residency and ‘home’ are more prevalent than the identification of the farm as a part of a market. The special places that Grandad identified were “every crop and every paddock”. When I asked Grandad if he thought that farming was a lifestyle, he answered affirmatively.

“It was a lifestyle that I loved. I would never have wanted to do anything else. I remember at the farewell we had at the Hook Hall when we were retiring, and I stood up at the end and said ‘I love the life on the land’”.

Grandad wanted to pass the farm on to one of his two sons, both of whom wanted to be farmers. My Uncle Bill had intended to go to University, but pulled out at the eleventh hour, and by that time my father was set to take over the farm. So Grandad sold the farm to Dad, and with that money was able to buy a small block for my uncle Bill to work, until Bill could, with Grandad’s help, buy his own farm. In effect Grandad had sold his farm and retired so that he could set both his sons up on farms. Once again, this shows the strong family orientation of Grandad’s sense of place.

The farm was in a working partnership between Dad and Grandad for three years until Grandad sold
his share to my father. Grandad still owned the small block he had bought to for Bill, but sold it when he stopped working on the family farm. During the time of partnership he would visit every day, and still visits the farm regularly, and hardly ever misses a shearing or tailing. I only need to see the pleasure on his face when he is at his old home to know how much he loved his farming life, and how much he loves his family.

My father had taken over the ownership of the farm in 1972. He was born in Waimate, like myself, and has lived there all his life. Dad attended Waitaki Boys High School, and after that he went to Lincoln College and completed a Diploma in Agriculture. For his course he had worked on a farm in Southland. He was also heavily involved in the Young Farmers Club, and during a round in the Young Farmer of the year won an agricultural exchange to Britain. So despite the fact that he is a Waimate lad born and bred, Dad has traveled and seen how farming is done in other places. Perhaps then this is a reflection that my father’s sense of place and of farming was more influenced by ‘culture’ (as in de Haan 1993, see section 2.1) than was Grandad’s. Dad had seen it as inevitable that he would be a farmer.

“At the time it was what I wanted to do”.

“I remember going out with my father, and the droughts and floods. When I was young I had a real lust for the land”.

Other memories are of good crops and bad ones, floods and droughts: the significant and sometimes catastrophic events in a farmer’s life. I do not think that Dad has the same passion as Grandad did for the farm - “It’s not so ingrained that I couldn’t walk away”- but Dad has a natural knack and an analytical mind that allow the farm to run efficiently.

Dad has not made any major changes to the way in which the farm operates as an economic place. Some grain silos have been built (see Plate 4.1), but in general change has been due to, as Dad puts it, “natural progression”. My father is able to grow more grain than did Grandad, because of the
improved technology since Grandad was farming. Overall, I think that Dad identifies with the farm as a place more economically than Grandad did. Having said this, the sense of place of my father is affected more by the 'global market' than Grandad's was (see 'global' circle in Figure 2.2).

Dad married in 1974, and he and my mother have five children, myself (the eldest) and my four sisters. The farm is owned in partnership between my parents, with a trust being established recently over part of the property. Mum and Dad both identify with the farm as a 'family farm'. Mum was from a farm herself, and was a primary teacher before marrying. At this point Mum and Dad imagine that the farm will be sold to someone from outside of the family. If one of my four younger sisters wanted to farm, or married a farmer, then they would endeavour to sell it to them and try to be 'fair' to the rest of their children.

"I would be happy to sell the farm to one of the kids, and I would pass on the expertise, but I don't think there would be much emotion in a handover".

Dad has accepted that it is unlikely that I will take over the farm. I was born at Waimate Hospital in 1976, and lived on the farm all my life until I came to Dunedin to study. I have some great memories of the farm. I remember the tree huts that I built, and having heaps of room to run around. My sense of place of the farm is permeated by the concept of the 'family' farm. The farm is my home, and I have undertaken labour on the farm, like most farmers' children. When I was young I used to help with simple things. My sisters and I would go with Dad at lambing and open the gates for him to drive the truck through. Tailing has always provided a great family outing (see Plate 4.2), where Grandad often comes out to help. As I got older I was given more responsibility and was able to do things that I enjoyed too, such as driving the tractor. At this stage I also started to do things like being a shed hand and dragging out lambs during crutching, which were jobs I did not enjoy as much.

Despite the memories that I have of the farm that are happy, there are two reasons why my sense of place of our farm is not compatible with being a farmer. Firstly, despite these happy memories, there are things I did not like as well, and these are just as strongly bound to my sense of place of our farm.
Plate 4.3: Scenic shot of the Chapman farm, with an oak tree where I had a tree hut as a child.

Plate 4.4: Sheep running past a creek where I played as a child. A tree hut is to the left of this shot.
I hate sheep, which is a big hurdle in the way of me becoming a farmer. More importantly though are the memories I have of the times that were not good on the farm. I remember the mood in the house being darker during droughts and not understanding why. My sense of place of the farm is as a ‘home’, and involved with the feeling of ‘dwelling’ (as in Massey 1991, see section 2.2). The experiences I had on the farm as a home, in other words my memories, are what is important to me. I do not have an economic sense of place regarding the farm. To me, it was my home, and not a business.

Secondly, I was not interested in farming, neither as a child or now. My favourite places on the farm were not the woolshed or out in the paddocks, although those places could be fun. I loved the garage, where I could build things and do my ‘volcano’ experiments with baking soda and vinegar. I loved my tree huts, where I could be an adventurer or a soldier (see Plates 4.3 and 4.4). I loved my room and school where I could read and plan to be an astronaut, a magician or a scientist. In short, the dreams I had, and the places I loved, were not directly related to the farm as a business.

An interesting time came in the holiday between my seventh form year and University. Just as I was steeling myself for the adventures of living in a ‘big city’, the rest of the family went away for a fortnight, leaving me in sole charge of the farm. Grandad and some of my friends visited, but essentially it was up to me: going round the sheep twice a day, helping the late lambers, feeding the dogs. And I loved it, I truly did. But two things come to mind. The first is that I found a lamb, and it was sick. I did all I could to save it, ringing up Grandad to get advice, but it died in my arms. It was only a lamb, but at that point I felt useless. Secondly, I knew it was a genuine reflection of the true life on the farm. The novelty of having sole control of the property was a mirage, and I understood that as a farmer I would have to work in the business of the farm, which I do not enjoy. So that was it. From a young age I had never been as interested in the farm as other things, and that culminated in me coming to University.

I think it would be strange to see the farm in other peoples’ hands. It has always been my home and if people ask where I am from that is the place that I identify. It is the place that I can tell people that
they are guaranteed to be able to contact me. It is where I go on holidays. It is my base. I understand why people become farmers. The sense of being at home, the freedom of being in the ‘natural world’ and the closeness of farm family relations create a strong sense of place. To me however, viewing the farm as an economic place is not at all exciting. My sense of place of the farm is rooted in a feeling of being at home, and not in having a role in enhancing its production of capital.

4.2: Conclusions.

In using bio reflection, (as described in Chapter 3), this chapter has discussed the narratives and senses of place of myself and my family. The feelings of three generations of Chapman males are summarised in Figure 4.1. The world that Grandad lived in allowed him to treat the farm as a lifestyle. For him farming was the number one choice, and he lived in a time when prices were good and that fact allowed him to enjoy the lifestyle more. Grandad identified strongly with the farm as a family farm and passed it to a son accordingly.

When my father was set to take over the farm, his world was not that much different to Grandad’s. ‘Oil crises’, the E.E.C. and restructuring were not things people were concerned with. Dad had other things that he enjoyed - he would have made a great accountant - and the fact that the world has changed so drastically for farmers must affect his enthusiasm. Dad’s sense of place still reflects the fact that the farm is our home, and the base of his family, but economic considerations have to take priority as the farm is part of the market.

