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„The Meaning and Loss of Place in Times of Globalisation:
Family Farms in the Postcolonialising Australian Nation“

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Abstract

I focus on the relation between the Australian nation-state and its claim to territory by drawing on my field research among family farmers in the 5th generation in the Central West of rural New South Wales, Australia. I ask how family farmers' senses of belonging to place are constructed in times of uprooting redistributional processes in the Australian nation that affect farmers in both the imaginary and the material realm.

As early British structural-functionalism was influential in the founding phase of Australian anthropology correlating with the invention of the Australian nation, I deconstruct the epistemological framing for its implicit methodological nationalism. I show that national identities and belonging call into question anthropological assumptions about "culture/society", an implicit isomorphism of culture and place. Describing Indigenous-settler relations by contrasting two opposing "complex wholes" is not only a paradigm in the identity politics of the nation-state, but also present in recent anthropological work.

Engaging with narratives of family history, I focus on how belonging to place is maintained among family farmers despite postcolonialising processes active in the idea of nationhood, which question their legitimacy to the land, of being in place. The general decline of family farms is identified as a neoliberal reterritorialisation process that demands farming systems to be more efficient in the capital intensifying agricultural economy, often in contrast to environmentally sustainable practices. Aiming to understand the pressures families face in the maintenance of their farms, I reason why many are forced to sell their land. The redistributional processes in the imaginary and material realm for family farmers in the rural Central West are identified as neoliberal and postcolonialising. The symbol and place of these processes is the family farm. Both, the historic legacies as well as new challenges of the environmental and economic constraints render it difficult for family farmers to determine and maintain 'their place' in the Australian nation.

Kurzzusammenfassung

Im Mittelpunkt meiner Arbeit steht das Interesse an Zugehörigkeitskonstruktionen von Bauern der fünften Generation familienbetriebener Bauernhöfe im ländlichen New South Wales, Australien. Die strukturelle Umverteilung von Nationalzugehörigkeit identifiziere ich als postkolonialisierend, während die Umverteilung von Produktionsmitteln, wie z.B. agrikulturellen Landflächen, einer neoliberalen Logik folgen, von der mittelständische Betriebe nicht profitieren. Meine Forschungsfrage konzentriert sich einerseits auf die Legitimierung von Landansprüchen und andererseits auf die Gründe, warum Bauern unter Druck geraten, der sie zunehmend dazu zwingt, ihre Ländereien aufzugeben.

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1.Introduction

“Sooner or later, any society that would like to know itself as ‘post-colonial’ must confront an inevitable question: how to live with collective memories of theft and murder?”

(Gibson 2002:83).

I focus my research interest on the relation between the Australian nation-state and its claim to territory by drawing on my field research experience among family farmers in the 5th generation in the Central West of rural New South Wales, (NSW). My main question asks how family farmers’ senses of belonging to place are constructed in times of uprooting redistributional processes in the Australian nation that affect farmers in both the imaginary and the material realm. Both, the historical legacies as well as new challenges like the environmental and economic constraints render it difficult for family farmers to determine and maintain ‘their place’ in the Australian nation.

My interest in family farmers’ life worlds is derived from their historical importance as an icon of the white settler-nation. Farmers inhabit a special position within the nation’s imaginary of itself. This positionality contained specific rights, privileges and wealth. Farming can be viewed as a place-making activity; it is a spatial practice that, by cultivating Australia’s very land, was seen as establishing the nation-state. Therewith, first settlers and later family farmers are inscribed as venturous explorers and heroic pioneers in the foundational myth of the modern Australian nation. I am interested in family farmers conceptions of the history of colonisation in Australia and I engage with farmers’ imagining of the Australian nation’s past through the lens of their family history. I am interested in the processes that establish family farms as places of meaning farmers feel they belong to and how narrations of (family) history as well as farmers’ labour, understood as spatial everyday practices, are connected to the farm as a home. In this context, it is important to notice that I grew up and have been socialised mostly in western parts of Germany. This plays a role in my ethnography due to my positionality in the field and yards and my own perspective on history. Today family farmers’ positionality has changed. They are structurally distinct from corporate farmers and farm managers or pastoralists as they are freeholders and own the land they cultivate and often live upon. They are self-employed and commonly inherit the land since several generations. Although farms operated as family businesses are still the major organisational structure in Australian agriculture, their number is decreasing, giving way to

larger properties managed by corporations. Family farmers are subject to a variety of stressors, disjuncture and marginalisation. Although inherently diverse, they are the most vulnerable agents among agricultural economic players in Australia, dependent on changing environmental conditions as well as unstable commodity prices commanded by the “free market”. Understanding the pressures farmers face in the maintenance of their land will be part of my thesis, investigating why many of them are forced to sell their land.