My sense of place is strongly linked with the perception of the farm as my home (as discussed in Massey 1991). This is coupled with the feeling I have toward my family. However my sense of place does not take economic factors into account. I have never had an ownership, or ‘vested interest’ in the farm as a business (as discussed in Gasson and Errington 1993). Also, I do not enjoy the parts of farming life that are economic, and they do not therefore feature strongly in my sense of place.
Grandad

**Sense of Place**
- Lifestyle.
- Family most important.
- Business less so.
- Localised.

**Transfer implications**
- Pass farm to sons.

Dad

**Sense of Place**
- Business most important.
- Lifestyle less important.
- Family important.
- 'Global' sense of place.

**Transfer implications**
- Would like to pass farm to children but:
- Will probably sell outside family.

Me

**Sense of Place**
- Feeling of 'home'.
- Childhood memories.
- Dislike business factors.

**Transfer implications**
- Will not take over farm due to business factors:
- Cost and lack of enjoyment.

**Figure 4.1**: The Chapman farm: Senses of place across three generations.

Source: personal interviews and personal reflection (April - September 1998).
in sum, the narratives of the Chapman family reflect a generational change in sense of place. I would argue that my Grandfather, Father and I all identify strongly with the farm as a home. The differences in our senses of place stem from the way in which we view the farm as an economic place. This has affected the transfer of the farm, in that for the passing of the farm from my Grandfather and Father was a lifestyle decision, while for myself and my parents it is an economic one. It is my contention that the two 'senses' of place shown in my family, (the lifestyle and the business), and the according views on farm transfer, will show through in the experiences of other farmers in Hook. The next Chapter will discuss the ways in which the interviewees conceptualised the farm, and their senses of place, while Chapter 6 addresses the farm transfer process.
Chapter 5: Conceptualising the farm.

This chapter explores the way farms are conceptualised by the farm owners. First the ownership of the farms will be established. This is followed by a discussion of the farmers spatial identification of the property. Following this, the economic and social conceptualisations that the interviewees identified will be discussed in turn. The sum of the conceptualisations of the farm as an ‘owned’ property, a physical space, and both an economic and social unit goes part of the way to establishing the farmers’ sense of place, as outlined in Chapter 2. Sense of place also involves the memories, feelings and attachments that are intertwined within the former four conceptualisations, hence the penultimate section of this chapter will discuss the farmers memories, feelings and attachments toward the property. Lastly conclusions will be drawn on the farmers’ sense of place.

5.1: Ownership of the farm.

Ownership is the base upon which the farmers’ notions of the farm are built. For the farmer owning the farm means it is ‘ theirs’ . As will be seen in this chapter, it is the farmers’ responsibility, their home, their income and their retirement investment. This means that the ownership of the farm precedes and strengthens other conceptualisations of the farm. This study deals with the farm owners, in most cases a husband and wife partnership. It is assumed that the farm owners will have control in the day to day operation of the property, and the decisions on the properties future. It was for this reason that the farm owners were interviewed, and for this reason that it is important to establish the patterns of farm ownership among the interviewees before discussing the conceptualisations of the farm as a place that farm ownership inherently shapes.
The fourteen interviews conducted relate to twelve farms\(^1\). The ownership scenarios of the fourteen interviewees are outlined in Table 5.1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ownership Scenario</th>
<th>Number of Interviewees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Retired</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In husband’s name only</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Husband and wife partnership</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Husband, wife and child partnership</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brothers and wives partnership</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 5.1**: Ownership scenarios of the interviewees.

Two retired farmers were interviewed and had farmed in the Hook district in the 1950s and 1960s. Their ownership correlated with another farmer who gained his farm in the 1960s in that their farms were in their names only.

Although all three are married, their wives had no title to the farm. This seems to have been the accepted ownership situation in the 1960s.

“Yes, it was just me that owned it. That’s the way things were done back in those days” (Charlie).

The farmers that were currently running their properties and had gained them after the 1960s were involved in two main forms of ownership, the trust and the partnership. Three of the

\(^1\)The difference in the number of interviews and farm properties explained by the fact that two of the interviews were with a father and son in partnership, and another two were with a current farmer and his retired father who had farmed the same property.
interviewees were running farms that are in trust. This means that they do not actually own the property and assets. The reason for this was generally to ensure a secure passing on of the assets of the farm in the future.

“Our solicitor said that we should put it into a trust so we would be able to pass it on” (Murray).

The creation of a trust suggests that the farmers involved have an interest in maintaining the family emphasis of their farm. This corresponds with the work of McGuckian et al. (1995) (see section 2.3), in that a trust is used as a way to continue bloodlines. All three trusts had a division of the profits between the husband, wife and children, with the parents having discretion over the farms profits.

The other seven farms represented have at their base a husband and wife partnership. Of these, three are in partnership solely between husband and wife. Three more are in partnership between the husband and wife, together with a son who is in the process of taking over ownership of the property. The last farm is in partnership between two brothers and their wives.

This means that in the case of the ten farms represented by partnership or trust the decisions about the farm were not made by the ‘male farmer’, but by more than one party. The effect of the fact that ten of the twelve farms were owned by more than one person means that the decisions made about the space of the farm, the economics and especially the family are made in consensus rather than one person having sole control of the destiny of the farm. This will affect the sense of place that the farmer has of their property, in that their decisions memories and feelings will take into consideration more than just their view of the farm.

Also, as described by Gasson and Errington (1993) (see section 2.1), the ownership of a farm strengthens the conception of the farm as a ‘family farm’. This means that under by definition
provided by Gasson and Errington (1993), the farms that are owned by more than one family member of the family can be described as a 'family farm'. Accordingly, a sense of family strengthens the farmers' sense of place.

5.2: The farm as a spatial entity.

This section addresses the elements of the farmers' sense of place related to the space and location of the property. Also discussed in this section are the general trends of spatial change that have occurred on the farms and the reasons behind these changes.

All of the farms were over 120 hectares in size, with the largest at 700 hectares. Nine of the twelve farms were between 120 and 300 hectares, with the other three being considerably larger. The medium size of the properties, along with fertile soil and usually consistent rainfall means that the area lends itself to mixed crop and sheep production (see plate 5.1). When asked “what type of farm is this?” interviewees gave similar answers.

“It’s sheep and cattle and cropping country” (Henry).

“The basic mix has always been run on a sheep and crop mix” (Rick).

“It’s a mixed cropping farm with beef, sheep and barley” (Ed).

Ten of the twelve farms were involved in mixed production of sheep and crop, and often beef cattle to supplement the staple production. Two of the farms had diversified from mixed sheep and crop in the last five years, one to deer and beef, and another to dairy production.

The changes in economic production meant changes to the space of the farm. A farm is a large piece of land, and it is almost impossible to actually change the shape and form of that land. Rather, the ways in which the land is used are altered. Infrastructural changes came
Plate 5.1: A mixed production scene. Sheep grazing is shown in the foreground, while in the background land is being prepared for cropping.

Plate 5.2: Tractor driving, an activity in which the space of the farm is altered for economic reasons.
under two categories: the day to day improvement and maintenance of the property, and the larger changes brought about to improve productivity. Day to day use of space included the sowing of crops and laying of fertiliser for improved production (see Plate 5.2). Changes to the space of the farm incorporated such activities as maintaining the fences and replacing things when they became obsolete.

“I’ve added some silos and done a bit of fencing, but change is due to natural progression, when things are no longer useful” (Ed).

The second type of change involved preparation for an improvement in the productivity of the property or a shift in production. This means that the changes for productivity reasons will in fact alter the space of the farm, and the way in which that space is used. An example of this type of change was the way in which the dairy farmer, Murray, had used his old mixed farming infrastructure in his new dairy enterprise (see Figure 5.1, note cowshed).

“There is a woolshed on both sides of the road but they are no good since the shift (to dairy) so now we use them as calf rearing sheds” (Murray).

Alterations to the use of space were coupled with larger changes. In the case of the dairy and deer farmers the infrastructural changes were extensive, with the building of milking sheds and deer fences (see Figures 5.1 and 5.2). Mixed farmers made more subtle changes to the property in order to increase profitability. Mixed farmers, without exception, had changed their production mix to rely more heavily on cropping than stock in the last twenty years. The reasons for this were twofold. The first was that the removal of subsidies in the restructuring undertaken by the 1984 Labour Government had made the profitability of sheep farming less viable. Restructuring was not a factor voluntarily identified by the interviewees, but when asked if they thought restructuring contributed to spatial change the answer was affirmative.

“Since the 1980’s we have had to develop a formula to become more profitable”
Figure 5.1: Farm map by Murray.

Pink area: trees (Pinus radiata important for our future income and macrocarya).
Black lines are the cow tracks for the dairy farm.
Green map most important area.
Cowshed: planted in the property even though on the other side of road means dairy area but not included in past.
Block between two green blocks not owned important areas, because we share that with another partner.
Figure 5.2: Farm map by 'Quincy'.
"Due to restructuring?"

"Yes, and there was also a recession" (Lance).

The second reason was that cropping was a more reliable form of income than stock production.

"We used to have some beef but the price dropped at the same time as the crop, so we had to give it up" (Bruce).

This is in accordance with Fairweather (1992) (see section 2.1) who argues that restructuring and an increasingly 'free' market have affected farmers at a local level.

The sum of these outside economic and political factors is that the space of the farms studied has been altered in order to create more profitability for the farmers and their families. The space of the farm is the resource from which income is derived, and the most efficient use of this space will create a more profitable economic unit. Therefore the economic conceptualisations that are held by farmers will affect and be affected by the way in which the space of the farm is shaped. In the case of Hook, the land lends itself to mixed crop production, and so the space of the farm alters its use, in that production will lean toward mixed cropping. On the other hand, economic conceptualisations will alter the way in which space is used. In the case of the farmers in this study, as restructuring and shifts in commodity prices lowered farm productivity, the farmers altered the infrastructure of their properties in order to become more productive.

5.3: The farm as an economic unit.

This section will discuss the way in which the interviewees conceptualised their farms economically. The farm is an investment for the farmers and their families and their income provider, and is therefore an extremely important part of their lives. The ways in which the
space of the farm is used is intrinsically tied up with the way in which the farmers choose to use their land for economic purposes.

“You take the money and you reinvest it back into the farm, you don’t go and spend it on nothing, business decisions have to be made on profit” (Murray).

Reinvestment into the property meant that for some of the farms the space was altered. Despite the fact that most of the farms had remained in mixed production, the percentages and products had changed in an effort to gain more profitability. In general this meant a shift from a sheep dominated mix to a cropping one.

“We used to be livestock, now we are arable” (Tom).

“It was mostly sheep when I took over and now it’s crop. The hope was that it would be more profitable, and so far it’s worked out that way, yes” (Jack).

In the case of the two farms which had diversified, the reasons for doing so were purely profit driven.

“The change to dairy was hopefully for profitability reasons. It took a year to plan it and then a year to change it over, but it was a business decision rather than a personal decision” (Murray)

“Well, the price of everything else was dropping, so I changed to deer to try and diversify, venison’s still pretty good (in price)” (Quincy, parentheses added).

All of the interviewees identified with the farm as being their investment for retirement also.
“Well, it (selling the farm) would have to be a business decision because that’s the only superannuation fund we’ve got, we haven’t got a super scheme or anything so it has to be a proper business arrangement” (Iris, parentheses added).

“The farm is a tremendous asset for the future” (Murray).

This meant that the farm is often treated as a business that has to be run efficiently for the future, and also as a space that has to be tidy and well maintained for the expected sale that will come with retirement. Economically the farm needed to be made as productive as possible to increase the likelihood of sale.

“I see it as our lifestyle and something that has got to be maintained and kept in good order for resale value on the day we want to retire completely. We’ve got to look after our investment (the farm) so that it increases in value” (Henry, parentheses added).

When asked whether or not the farm was a business or a lifestyle, only four of the fourteen interviewees or their partners identified with the farm as more a lifestyle than a business. The basis of their identifying with the farm as such was the fact that they did not consider the farm to be economically viable and therefore stayed on the farm for lifestyle reasons.

“I do this (farming) for the lifestyle, because I really enjoy the lifestyle, but there is no way that it is a profitable business” (Angus, parentheses added).

Two of those who identified with the farm as a lifestyle were the two retirees. The reason behind their conceptualisation of the farm as a lifestyle rather than a business was the fact that they farmed during the 1950s and 1960s when the prices for primary produce were still reasonably high, and the State gave subsidies to farmers. This meant that economic factors
were not as worrying, and therefore the choice to farm and how to farm was made on the basis of enjoyment rather than of economic necessity.

“It was more of a lifestyle that I loved, but you could afford to do that back then, there wasn’t as much worry about where your money was coming from as there seems to be now” (Charlie).

Five of the fourteen interviewees, or their partners, thought farming to be both a business and a lifestyle concurrently. The reason behind this was that they considered that it was both a lifestyle they enjoyed, and also the investment from which they made their money.

“I would say it’s an equal partnership (between a business and a lifestyle), it’s going to provide for us in the future and it’s our lifestyle now” (Henry, parentheses added).

The remaining five interviewees identified with the farm being a business above all else. This was because they believed that it was unrealistic to treat the farm as a lifestyle at a time when farming was becoming less financially viable.

“Commodity prices are low and we are still in a bind over how to make things profitable, so I’m even less inclined to find it enjoyable at the moment” (Lance).

“It has to be a business first, it’s definitely a business” (Ulrika).

“Things have to be a business decision rather than a personal one, I mean, if you do something with the farm hopefully it’s going to make a profit and you’ve done it for profitability reasons” (Murray).

The farmers that identified with the farm as a business before all else closely correlated with the farmers who had made the most extensive changes to their properties in the attempt to
increase profitability. The dairy farmer and the deer farmer were in this group, while the remaining three had made large alterations to the space of their farms in order to alter their farming regimes. The map sketched by the deer farmer (Figure 5.2), indicates the building of deer fences, and identifies areas of good feed and shelter. The space of the farm had been altered markedly, due to the refencing of the entire property in deer fences. This correlation provides emphasis to the argument that the spatial and economic conceptualisations of the farm are closely interlinked.

The farm was also related to broader economic processes by a small number of the interviewees. Although all the interviewees cited dropping commodity prices as the main reason for change at the farm level, only four of the interviewees discussed the impact of global and national economics on their farms. This conceptualisation has links with the work of Fairweather (1992) and Voyce (1996) (see section 2.1) who argue that a farm is part of global economic processes. The four farmers who identified with wider market forces were also from the group that identified with the farm as being a business above all else. The way in which they viewed their farms was as part of the national or international scene, and these farmers specifically mentioned the forces beyond the farm gate that affected their profitability.

"People in Britain don’t want to buy a side of lamb, they want a small package they can cook in ten minutes. We have to realise we are supplying a specialty market" (Lance).

The five farmers who most strongly identified with the farm as a business seemed to have a different and broader outlook than the other interviewees. Rather than seeing the farm as just their income provider on a day to day level, these farmers seemed willing to strive for profitability in a way quite unlike those who did not see the farm as a business. The farmers with a strong sense of business were not only more likely to change the space of their farm to increase profitability, but were also more likely to change their farming practices to be aligned with national and international trends in agricultural commodity returns. This provides
strong evidence for the argument that the farmers' perceptions of their farm will lead to shifts in the space and the use of the land.

5.4: Social conceptualisation of the farm.

This chapter deals with the ways in which the interviewees perceived social aspects of the farm. The interviewees identified with social networks on three levels. The first was the level of the family. The family is the basic unit that inhabits the farm. None of the farmers from the twelve farms studied were unmarried. All have children, although the children are not necessarily living with their parents. The family also often includes relatives that live near to the household. The second scale of social unit is the community of Hook itself. Hook is a rural community which has often been brought together by the local school (now closed) and events at the Hook Hall. Along with this are network of friends that established when a family lives in close proximity to others. Lastly, the farmers have contacts at a level wider than that of the community, for instance friends that have moved away from the district, or contacts made nationally within the agricultural industry. This section will discuss the three levels of social unit in turn, beginning with the farm as a site of family relations.

The social unit of the family was strongly identified with by the interviewees. This is not surprising, as all of the interviewees resided on their farms, which means that it is their home. As mentioned above, all of the interviewees were married with children. The homogeneity that existed among the interviewees led to consistent results when talking about the farm as a 'social place' for the family. The discussion on the farm as a family unit centred on three main areas: the relationships with parents, partners, and children.