In the first chapter I develop my research interest by exploring the relation between culture and place in anthropology. I provide a short and selective summary of the history of British and American anthropology in a broad meta-narrative manner. The epistemologies of British structural-functionalism and American interpretative anthropology are both criticised for their shared imagining of culture/society as “complex whole”. I further deconstruct the bias of structural-functionalist anthropology due to its unconsidered embedment in the colonial framework of the British Empire with the work of Talal Asad. I have to neglect a range of nuanced studies, such as the work of the Manchester School, who critically engaged with anthropology’s production of knowledge in colonial conditions. I further draw on Fredrik Barth’s work to shift attention from anthropological island thinking and collections of culture-characteristics to relational constructions of boundaries between groups through markers of difference. Where the former approach constructs and negates the Other, echoing the culturalism of the nation-state, the latter enables deconstruction of Self-Other mechanisms and interactions embedded in asymmetrical power relations. As the work of Radcliffe-Brown and Malinowski were influential in the founding phase of Australian anthropology correlating with the invention of the Australian nation, I attempt to deconstruct their epistemological framing for its implicit methodological nationalism. My point is to show that national identities and belonging call into question anthropological assumptions about “culture/society” and its boundedness as well as an assumed isomorphism of culture and place. Describing Indigenous-settler relations by contrasting two opposing “complex wholes” is not only a paradigm in the identity politics of the nation-state but also present in recent anthropological work I encountered in Australia. The colonial legacy of British structural-functionalism is still present. *How should we deal with our natives?* was and remains to be one of the leading questions, as I was told by an Australian professor of anthropology.

In the second chapter I continue my theoretical encounter by engaging with the work of Arjun Appadurai (1996), Benedict Anderson (2006) and Neil Brenner (1999). I thereby outline some of the major characteristics of the current round of globalisation, the nation-state as imagined

community and the dynamics that lead to processes of re/deterritorialisation. The challenging role of imagination as collective practice is here a major point of interest.

Literature on Australia indicates multiple changes that go along with the attempt of the nation to imagine itself as post-colonial and reposition itself in the international landscape in times of globalisation (Cerwonka 2004; Hage 1998; Gelder/Jakobs 1998). Cerwonka (2004) identifies three moments of deterritorialisation effecting the settler-nation: Indigenous land rights in the post-Mabo era, multiculturalism and the restructuring of the nation-state's relations to Asia. These processes are presented as uprooting Anglo-Celtic hegemonic positionality within the national imaginary. They would dislocate white culture from the nation's centre and disrupt Anglo-Celtic senses of belonging. The consequences of the Native Title Act challenge the legitimacy of Anglo-Celtics' claim to land, of their being in place. Processes of multiculturalism contest the idea of Britain as an imagined shared home and alter distributional processes of recognition within society. Additionally, the newly emphasised economic relations to Asia force Anglo-Celtics to reimagine Australia's geography in terms of its international locality. These three identified processes demand a reimagination and reconceptualisation of culture and place or, more precisely, of the relation between the nation-state and its claimed territory. Although the processes are intertwined, I am mainly interested in the rural regions of NSW and multiculturalism is identified as a city phenomenon.

Engaging with rural Australia, I focus on how belonging to place is maintained among family farmers despite postcolonialising processes active in the idea of nationhood, that question their legitimacy to the land. As Australian societal elites push to establish the country as a post-colonial economic power in the Pacific, the symbol of Australian farmers as a national icon is devaluated as it gets replaced with less burdened signifiers of the nation, neither associated with the colonial past nor with the future of an extreme and changing climate. The general decline of family farms since the 2nd World War indicates a restructuring process of the agricultural sector to the disadvantage of family farmers. This is identified as a neoliberal reterritorialisation process that demands farming systems to be more efficient in the capital intensifying agricultural economy. Here I am interested in the strategies farmers engage in to remain economically viable.