None of the fourteen male or seven female interviewees mentioned the role of their mothers in the farm as a social unit. The memories that they had were like the ones above, with mention and remembrance of the time spent on the farm with 'Dad', but no mention of the role of the mother. This is an interesting result as it would be expected that when discussing
the farm at the family level the influence of the mother would be considered important. There are two possible explanations of the lack of mention of the mother when discussing family relations as children. The first is that it reflects a ‘discounting’ of the role of women on farms in the Hook area. This links to the argument of Whatmore et al. (1994) (see section 2.1) who argue there is a social construction of women in marginalised positions in rurality. This concurs with de Haan (1993) (see section 2.1) who argues that the farm is a reflection of cultural values. However, it is more likely that the interviewees considered the farm enterprise and the household to be unrelated. As the interview questions were asked about the farm as a family and social unit, and not the household, perhaps the answers given reflected a difference in perception along the same lines.

The relationship between the married couple and their roles on the farm were not discussed in detail by any of the interviewees. Thirteen of the fourteen households represented had the common gender division of the male being identified as the ‘farmer’. In one instance the wife had the main hand in farming the property and the husband worked to supplement income. As mentioned in section 5.1, most of the farms were owned in partnership, and this was generally reflected by the division of labour on the farm, with both domestic and farming duties more likely to be shared more evenly. The trend, however, was still toward the common gender division of the wife as the ‘domestic’ partner and the husband as the ‘farming’ partner (as identified in Bridge 1985, (see section 2.1) Keating and Little 1991, 1994) (see section 2.3).

The final set of family relations developed in the interviews were the interviewees’ relationships with their children, with regard to the farm. This was the relationship most strongly felt by the interviewees. The importance of the children in conceiving the farm as a family unit was mostly discussed during the portion of the interviews dedicated to the future plans that the farmers had for their farms. These results will be discussed in the next chapter. The interviewees also discussed their children outside of the topic of transfer.
"I have happy memories of my children growing up on the farm, they used to come out with me, and they really enjoyed running around and playing on the farm." (Charlie).

"I don’t really mind looking after the kids, but I’m tied in at busy parts of the year when I’m working on the farm" (Rick).

When discussing the children in this way, the emphasis was on the relationship between the child and parent in the day to day running of the farm. There was no discussion of the children as part of the domestic unit, but with regard to the way that they were related the farm itself. This reflects the argument of Hill (1993) (see section 2.1) who asserts that an important part of a family farm is the process of kin working the land together.

The family relationship is obviously of importance to the farmers, shown in the way that they referred to their direct family. However, the family relationship was not emphasised by the interviewees as strongly as might be expected. As mentioned earlier, it is quite likely that the interviewees did not consider the household as part of the farm unit. Instead it would appear that they considered the family to be separate from the economic day to day running of the property. This could be seen to emphasise the view that the farm is a business first and foremost, in that the family unit would exist even if the farm was not the investment that the parents had placed their capital and time into.

The second level at which the farm is a social unit is as part of the Hook community. This was discussed by only four of the interviewees, but it would be expected that most farmers would have some relationships with the wider community. All of the four interviewees that mentioned the Hook community are active in that community, and have been involved in Hall or school committees, or in local politics. References to the community were positive in nature:
“Well I’ve really enjoyed my time on the farm, but at the same time, it’s been a terrific district to live in too” (Bruce).

One of the interviewees mentioned social networks that were broader than the community. This farmer was involved in specialised lamb finishing and rearing, and was therefore involved in a network with other farmers with similar interests.

“I have close relations with the people in stud farming, and I think that I would still remain close to them even if I left the farm” (Lance).

The identification of the farm within social networks has links to the work of de Haan (1994) (see section 2.1) who argues that the conceptualisation of the family farm is influenced by the wider culture it is within. It is likely that a family in hook will have ‘friendships’ with other families in the area. The identification of wider social networks in this study reflects that some of the interviewees were able to relate the farm as a social unit in itself to the wider social networks it is in, and therefore the ‘culture’ that adds to the conceptualisation of a farm as a ‘family farm’.

Overall, the emphasis placed on the farm as a social entity by the interviewees was not as great as expected (possibly because the interviews dealt mainly with men?). It is possible that the social networks involved with the farm were taken as a given, and not something that needed to be specifically discussed. The family was of obvious importance to the interviewees, but not voluntarily identified as being so. The family does take more significance in the discussion of transfer in Chapter 6 however. Neither were the community or wider networks consistently identified by the interviewees. As stated earlier in this chapter, perhaps this indicates that the interviewees did not consider the farm primarily as a social entity, but rather separated their perceptions of the farm as a productive economic unit and as their home or social unit.
5.5: Meanings, memories and attachments.

This section will use the information of the previous four sections to develop the trends that the interviewees showed in their development of a sense of place. As mentioned at the start of the chapter, the sense of place involves the elements of the farm as a space, and as a social and economic entity. Sense of place is more than this however, and involves the memories, attachments and feelings, (as described in Daniels 1992, Harvey 1996, Massey 1991 and Relph 1976 in section 2.2), which are associated with the farm. This section will firstly discuss the feelings, memories and attachments that the interviewees held regarding their farms. Then this information will be combined with the trends shown in the preceding sections of this chapter to establish conclusions about the farmers’ sense of place.

When asked about their memories of the farm the interviewees that had been brought up on the farm remembered back to their childhood. These memories were usually related to a strong event of some type:

“My first memory is the clearing sale before Dad took the place over: I ruined the gearbox in the tractor!” (Jack).

“I remember being out in the floods and droughts” (Ed).

Memories from childhood also included the day to day fun that the interviewees experienced on the farm as children:

“Living in the country with a whole farm to play on was great as a kid, I really loved that” (Rick).

“The tree huts and playing in the trough we used as a swimming pool” (Tom).
For the farmers that had not grown up on the farm the situation was different. Their first memories were of the first time they had seen the farm, and made the decision to buy it.

“As soon as we drove up the drive, it was first impressions. Before we even looked around the property I thought that it was the property that I wanted” (Henry).

Overall, farmers’ earliest memories tended toward being positive, with the joy of childhood, or the satisfaction of seeing their future property for the first time. When asked about other memories of the farm, a strong sense of attachment began to make itself evident in all the interviews. Part of this was reflected in the idea that the day to day work on the farm had ingrained it upon the farmer. This is the essence of the argument of Hill (1993) and Kritzinger and Vorster (1997) (see section 2.1), who argue that a large part of farmers’ conceptualisation of the farm is formed by the labour upon it.

“The things I’ve fixed, the fences I’ve built, everywhere I see things that have a memory attached to them” (Tom).

The farmers’ memories of the farm were often linked to specific places on the property (see Figures 5.3 and 5.4. For instance, note the ‘X’ marks in Figure 5.3 and the comment on the tulips to the top right of Figure 5.4). This means that the interviewees not only identified with the farm as a place, but also with specific places on the farm. The memories of special places on the farm, and memories of the farm means that the interviewees attach meaning to the property.

Farmers were asked questions about the meaning that the farm had for them, in terms of their love of the ‘life on the land’. All of the interviewees were forward in expressing that the farm meant more to them than just a block of land. Responses varied, however. For some, there was a begrudging admission that the farm had meaning:
Figure 5.3: Farm map by ‘Ed’.

\[ X = \text{favourite spots, because of view} \]
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>30</th>
<th>35</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Falls removed by Roy.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No stones on property &amp; very little wasteland.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 5.4: Farm map by 'Charlie'.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>25</th>
<th>25 ac</th>
<th>25 ac</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This is the original layout & was very important in the whole setup.

DE JONGHS
Was once a lake
With Tihko. As you
drove over the
hill it gives
breath-taking
"Yes, it does have meaning for me, more than it probably should have. The times at the old farm when I was a kid, those were great times, I loved those times, but we've put in the blood sweat and tears here" (Murray).

Others were openly happy about their farm and their role in farming it:

"It will always have a special place in our hearts... it's our place" (Sarah).

When asked if the farm was just 'a piece of land', answers indicated that the farm had meaning:

"Hell no, if it was (just a piece of land) we would have left, but yes, it's our lifestyle, so it means a bit to us" (Henry, parentheses added).