I understand de/reterritorialisation processes as part of globalisation. They occur simultaneously, but vary by perception in accordance to the subject's positionality within the nation-space. They signify redistributional developments: not only of the imagined position of one's place in the nation, but also of its corresponding material expression. In other words, the

reimagining of the nation and one's position within it is bound to changes of material status. In my thesis I want to understand farmers' entanglement within this dialectic process.

Furthermore, I aim to show in my thesis that the Australian nation cannot be described as post-colonial. Instead it is in the process of postcolonialising, in the state of becoming post-colonial. This is outlined in the third theoretical chapter of my thesis. Here I present a deconstruction of the key ideology of egalitarian individualism inherent in the form nationalism takes shape in Australia (Kapferer/Morris 2006). I narrate the farm as a symbol of this ideology and part of the iconography of the imagined community of Anglo-Celtic settler descendants. I further stress the postcolonialising processes in Australia by providing a history of how Anglo-Celtic settler migrants constructed and dealt with the traditional Other in settler-society, the Indigenous population (Moreton-Robinson 2003). I briefly sketch the development of the Native Title Act that overruled the foundational myth of *terra nullius*, which provided the legitimacy for white settlement. Although overpowered, I show that the paradigm maintains relevance, not only in the legal framework but also in public debates such as the "History Wars". By drawing on Gelder and Jakob's (1998) analysis of the uncanny in public debates I refer throughout my thesis to uncanny self-representations expressed by Anglo-Celtics in relation to Indigenous Australians.

The process of postcolonialising is an uneven and asynchronous development. This is not only reflected in rural Australia among the farmers I have met, but also in academia, such as the disciplines of history and anthropology. My point being is that I do not want to encourage a singling out of family farmers *who still don't get that White Australia is history* but that the process of postcolonialising is very much present in the public sphere and in academia. That includes anthropology and "*to ignore this fact is to miscomprehend the nature of that object*" (Asad 1973:18). In the conclusion of my thesis I return to the discipline, to briefly engage with the "Culture Crisis" debate in Australia to further stress this point.

My intention is to critically reflect on the knowledge production framework my thesis is embedded in as I have spent 20 months in Australia, not only to conduct my field research, but also to study two semesters at the Australian National University in Canberra, ACT. There I happened to meet the daughter of my soon-to-be informants and in fact we lived in a shared house together for a year. She introduced me to her parents, family farmers in the 5th generation, who were so open and kind to participate in my research and to introduce me to their extended family; all are based in the Central West, NSW.

To engage in farmer's life worlds I conducted a two-months lasting field research in the rural regions of Little River¹ in 2011. This included participant observation, the conduction of 15 narrative and semi-structured interviews as well as participating in community events, excursions to local heritage museums and the surveying of the private family archive. During the two months period, I lived in three farming households and worked as a farm hand. These three farming families, a pair of brothers and their cousin, are descendants of the squatter William Lee who received one of the first land grants in the interior in 1818. As the family history is also the colonial story of Australia, it became part of my fieldwork to ask how Indigenous-settler relations are imagined and narrated and how they are further integrated or ignored in the family heritage. The Lee family is one of the founding families of Australia's white inland settlement.

Although Lee's descendants and their families are my key informants, I also engaged with other farmers in the area and spoke to rural workers, shop owners, librarians, tourist officers, cattle selling agents, nannies, backpackers, students and representatives of the National Farmers Federation. Not all voices are included and not all themes can be discussed. I mainly exclude the human-animal relations in the fields and yards, which however, form a very important part of everyday life. Interactions with animals are not only related to internationally operating chains of production, but also to feelings of friendship, responsibility, emotional attachment and mutual dependency. Animals are pets or part of production and an endpoint of violence on the farm. They are also sources of pride and danger and central to many community events. Furthermore, there is a gendered aspect to the relation between animals, the land and humans. However, I focus on human-land relations to identify how redistributive processes in the imaginary and material realm for family farmers in the rural Central West can be described by taking the family farm as a symbol and place of these processes.

2. Globalisation: Imagining the Relation between Culture and Place

The *Encyclopedia of Social and Cultural Anthropology* (2007) starts its discussion of 'culture' with evolutionist Edward Tylor's definition: "*Culture or civilization, taken in its*

¹ Localities and names of key informants are anonymised. For further information, please contact me directly: norma.deseke@gmail.com

wide ethnographic sense, is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, arts, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society. (Tylor 1871 I:1)” (Barnard/Spencer 2012:137). This definition of culture as a ‘complex whole’ remains a battleground for defining anthropology’s field of enquiry: the concept is still in use by some anthropologists (Eriksen 2001) and heavily contested by others (Borofsky et al 2001).