A key element of sense of place identified in the literature was a sense of dwelling or being at home (Daniels 1992, Harvey 1996, Massey 1991 and Relph 1976 in section 2.2). The concept of home is one that was identified with by the interviewees. This is logical, as all of the interviewees lived on their farms and many had grown up there. The use of the word 'home' indicates a strong sense of being 'in place' on the farm. As well as economic features, the identification of 'home' was emphasised on the maps (see references to house area in Figures 5.6 and 5.7)

"It's always been a home, a place to come back to when I'm moving around. I can't imagine doing anything else now" (Rick).

Overall, the interviewees had strong memories of the property, whether or not they had grown up on it. The work that had gone into the property and the meanings attached to the farmers' memories meant that in the minds of the interviewees the farm was special. In the case of family farms, it tended to be more so, as the land had been passed down and the male
Figure 5.5: Farm map by ‘Rick’.
Figure 5.6: Farm map by 'Tom'.
farmer interviewees had grown up there. This meant that the farm was part of the family history, and therefore also special for that reason.

5.6: Conclusion: the farmers’ sense of place.

Overall there have been two main streams of thought shown by the interviewees, which reflect two differing senses of place. The first of these is business focused, and the second is lifestyle focused. Table 5.2 provides a summary of the farmers’ senses of place based on the conceptual framework.

The farmers with a business focused sense of place thought that the farm was more of a business than a lifestyle. This meant that they were more likely to base their decisions about production on financial rationale. The farmers with a business focus were more likely to change the way in which their farm operated in order to increase profitability, and thereby alter the physical space of their farm in order to do so. The way in which the two groups saw the family was also different. Business focused farmers saw the family as separate from the farm. Despite this, business focused farmers had attachments and memories about the farm that indicated that they considered it home, and it was a meaningful place to them.

The second focus of farmers was farming as a lifestyle, wherein farmers saw the farm as their lifestyle first, and were less concerned with it being a business. This meant that they were less likely to change production techniques and the space of the farm in order to increase profitability. The family was more important to lifestyle focused farmers, and they identified with the farm as a ‘family farm’. They were more likely to have strong attachments to the property. The next Chapter will deal with the farm transfer experience of the interviewees, and relate the two senses of place identified in this chapter to the farm transfer process.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concept</th>
<th>Business focused farmers.</th>
<th>Lifestyle focused farmers.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physical space.</td>
<td>More likely to be altered for economic reasons</td>
<td>Alterations due to natural progression</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social.</td>
<td>Family important, but separate from the farm</td>
<td>Close identification with ‘family’ farm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic.</td>
<td>Most important: decisions based on economic reasons</td>
<td>Important, but less so than family ties.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture</td>
<td>Identify with wider culture</td>
<td>Identify with ‘community’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global economics</td>
<td>Understood as a factor in economic production</td>
<td>Less likely to be considered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sense of place.</td>
<td>Some attachment, but economic factors come first.</td>
<td>Deep attachment based on farming as a ‘lifestyle’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.2: Senses of place.

Source: Original analysis of individual interview transcripts (August 1998)
Chapter 6: Transfer of the farm.

This chapter will discuss the transfer of the farm and the way in which the farmers’ sense of place affects this. There were three periods of farm ownership identified in the conceptual framework (after Keating and Little 1991) (see section 2.3). The first was the period of entry, the second the time of ownership and the third the period of exit. As the experience of the time of ownership is part of the previous chapter on sense of place, this chapter will firstly discuss the entry experience of the interviewees. Secondly the farmers’ plans for exit from farming will be discussed. In both cases the elements of sense of place will be applied to the process in order to establish the effect of the farmers’ sense of place on the process of farm transfer.

6.1: The farmers’ entry into farming.

The farmers’ entry into farming was experienced in two main ways. The first was entry through the family, where the farmers’ parents had owned the farm before them. The second was entry into farming outside of the family. These two types of entry concur with those described by Keating and Little (1991) (see section 2.3). The experiences of life before farming differed between these scenarios. It is hard to gauge the effect of the farmers sense of place on their entry into farming, as it is the sense of place of the previous owners that allowed the farm to go to the current occupants. However, in the case of a family farm the entry scenario was more closely linked to the sense of place of the family. Ten of the interviewees took over the farm from their parents. All of these farmers were in a partnership arrangement before gaining control of the farm. The usual way in which they gained the farm was to buy half the stock and plant of the property, while buying the land itself incrementally.

For some, the experience of taking over control of the farm was relatively direct and simple:
“I was in partnership with my father, then I bought out his share: it was a straight transfer” (Angus).

This was the case with only three of the ten interviewees who gained the farm from their parents. With the other seven the handover was a more lengthy process. There were two main ways in which the farm was handed over if the process was more drawn out. The first was the situation of the partnership as identified above, where the transfer process simply took longer than a ‘direct’ transfer.

“This was my side, that was my brothers, but it was all owned in common, so yes, it was blimmin’ complicated” (Murray).

The second form of handover involved conceptualising the farm as a legal entity in order to ensure its handover. The legal conceptualisation of the farm happened at one of two stages. The first was if the previous owner died. This meant that the transfer of the farm was decided by the estate of the deceased (see McGuckian et al. 1995 in section 2.1). This situation occurred with three of the interviewees. In this case the other siblings had to be treated fairly, and so the current generation would gain the farm, and compensate siblings in some way, usually through not calling on other parts of the estate. The problem with gaining the farm from the estate was the fact that prior to 1976 there was a death duty on property gained from an estate. This meant that the real expense in gaining the property could be much greater than the value of the farm.

To avoid the cost of death duty, other families put the farm into a trust while the parents were still alive. Gradually the children took more and more of a share of the trust, as they bought the farm off their parents. This meant that the death duty could be avoided. The death duty was a topic that was mentioned by a number of the interviewees. The effect of death duty made transfer of the farm harder, and meant that work had to be done to sidestep the fees that could occur:

“A lot of avoidance was done in those days” (Oscar).
Overall however, the essence of the transfer process was similar with all of the interviewees. The culmination of the process was the purchase of the farm, and the previous owners had to be paid in some way. In the case of the farmers who were not from family farms, the transfer was simple. They saved enough money, and perhaps took out a mortgage, in order to buy the property. Family farmers still had to purchase the property, they were simply more likely to do it incrementally, whether through a partnership or a trust, or buying from an estate.

The entry experience for farmers who gained their farms through kinship ties was linked to their sense place of the property as a child. The memories of the farmers in Chapter 5 show part of the sense of place they had of the property as children. As well as this, the continuation of blood lines has been identified in the conceptual framework as an important aspect of a farmer’s conceptualisation of the property as a family farm (Eaton 1993, Gray 1998 in section 2.3). Also, all of the kin entrants to farming had worked on the property before buying it. This meant they had the strengthened sense of place that comes with working on the farm (Hill 1993 in section 2.1).

The sense of place that the farmers who gained the farm from their parents tended to tie in closely with the conceptualisation of the farm as a ‘family farm’. These were the farmers who had childhood memories and attachments to the property, and these continued through to the present day.

Six of the ten interviewees who experienced family transfer had done nothing else but farm all of their lives. They had grown up on the property, helped to farm it, and eventually taken it over. When asked if they thought it was inevitable they would become farmers, these six interviews consistently answered in the affirmative.

“From four years before I left school all I wanted to do was drive a tractor. I like the life on the land but I don’t know anything better!” (Jack).

“It was expected I would be a farmer. That was expected on a family farm if
there was a son” (Lance).

“I never went off the place and I came home from school and went straight onto the farm” (Bruce).

The remaining four interviewees who gained the farm through the family had either gone to university or had worked outside of the rural sector prior to their taking over the farm. This meant that the sense of inevitability was not as strong.

“Before I started on the farm I was a student at Otago. I didn’t decide to be a farmer but the option was there, and my brother didn’t want to farm it, so I drifted in slowly” (Rick).

The final four interviewees who did not gain the farm from their family had various vocations before gaining the farm. One of them had become a farmer, even though he was not from a farming family, and had gradually moved from farm to farm until he had settled at Hook. The remaining three had ‘regular’ jobs before deciding to go farming. Once again however, these four interviewees had a sense of inevitability about their life on the farm. Most of them had some links with farming as a child, whether they grew up on a farm or a relation had one that they visited.