2.1. The Object of Anthropological Enquiry: Culture

In the following chapter I outline the epistemological frameworks of structural-functionalism, employed by Bronislaw Malinowski and Alfred R. Radcliffe-Brown, and symbolic/interpretative anthropology, as outlined by Clifford Geertz. Where the former describes anthropology’s field of enquiry through the metaphor of culture/society as an organic organism, the latter employs the metaphor of culture as text. I demonstrate that both conceptualisations represent anthropology’s field of enquiry as “complex whole”. Engaging with the work of Talal Asad, I criticise the British apolitically biased approach for failing to acknowledge society’s embedment in internationally shaped asymmetrical power structures. Fredric Barth’s focus on boundary constructions enables a criticism of both, the structural-functionalist and symbolic/interpretative framework, for their implicit methodological nationalism. I end the first chapter with Gupta and Ferguson’s call for a deconstruction of the relation between culture and place, to engage with the question of how places are naturalised and how locality is produced.

2.1.1. British Social Anthropology: Culture & Society as an Organic Organism

The works of Bronislaw Malinowski and Alfred R. Radcliffe-Brown institutionalised British social anthropology. Radcliffe-Brown also established anthropology in Australia and his approach remains a strong influence today, especially in the literature on land rights (Maddock 2012). As Malinowski and Radcliffe-Brown thought of anthropology as a science, they focused on observable facts to analyse the social laws by which humankind was assumed to live.

“[T]he point of functionalist investigation was to identify the standardized habits that maintained the social organism in a condition of dynamic equilibrium – the ‘more or less stable social structures’ regulating individuals’ relation ‘to one another, and providing such external adaption to the physical environment, and such internal adaption between the component individuals or groups, as to make possible and ordered social life’ (Radcliffe-Brown 1932:152)” (Kuklick 2012:247).

This focus on social integration - on continuous social structures within society - imagined as a social organism, echoes the influence of Emile Durkheim (Kuklick 2012:249). A major difference to Durkheim regards history’s relevance for the analysis of contemporary societies. Where Durkheim insisted on paying attention to processes of historical transformation because showing *“how a fact is useful is not to explain how it originated or why it is what it is”* (Durkheim [1895] 2005:47), Malinowski and Radcliffe-Brown dismissed historical analysis as the search for origins related to evolutionism and diffusionism.

One of the major differences between Malinowski and Radcliffe-Brown concerns whether “culture” should be included in scientific anthropological enquiry. *“While I have defined social anthropology as the study of human societies, there are some who define it as the study of human culture”* (Radcliffe-Brown 1952:189). Here, Radcliffe-Brown refers to Malinowski’s and Franz Boas’ concern with culture as the object of research. Malinowski includes the *“spiritual quota”* (Malinowski 1944:69), ideas, values, beliefs and moral principles in his definition of culture, while simultaneously stating *“nothing can be objective which is not accessible to observation”* (Malinowski 1944:69). His challenge lies in the difficulty to define an objective approach to phenomena he regarded as intangible or inaccessible in the first place, a realm *“where neither form nor function is very evident”* (Malinowski 1944:69). Where Malinowski is challenged by the inclusion of apparently intangible phenomena, Radcliffe-Brown excludes the sphere of culture from his study, dismissing the concept as an abstraction (Radcliffe-Brown 1952). Radcliffe-Brown is concerned with the observation of social structures - represented in behaviour, speech and material objects - from which *social laws of society* can be inferred. His idea about what should be the anthropological field of enquiry is outlined in the metaphor of society as an *organic organism*, setting a conceptual framework for his functionalist anthropological research agenda. To claim the same authority, which legitimised research in the newly established natural sciences, society is identified as a natural phenomenon subjected to invariant laws. The general impulse behind this effort is regarded as positivism: positivists

aim to cleanse rhetoric of its ambiguities, so that the communication of true knowledge could be as reliable as mathematical symbols (Levine 1995).