“He (father) worked for a farmer and that was something I always wanted to do but he warned me against it, but no, we’ve worked our way up by investing in property really, and having jobs, well paid jobs” (Henry, parentheses added).

The links that the interviewees had to farming before they gained the farm play an important role in their decision to become a farmer. Their feelings about farming were strong enough to allow them to become farmers. It is not a sense of place as such, because being ‘drawn’ toward farming does not necessarily mean that there is a spatial element to the feeling. Elements of sense of place show through in the farmers’ decision to enter farming, however. The element of sense of place that showed the most was the
meaning that family played in the farmers’ lives. All of the interviewees had meaning that they attached to farming through the fact that they had some experience of farming life when younger. Undoubtedly as many children who have experience with farming construe that experience to ensure they do not become involved in farming. In the case of the fourteen interviewees, the meanings that had been attached to farming at a young age, and throughout life, affected the decision to go farming.

6.2: The planned exit.

This section deals with the plans that the farmers have for retirement and what they will do with their farms when they retire. There were two ‘senses’ of place developed in chapter 5, and these go some way to explaining the planned exit. This section will discuss the patterns in planned exit of the interviewees, while correlating the information to the senses of place identified in Chapter 5.

As discussed in Chapter 5, those with a business focus were more likely to treat the farm as a business first and foremost, and use and alter the space of the farm accordingly. This meant that it could be expected that they would treat the sale of the property as a business decision. When asked what they planned to do with the farm when they retired, the interviewees were consistent in that they would sell it and leave it if they had to.

“\textquote I could walk away from being a commercial farmer tomorrow, but I have close relations with the people in stud farming and if I get to the top it’s not the end, I’ve got to keep striving\textquote” (Lance).

“\textquote Ultimately it’s a business decision. Every day I meet people who are financially buggered. They’ve been there twenty years and they’ve gone backwards, they’ve got no future for themselves and they’re not leaving their family anything. I wouldn’t do that to the kids, I don’t think that’s fair\textquote” (Murray).

This correlated with the economic part of their sense of place, in that the farm was a
business first and foremost and therefore business decisions were the most important.

Farmers with a business focused sense of place, who identified with the farm as part of global economics, tended to have a wider view of the farm transfer process than farmers who identified with farming as a lifestyle. This meant they were able to discuss the implications of farm transfer for the future of agriculture.

"Most of the people attracted to agriculture in the past twenty years couldn’t do anything else or weren’t bright enough to do anything else. But agriculture needs the brightest people of New Zealand. It’s a multi million dollar business, so why put it in the hands of the dumbest?. The next twenty years of farming will be really hard, they’ll have to be really switched on. I just don’t think the family farm’s gonna survive" (Murray).

The identification with wider economic processes (as in Fairweather 1992 in section 2.1), was a consistent feature of the responses of interviewees with a business focused sense of place. To them, the most important part of the transfer process was maintaining the economic viability of the property (see Eaton 1993 in section 2.3)

Lifestyle focused farmers had their interest in maintaining the farm as a family property. Their sense of place was more family oriented and this was reflected in their comments about the future. This concurs with Eaton (1993) and Gray (1998) (see section 2.3) who argue that farmers will prefer to keep a farm in the family.

"We will sell it to anybody, but we’d prefer to keep it in the family, it’s more of an heirloom” (Rick).

"He’s (son) very strong on family and correctness that way, he’d carry it along very strongly that part of it (the family farm)” (Bruce, parentheses added).

This was the fundamental difference in the two views of the farm and their affect on the
planned transfer. However, there were a number of views shared by farmers having different senses of place. Despite the focus on either business or lifestyle, the consistencies shown between the two senses of place on the topic of attachment and meaning when it came to the transfer of the farm were very strong. Firstly, all of the interviewees with the exception of one stated that they would prefer the farm to stay in the family. This is consistent with the studies of Eaton (1993) and Gray (1998) (see section 2.3) who state that farmers prefer the farm to stay in the family. The one interviewee who did not consider a family transfer gained the farm after the children had left home, and therefore they had no interest in the farm. The preference to keep the farm in the family was prevalent despite any predetermination toward another outcome (for instance even if none of the children were interested). Five of the interviewees were realising the goal of passing the farm on, and were in an arrangement with one of their children to do so.

For the others, the future was less clear. Two scenarios were represented here. The first was where the children were too young to really know their future career plans, and therefore the parents could not determine if a transfer was possible. In this case however, the parents could usually identify one of their children as the most likely to take over the property.

“I can see (my son) taking over the property, he sets up wee farms with his toys already” (Murray parentheses added).

The second scenario was where the children were not interested. In some cases there was hope for an alternative to keep the farm in the family.

“Well (our son and daughter) have already chosen careers of their own. I don’t know what will happen, maybe we can pass it to grandchildren” (Oscar, parentheses added).

Others simply accepted that the fate of the farm would be sale to a non family member.
"At this point I imagine it would be sold to someone outside the family, yes" (Ed).

There were marked differences in the perception of gender in talk about the future. The farmers, and their partners, consistently talked about a male taking over the farm. When asked what would happen if none of the sons wanted the property, responses leaned toward one answer: marriage. Farmers who had a daughter talked about what they would do if their daughter married a farmer.

"It would be difficult if one of the girls married a farmer" (Ed).

"We would have to watch out for gold diggers" (Ulrika).

Not one of the interviewees considered that the farm could be taken over by a daughter who wanted to farm the property herself. This is again a cultural construct in regard to gender, much like the marginalisation of the mother from farmers narratives of their childhood on the farm (see de Haan 1994 in section 2.1, Whatmore et al. 1994 in section 5.4).

The farmers consistently stated that to hand the farm over to one of the children would be difficult. This was for two reasons. The first of these is the sheer cost involved in farm purchase.

"A partnership will be easiest, but if it was to work it would depend on how much he (son) has to put into it" (Quincy, parentheses added).

This posed a problem to the outgoing generation as well. Most viewed the farm as their retirement investment as well, and realised that it would be difficult to pass the property on incrementally and have adequate capital reserves to retire on.

"It will be hard to get by ourselves and sell it to (our son) so we will have to
maintain some stake” (Lance, parentheses added).

The other reason that the farmers thought that a transfer within the family would be hard would be in maintaining fairness among the children. The farm would create a large proportion of the estate or the capital that the farmer possessed, and there was a consistent desire by the interviewees to treat their children equally if the farm was to be passed on.

“It would be important if one took it over to be fair to the rest” (Ed).

When asked how they would relate to the farm when they had finished farming, the interviewees stated that they would still have an interest in the property and that it would still be special to them.

“Oh yeah, it (the farm) will still have some meaning to us, all of our properties do” (Henry, parentheses added).

However, they maintained that if they passed it on to a family member, they would not interfere with the way the new generation did things.

“You’ve got to get out of the way and let them do it the way they want” (Oscar).

6.3: Conclusions.

A summary of the results of this Chapter is provided in Table 6.1. The field data indicates that the farmers’ sense of place has some bearing on the decisions they make about the future of the farm.
There was a distinction between the lifestyle focused farmers and the business focused ones. Lifestyle focused farmers considered the family tradition as the most important aspect during handover. Business focused farmers continued the line of thought they had shown on the questions about economics during the interviews, in that decisions had to be based on financial reasons.

There were some consistencies between the two groups as well, particularly the preference for the farm to stay in the family (as in Eaton 1993 and Gray 1998). Despite varying other ways in which they view the farm, all the farmers saw it as something they would like to pass on to further generations. All of the farmers realised that to pass the farm on to a child would be hard however. They realised that the economic difficulty and the need to maintain fairness when passing on assets to the children were important. The farmers maintained that the farm would have meaning to them after retirement.