In post-war British anthropology, the discipline is saturated with functionalism, due to the specific knowledge production policy. *The* scientific agenda, which by definition denies schools of thought, and its established representatives, who controlled the distribution of resources, left no room for theoretical pluralism (Kuklick 2012). However, decolonisation processes put the British Empire and therewith anthropology under pressure: structural-functionalism of Radcliffe-Brown's kind could neither observe social change nor provide explanations about the post-colonial turmoil. Consequently, anthropologists challenged its assumptions and deconstructed the mode of knowledge production, exemplified by the work of Edmund Leach (1976) among others.

2.1.2. American Cultural Anthropology: Culture as Text

Like British social anthropologists, the American cultural anthropologist Franz Boas argued strongly against socio-cultural evolutionism. Instead, "*culture was offered as a pluralistic and relativistic alternative to scientific racism and ethnocentric evolutionism*" (Barnard/Spencer 2012:138). Boas' cultural relativism posited cultures (and not societies) as equally valued contemporaneous entities, whereby evolutionist arguments for domination by "culturally more developed societies" lost their legitimising ideological ground. Boas' understanding of culture is nowadays depicted as anthropology's 'conventional relativism' (Whitaker 2012).

The different conceptualisations of anthropology's object of study, the all-embracing concept of culture in American anthropology and the dominance of Radcliffe-Brown's framework for social anthropology's enquiry after Malinowski's death, enflamed a debate between American cultural and British social anthropologists in the 1950s and 1960s. American cultural anthropologists accused their British colleagues of reducing cultural phenomena to social explanations (Spencer 2012), whereas British scholars dismissed the concept of culture promoted by the Americans as an abstraction, strangely detached from observable social behaviour. The theoretical bricoleur of the 1950's, British structural-functionalism, American 'culture and personality' anthropology and American evolutionist anthropology, launched the platform for structuralism, symbolic anthropology and cultural ecology in the 1960s (Ortner 1984). Victor Turner, David Schneider and Clifford Geertz were key figures of symbolic

anthropology in the 1970s, promoting the shift of understanding culture as shared sets of meaning. They shared a reluctance to apply scientific methodologies on the one hand and a commitment to a historical particularism on the other. Symbolic anthropology was mainly an American movement, but its effects were felt widely (Spencer 2012). Although the period of the 1960s till mid 1970s is characterised by Clifford Geertz (2002) as a time of the explosion of paradigms, I limit myself here to the discussion of symbolic or interpretative anthropology as developed by Geertz himself.

Highly influential for Geertz' thinking was the work of Talcott Parsons, which introduced a new perspective into the debate between British Social and American Cultural anthropologists in the 1960s (Barnard/Spencer 2012). Drawing on Parson's approach, Clifford Geertz established a new conceptualisation of culture, which changed anthropology's field of enquiry and enriched it in the long run with a new self-awareness in its literary mode of representation: *"The concept of culture I espouse [...] is essentially a semiotic one. Believing, with Max Weber, that man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he has himself spun, I take culture to be those webs, and the analysis of it to be therefore not an experimental science in search of law but an interpretive one in search of meaning"* (Geertz 1973:5). This definition is radically different to what earlier British structural-functionalists had proposed and it encourages a distinctive epistemology. The scientific agenda is replaced with a semiotic approach: the framework for the anthropological agenda is not the detection of social laws, but a cultural analysis based on the interpretation of meanings. Human behaviour is seen as symbolic action, which comments on more than just itself as it articulates cultural forms. With the semiotic approach, Geertz analyses symbol systems to gain access to the conceptual world of actors (Geertz 1973). The understanding of symbols, the vehicles of meanings, is now considered to be the shared competence of the members of a culture. Therefore, culture is taken to be a unifying system; it is framed as a context and a public system of referencing meaning. To outline interpretative anthropology's field of enquiry, Geertz draws on the metaphor of reading culture as text, culture is imagined as an acted document (Geertz 1973). Accordingly, anthropologists have to focus on the interpretations of the world by informants themselves (Ortner 1984). Geertz *"plant[s] the actor at the centre of his model"* (Ortner 1984:130), although he did not develop a theory of practice.

Geertz' work prepared the ground for the "literary turn" in anthropology and therewith a serious reconsideration of representation and epistemology in the 1980s (Clifford/Marcus 1986; Marcus/Fischer 1986). Anthropologists were concerned about the role of

anthropological knowledge and its production in the colonial past and present. Post-colonial and feminist critiques of anthropology's role in the colonial system and its perspectives unmasked it as predominantly white, male and European (see Said 1978; Rubin 1975 among others). The critique transformed the discipline as it revealed its inherent forms of ethnocentrism in forms of representation, which raised (self-)reflexivity about knowledge/power structures. This new awareness of the researchers' positionality not only concerned structural differences between 'national anthropologies' (Beckett 2010), but also the interdependencies and global relations between places: the relevance of the global in the local context.

2.1.3. Critique of Culture/Society as a Complex Whole: Power & Agency

Whereas British anthropology under the structural-functionalist model defines anthropology's object of enquiry to be "society", American anthropology frames "cultures" as their major frame of reference, from Boas' inception of the discipline until Geertz definition of culture as text. Both frameworks require very different epistemologies to develop an understanding of human diversity; however, they also share a distinct similarity in their framing, namely the construction of anthropology's major field of enquiry as "complex wholes".

The question of how we differentiate ourselves from each other invokes issues of power, as dominant agents have a stronger assertiveness in labelling and identifying themselves and others. Naming, defining and identifying are seen by the postmodernist critique as acts of power and dominion (Pieterse 2001), however, *not* naming, defining and identifying structures of inequality, forms of dominion and exploitation can also be seen as an act of ignorant power and dominion (Scheper-Hughes 1995). This point is made by neo-Marxists such as Talal Asad (1973) and Eric Wolf (1982).

At the forefront of anthropology's post-colonial critique, Asad rejects functionalist anthropologists' strategy of claiming political neutrality based on their assumed methodological objectivity: being political was not in line with being scientific. Here, the function of Radcliffe-Brown's metaphor of the social organism implies the possibility of a value-neutral approach to social research by borrowing its legitimacy from the authority of natural scientists (Levine 1995). Asad deconstructs and opposes functionalists' inattention to relations in another manner than the reproduction of the complex whole, arguing to expose contradictions instead. He regards the dominant effect of functionalist anthropology to be the

maintenance and affirmation of the status quo. Focusing on relations between knowledge and power, Asad raises questions about anthropology's role as a knowledge generating system that is mainly concerned with colonised societies as its major object of study. Although he does not consider anthropologists to have great influence over key political agents of the British Empire, he insists that in turn the colonial framework had an intense influence on anthropology. Not only did it shape its institutional structures, but also how the discipline framed its field of study and the ways of approaching it.

"At any rate the general drift of anthropological understanding did not constitute a basic challenge to the unequal world represented by the colonial system. Nor was the colonial system as such - within which the social objects studied were located - analysed by the social anthropologist. To argue that anthropologist's expertise did not qualify him for considering fruitfully such a system is to confess that this expertise was malformed. For any object which is subordinated and manipulated is partly the product of a power relationship and to ignore this fact is to miscomprehend the nature of that object" (Asad 1973:18).

This is a strong call for a new anthropology. Instead of focusing on social integration, *"how solidarity is fine-tuned, reinforced, and intensified"* (Ortner 1984:130) neo-Marxist analytical questions elaborate on the construction and maintenance of coherence despite *"the conflicts and contradictions that constitute the normal state of affairs"* (Ortner 1984:130). Neo-Marxist anthropology concentrates not on the affirmation of social reality in a Durkheimian sense, but on penetrating power relations, which maintain asymmetrical structures of dominion and exploitation. Although Asad's critique argues for a new anthropological perspective, he challenges neither British nor American anthropology's conceptualisation of the field of enquiry as a bounded entity. He deconstructs the biases that neglect the embedment of a society/culture in an international field of asymmetrical power relations, agents thereof being Empires or nation-states, but he does not contest the naturalisation of those entities as "complex wholes".

Fredrik Barth's (1969) constructivist approach created a synthesis between structural-functionalist and cultural relativist assumptions, by analysing the social organisation of cultural differences between groups through the concept of ethnicity. He criticised the way anthropologists analyse processes within society/culture and thereby transcended the construction of naturalised entities as holistically bounded. Barth described the understanding of anthropology's field of enquiry in the 1960s and 1970s as the following:

„...we are led to imagine each group developing its cultural and social form in relative isolation, mainly in response to local ecologic factors, through a history of adaption by invention and selective borrowing. This history has produced a world of separate peoples, each with their

culture and each organized in a society which can legitimately be isolated for description as an island to itself" (Barth [1969] 1998:11).