The attachments and memories that the farmers displayed affect the way they think about the farm. Despite their orientation toward business or lifestyle, Chapter Five shows that all of the farmers attached memories and meaning to their farms. These memories and meanings in turn affect the way in which they want their farm to be transferred. All of the farmers viewed their farms as special, and it is this quality, the sense of attachment to a place, that causes the farmers to want to transfer the farm to their children. However it is not realistic for some of the farmers to pass the farm onto their children, so despite

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sense of place.</th>
<th>Business focused</th>
<th>Lifestyle focused</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Most important aspects of transfer</td>
<td>Economic viability of the transfer.</td>
<td>Retaining family farming tradition.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'Ideal' form of transfer</td>
<td>Would go to family 'Fairness' with family.</td>
<td>Would go to family. ‘Fairness’ with family.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.1: Transfer of the farm.


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the effect of sense of place on the desires of the farmer, the farmers' sense of place may not determine the nature of the actual transfer, but will definitely shape the preferred transfer of the farm.
Chapter 7: Conclusions.

7.1: A review.

Previous research on the transfer of the farm have focused on the transfer process rather than the reasons for the transfer (see Eaton 1993, Keating and Little 1991, 1994). By uncovering the farmers’ senses of place, and applying that to their transfer experience, this study establishes an understanding of the farm transfer process. Moreover, the linking of the concepts of ‘sense of place’ and ‘farm transfer’ has not been previously acknowledged academically and the present study has addressed this research gap by linking the two concepts.

By drawing on the theory of previous studies, a conceptual framework was established on which to base the present study. Different conceptualisations of the farm provided by various authors were discussed. The farm is conceptualised as a space, or a physical entity (Blunden et al.1995). It is also conceptualised as a social entity, both as a family unit (Whatmore 1995) and as part of wider ‘culture’ (de Haan 1994). The farm is also conceptualised as an economic unit, as the farmers income provider (Fairweather 1992). Memories and meanings are also attached to the farm as a ‘place’ (see Daniels 1992). I have argued that the sum of conceptualisations of the farm as a space, an economic and social unit, and a meaningful place, create the farmers’ sense of place (refer to Figures 2.1 and 2.2).

Previous studies of transfer have concentrated on three main phases of the farmers’ life on the farm (Eaton 1993, Keating and Little 1991, 1994). The results of these studies are summarised here. First, there is the entry into farming. Entry is usually experienced from one generation to the next in the case of a family farm (Bridge 1983). Less often someone who is not from a farming family may enter into farming. The entry experience of the two groups differ as those on a family farm take over gradually, while someone buying a new farm will need to build up capital in order to
afford the investment. The second phase of life on the farm is the middle stage between entry and exit, where the farmer works and lives on the farm, often with a family. This is the period in which sense of place is developed. The third period is that of exit, where the farm will be sold and the farmer and partner will retire. The reasons for exit differ, but are usually motivated by old age or illness.

The conceptual framework was used to develop a research process to answer the key question: “How do farmers’ sense(s) of place shape the process of farm transfer”? The results of the research to answer this question are summarised briefly in Table 7.1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focus of farmers.</th>
<th>Sense of place.</th>
<th>Transfer implications.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Business.</strong></td>
<td>Economic focus.</td>
<td>A business decision.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>More likely to alter space of farm.</td>
<td>Less likely for farm to stay in family.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>More likely to identify global trends.</td>
<td>Ideally, wanted farm to stay in family.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lifestyle.</strong></td>
<td>Farm as a lifestyle choice.</td>
<td>Keeping the farm in the family most important.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Less economic focus.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Farm as ‘home’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7.1: Summary of results.

The first objective of this study was to identify the ideas that made up the farmers’ sense of place. In the current study, farmers, including my own family, identified broadly with two senses of place: business focused and the lifestyle focused. Those with a business focused sense of place identified with the farm being an economic producer first and foremost. They treated the space of their farm accordingly, and altered the space of the farm, sometimes greatly, in order to generate more profit. This finding fulfils the second objective of this study, to investigate how the farmers’ sense of place affects the way they use the space of the farm. The farmers that were business focused (including
my father) were more likely to mention national or international trends that were affecting their productivity (as in Fairweather 1992 and Voyce 1996). To business focused farmers, the family was an entity separate from the farm enterprise.

The third objective of this study was to consider the planned farm transfer process through the application of the farmers' sense of place. The effect that a business based sense of place had on the transfer process was to make the transfer less family orientated, a pattern identified in Fairweather (1992). Although the farmers and their partners wanted to treat their children fairly in regard to inheritance and possible transfer to the children, they emphasised that decisions on the future of the farm were made on profitability and economic foundations, rather than for more 'sentimental' reasons.

Farmers who had a lifestyle focused sense of place on the other hand, treated the farm as their home and lifestyle choice. They were less likely to alter the space of their farm, and were orientated more toward the maintenance and natural progression of the property. Although the farm was still of economic importance to them, as their income provider, these farmers (including my Grandfather) were farming out of lifestyle reasons rather than a drive for profitability. Lifestyle focused farmers were more attached to the family relationships and the history of their property remaining in the family (the concept of residence identified by Hay 1998). Their sense of place was more orientated toward viewing the farm as their 'home', and they tended to have stronger social connections, memories and attachments to the land. These farmers were more likely to emphasise the desire to pass the land on through the family (as in Gray 1998), but realised that it would be hard for the next generation to afford to do so.

7.2: The research process: a critique.

Interviews were the main supply of information for this study. The interviews were open ended, although set around focusing questions in order to maintain the relevance of the information gained. The use of this technique meant that the farmers' feelings could be discussed, and events and views
clarified at the time of the data collection. Maps were drawn by the interviewees four months after the interviews. These provided empirical evidence on the farm as a space. A self reflective analysis of the senses of place of my family (including myself) was also conducted. Self reflection was useful in that the information gained allowed for a greater understanding of the patterns shown by other interviewees, and provided a chronological 'case study' of the transfer of one farm.

The research process was not immune from difficulty, however. Without a survey or a similar data collection technique to gain empirical data, trends were hard to establish. The interviews had to be read and deconstructed carefully to enable trends to be seen. The interviews also had a tendency to slip into anecdotes, due to the 'reminiscing' tendency resulting from the use of questions about memories and feelings. Despite the help that the self survey proved to be, it was hard to keep focused for the same reason, in that it tended to slip into anecdotal reflection. For this reason I attempted to stay close to the conceptual framework in the writing of Chapter 4. Lastly, the interviewing process was strongly biased toward the male point of view, as men tended to be the day to day operator of the property. This means that the woman's role on the farm was not emphasised as much as deserved. The gender issues in farm transfer and rural studies are far greater than the reach of this study however, and the decision to interview males was made to in the assumption this would gain the most effective reading of how sense of place affected the running and transfer of the farm. Overall, the methodological difficulties encountered were far outweighed by the positive factor of being able to gain a sense of the interviewees emotions during data collection.

7.3: Further implications of the study.

The application of the concept of 'place' to the way in which the farmer conceptualises and uses the space of their farm in this study has proved to be fruitful. The use of sense of place as a concept has also uncovered trends in the ways in which transfer of the farm is affected by the meanings that the farm has to farmers. This study then, has provided an alternative reading of the transfer process to the statistical approach of previous studies (Eaton 1993, Keating and Little 1991, 1994). An application of the conceptual framework developed in this dissertation could be used in other rural
areas in New Zealand or abroad. This would allow for the comparison of trends shown in this study with those occurring elsewhere. It would also test the validity, or usefulness of, the concept of ‘place’ as used in this study.

A second implication of the study is the way in which the farmer views their family. The family is an important part of the farm, as the farm is also their home. The interviewees in this study did not identify strongly with the family as part of the farm unit, although they strongly identified with the idea of the ‘family farm’. It is possible then that future studies into farming may need to be explicit in gaining information about a farm family, and not assume that the family and the farm are treated as interrelated by interviewees. An investigation into the ways in which the farm is treated as a family unit would be interesting and relevant to many farms in New Zealand.

The gender division of labour and the recognition (or lack thereof) of this on farms is another issue raised by this study (see Whatmore et al. 1994) Women play an extremely important role on New Zealand farms, and the fact that mothers were not mentioned in childhood memories is quite staggering, as is the lack of consideration of daughters in the planned transfer of the farm. The lack of recognition of women’s roles in farming is certainly worthy of future investigation.