Barth's critique of anthropological "island-thinking" deconstructs not only the vestige of structural-functionalism but also the legacy of Boas' particular cultural relativism. The structural-functionalism of Radcliffe-Brown's kind equals human agency with the movement of cells: every form of engagement is reduced to the reproduction of the social structure; agency is function. Due to this static construction, society appears to be a reified entity and functionalism cannot deal with social change. The framework suppresses temporality, which creates an ahistorical representation of the societies in question.

The legacy of Boas' historical particularism also frames cultures as bounded entities, although to be analysed in very different terms, i.e. with the semiotic approach as suggested by Geertz. By overemphasising the uniqueness of every culture, some of Boas' students lean to a form of relativism called 'ethical relativism' which accentuates cultural differences between groups, almost negating the possibility of comparison and interaction – at least in its strongest line of arguments (Whitaker 2012). This naturalisation of boundaries inherits the danger of creating insular and isolated entities, refusing relational interaction and exchange. Additionally, the construction itself is not very helpful to improve life circumstances of minorities, leading instead to a normalisation and acceptance of their marginalised status in the name of cultural diversity and pluralism. However, to silence cultural differences between groups may create a paternalistic standardisation process of norms by the more powerful agents, who enforce their own values onto the other. This assimilationist perspective might follow the rhetorical phrase "everybody is the same, the same like us". In this line of argument it is possible to deny the needs of specific groups, neglect their rights and legitimise their suppression in the name of equality (Gingrich 2001). This latter dimension is especially relevant in regard to the Australian context.

Both conceptualisations of society/culture echo Tylor's early understanding of anthropology's field of enquiry as a complex whole. The monolithic concept is reductionist as it refuses to capture the diversity between the members of a group, their status differences and struggles over resources. It is further an essentialist perspective as it homogenises the members of a group on two levels: towards each other and over time (Herzfeld 2012).

Instead, Barth aims to understand the processes that generate meaning and forms of agency, which create, negotiate and challenge naturalised boundaries as well as group representations (Barth 2007). Barth explicitly asks *how* cultural differences are socially organised by the

actors themselves. Ethnic identities emerge through social interaction; they are based on processes of identifying, labelling and naming the self and others. Here, cultural markers work as variable signifiers, that is, they are situational in character: agents identify their mutual belonging - an overlapping norm and value system - by accentuating those cultural markers. People recognise that they are “*playing the same game*” (Barth 1998:6). Therewith, Barth’s approach created a new perspective on cultural differences that allows for the research of how mechanisms of demarcation, inclusion and exclusion proceed and unfold: “*The critical focus of investigation from this point of view becomes the ethnic **boundary** that defines the group, not the cultural stuff that it encloses*” (Barth 1998:15, emphasis in the original). This research agenda does not have to stop at the boundaries constructed between ethnic groups, but can be extended to deconstruct boundary markers which define in/exclusion to the nation, as Barth’s approach challenges the perception of a world inhabited by naturalised entities.

2.1.4. Methodological Nationalism: Naturalisation of Place

To imagine the world as a cluster of naturalised entities leaves anthropology unfit to capture the increased transnational processes relevant to the discipline since at least the 1990s (but indeed put forward by neo-Marxists way earlier; see Wolf 1982; Wimmer/Glick Schiller 2002). “*Studies of ethnographic writing have revealed the apparent boundedness and coherence of “a culture” as something made rather than found; the “wholeness” of the holistically understood object appears more as a narrative device than as an objectively present empirical truth*” (Gupta/Ferguson 1997:2). Gupta and Ferguson deconstruct and criticise the implicit assumption that “a culture” belongs to its certain territory. This “*assumed isomorphism of space, place, and culture*” (1997:34) is based upon an apparent unproblematic division of space. The relation between culture and place is naturalised: “*It is so taken for granted that each country embodies its own distinctive culture and society that the terms “society” and “culture” are routinely simply appended to the names of nation-states*” (1997:6-7). Wimmer and Glick Schiller (2002) have defined this epistemology as *methodological nationalism* applied in the social sciences, including anthropology. Through its dominant bias the approach assumes that nation/state/society/culture are the natural social and political forms of the modern world system. Approaches with an inherent methodological nationalism presents societies as naturally rooted in their territory, uncritically underpinning the attempts by territorial states to homogenise their national societies through categories