The interests of children were not represented in this study either. As James (1990: 279) states, “Surely, if we understand more fully the child’s world then we are a step closer to understanding the adult world”. A longitudinal academic investigation of the interests of children in regard to the farm transfer process is also worthy of future study, as the children of farmers are likely to be the ‘first in line’ to gain the farm.

Overall this study has attempted to address the motivations that farmers have in their use of the land as a farm. Further study could uncover more trends and ideas on the way in which farmers use the land. Thus the use of sense of place could also lead to greater understanding of the environmental impacts of farming and the motivation behind the decisions that affect the land. Sense of place may have sustainability issues, in that the farmers’ willingness to change the space of the land for
economic gain may have implications for the capacity of that land to produce agricultural goods in the long term.

7.4: Conclusions.

This study has used the concept of sense of place to explore the process of farm transfer. The economic, social, spatial and emotional meanings attached to the farm have great affect on the way in which the farmer treats the farm, including the day to day operation and the eventual transfer of the property. By addressing the process of transfer, this study has provided an example of the possibilities of deconstructing the way in which farmers see their land in order to understand broader processes. Understanding the ways in which the farmers conceptualise the farm in the face of anonymous global processes can aid in improving the response of agricultural producers to global trends. For instance, with restructuring and global economic trends affecting farmers at the local level, an understanding of the ways in which they conceptualise the farm can help in developing ways for farmers to improve the success of their farms in a global market. The understanding of the farmers’ sense of place and its implications on farm transfer then, has applied implications in determining the future of agriculture in New Zealand.
References.


De Haan, H. (1994), *In the Shadow of the Tree: Kinship, Property and Inheritance Among Farm*
Families, Amsterdam: Het Spinhuis.


Eyles, J. (1985), Senses of Place, Warrington: Silverbrook Press.


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Appendix A.

Matrix of interviewee selection. An 'X' indicates the interviewees’ situations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviewee</th>
<th>Took over from parents.</th>
<th>Bought farm outside kin relations.</th>
<th>In partnership with wife (name if interviewed).</th>
<th>In current transfer arrangement.</th>
<th>Have possible heirs to property.</th>
<th>Retired farmers.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‘Angus’</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X (parent)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Bruce’</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Charlie’</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Ed’</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X (‘Fiona’)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Gavin’</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Henry’</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X (‘Iris’)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Jack’</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X (parent)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Ken’</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X (child)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Lance’</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X (parent)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Murray’</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X (‘Nancy’)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Oscar’</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X (‘Penny’)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Quincy’</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Rick’</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X (‘Sarah’)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Tom’</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X (‘Ulrika’)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix B.

Letter of introduction.

Dear Mr,

I am a fourth year geography student at the University of Otago, currently undertaking a year long research project. This study investigates the transfer of farms in the Hook area, and the meanings that farmers attach to their land. Guiding me in my research is Dr. Ruth Liepins, a lecturer in the Geography Department. Questionnaires for the study will be sent out later in the year, but at this stage I am writing this letter to invite your participation in an personal interview.

The interviews will provide evidence to compliment any trends shown in the later questionnaires. These interviews will be confidential, and the information gained will be used in such a way that no identification of the participants is possible. The interview should last between forty and fifty minutes, and will involve discussion on four major topics:

1. The processes involved in your gaining the farm.
2. The ways in which you physically run and have altered the land.
3. The meanings you attach to the farm.
4. The plans you have for the future of the farm.

I will be conducting interviews after Easter, from Tuesday, April 14 to Saturday, April 18. I will be at home prior to this period, and will contact you to gauge your interest in a possible interview. These will be arranged at your convenience. If you have any questions about this, please don't hesitate to contact either Ruth Liepins or myself.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this request. A summary of results will be made available if you are interested to read these.

Yours sincerely,

Craig Chapman
56 Cargill St.
Dunedin
Ph. (03) 4772771

Dr. Ruth Liepins
Department of Geography
University of Otago
P.O. Box 56
Dunedin
Ph (03) 4798784
Appendix C.

Interview focus questions.

1) The gain of the farm by the current generation.

- How long have you been on this farm?
- When did you acquire it?
- How did you acquire it?
- What was transferred? Land? Business? Other assets?
- Who did you gain the farm from?
- Why did the person before you give up the farm?
- Was the transfer direct, or more complicated? (e.g. did past generations ‘check up’)?
- Who owns the farm? (If in partnership with wife, then gauge their ‘meanings’ too)
- What did you do before you took over the farm?
- (If from the farm) Did you see it as inevitable that you would become a farmer?
- Were there other siblings/ options for the transfer that the previous generation could choose from.
- (If not from the area) What made you choose this farm as ‘the one’?
- Was it a business or personal decision?

2) Space and changes.

- What type of farm is it? (E.g. stock, cropping, etc.)
- What physical elements are there? Sheds, house, stock?
- How large is the farm?
- How many titles is it under?
• What was the farm like when you gained it?
• What have you done with farm: have you made any changes?
• Why did you make these changes?

3) What the farm means to the farmer.

• What is your earliest memory of the farm?
• What other significant memories do you have?
• Is the farm special to you, or is it just ‘a piece of land’?
• Is farming more of a lifestyle or a business?
• What are the characteristics of the farm for you?
• Is the farm unique for you? Does it have a characteristic of its own (cheers to Massey)
• What kind of priority is the farm (e.g. before or after family, wealth, etc)

  What place does the farm have in a hierarchy of values.
• What outside influences affect your view of the farm (economic, family, social)
• What places on the farm have significance to you?
• Why are these places significant?

4) The next generation.

• Who do you see as taking over the farm? (possibly, if children, gauge their interest).
• How will you determine who is eligible to take over?
• At what stage do you think that you will hand the farm over: for what reasons?
• How will you relate to the farm then?
• Will it maintain the meanings that you have for it?
Honours Dissertation Project:
The influence of farmers’ perception of place
in the process of farm transfers

CONSENT FORM FOR INTERVIEWEES

I have read the letter explaining Craig Chapman’s study in the Hook area and his wish to conduct a series of individual interviews. All my questions have been answered to my satisfaction and I understand that I am free to request further information at any stage.

I know that:

1. Craig Chapman is from a farm in this district;
2. Information gained from the interviews will be used only for the purposes of research;
3. Interviews will be stored and analysed in ways which maintain anonymity and privacy of participants;
4. My participation in the interviews is entirely voluntary and I can withdraw from the interview at any time if necessary;
5. Interviews will involve an open-questioning technique where the precise nature of the questions which will be asked will depend on the way in which the interview develops;
6. Should the open-questioning technique develop in such a way that I feel uncomfortable I may decline to answer any particular question(s) and/or may withdraw from the project without any disadvantage of any kind;
7. The results of the project may be published but my anonymity will be preserved.

I agree to take part in this project

(Signature of participant)  (Date)

Interviewer:  CRAIG CHAPMAN  03 477 2771
Supervisor:  Dr RUTH LIEPINS 03 479 8784

Appendix D.
Appendix E.
Letter and form for map drawing.

Re: Study of farm transfer.

Dear Mr,

Firstly, thank you for your co-operation at the interview stage of my study. The interviews have provided excellent information on which to base my study into farm transfer. To complement the interviews, I am writing to request that you draw a sketch map of your farm on the form provided. You can draw the farm in any way you like: it does not have to be to scale or accurate. There is no limit or expectations as to what you put on the map. The only thing I would ask is that in drawing the map you put the places on the farm that are important to you. What I am after is your representation of what your farm is and what it means to you. If you have more than one block of land, then draw the one that you consider most important in your life. Once you are finished please put the map in the stamped, addressed envelope provided and send it back. Can you please return the map by Thursday 19 August.

The maps will be treated with the same confidentiality as the interviews. The number at the bottom of the map is only so that I can identify your map, and will mean that they cannot be identified by others. Any information from them that is used in the final report will be presented in such a way that you cannot be identified. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact myself or my supervisor Dr Liepins. Thank you for your help with my study, I appreciate it very much.

Thank you,

Craig Chapman
56 Cargill St.
Dunedin
Ph. (03) 4772771

Dr. Ruth Liepins
Department of Geography
University of Otago
P.O. Box 56, Dunedin
Ph (03) 4798784

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