developed by culturalism. Society cannot be captured as a *national* society; the state's territory is no container of the social (Scott 2012; Wimmer/ Glick Schiller 2002; see also Beck 2000). This form of describing human relations mistakes the attempt for the status quo. Instead, Gupta and Ferguson call for a theorisation of the processes that turn space into meaningful places, and not to take the dominant entity nation-state for granted. The debate thrilled anthropologists coming to terms with globalisation: "*At a time when cultural difference is increasingly becoming deterritorialized because of mass migrations and transnational cultural flows of a late capitalist, postcolonial world [...], there is obviously a special interest in understanding the way that questions of identity and cultural difference are spatialized in new ways*" (Gupta/Ferguson 1997:3). Gupta and Ferguson call for the analysis of the production of locality and its naturalisation, an agenda pursued by Barth for ethnic groups, by Anderson for the nation and by Appadurai in the context of globalisation. In the following, I briefly summarise how anthropologists have looked at globalisation and how it affects thinking about nation-states by focusing on the shifting dynamics of territorialisation in the national context of Australia. These dynamics impact and challenge naturalised assumptions about the relation between people, culture and place.

2.2. Shifting Dynamics of Territorialisation: Globalisation & the Nation-State

In the second chapter of my thesis I engage with theorisations of processes of globalisation, how they impact on nation-states and change modalities of territorialisation. I distinguish precedent phases of globalisation, such as the mercantilist and colonial phase, from its current flows, identified as post-colonial globalisation and further engage with the changing scales of nation-states defined as *imagined communities*. By drawing on Appadurai's work I outline the altered role of imagination in everyday life and how this is reflected on the level of the nation-state in form of policies of culturalism. I end the chapter by linking transnational processes to the territorial scaffolding needed by the capitalist regime of flexible accumulation.

2.2.1. Processes of Globalisation: Global Cultural Flows

The term globalisation emerged in the social sciences only in the 1990s. It signifies the tendency towards increasing global interconnections, exchange processes and dependencies in culture, economy and social life (Barnard/Spencer 2012:768; Gingrich et al. 2011). In his theory of rupture Arjun Appadurai (1996) argues that globalisation is not a new process as “[a]ll major social forces have precursors, precedents, analogs, and sources in the past.” (1996:2). Globalisation is thus not an entirely new phenomenon: it did not emerge with the collapse of the USSR in 1989, but is the result of long historical processes that reach back at least until 1492. Eric Wolf (1982) points out that the world has been compressing since the 15th century due to mobility patterns over vast distances as well as world trade. Further continuous elements include a worldwide market economy and the disintegration of local economies under pressure of new streams of people, ideas, products, drugs, diseases, weapons, etc. Here it makes sense to distinguish between a mercantilist and a colonial phase of globalisation; moreover the current round can be described as globalisation’s post-colonial form (Gingrich et al. 2011).

Appadurai argues that although globalisation is not an entirely new phenomenon, the present form entails aspects entirely new to humanity: the altered scale of motion and mediation, the crossing of state borders by economic, technological, media related and political dimensions, indicated as global cultural flows (Appadurai 1996). This leads to a new self-reflexivity specific to this period of globalisation: although earlier generations lived in globalised times, they might not have been aware of it. Nowadays everybody is aware of living in a time of globalisation (Beck 1997). The issues surrounding Climate Change take on a special position here, as the destruction of the global ecosystem poses existential problems to humankind² (Chakrabarty 2009) – a field neglected by anthropologist so far (Crate/Nuttall 2009). Anthropogenic Climate Change adds to the field of contemporary crises that are strongly intertwined with concerns about the need for a regulated economy.

Appadurai captures the disjunctures between economy, culture and politics in the current round of globalisation by providing five relational dimensions in the framework of global

² Some authors, such as Chakrabarty (2009) put forward the idea of the Anthropocene: the term indicates the new geological epoch when humans exist as a geological force effecting the whole planet.

cultural flows: *ethnoscapes, technoscapes, financescapes, mediascapes and ideoscapes*³. These terms allow Appadurai to begin theorising the complex interrelations, exchanges, new constraints and shifting scales of people's life. The environmental metaphor "flow", which fosters associations of water and its distinct characteristics, as well as "-scape" point out the "*fluid, irregular shapes of these landscapes*" (Appadurai 1996:33) and their situational and perspectival character. The metaphor is not dependent on naturalised entities like the functionalist metaphor of the organic organism. Global cultural flows are not

"objectively given relations that look the same from every angle of vision, but rather, [...] they are deeply perspectival constructs, inflected by the historical, linguistic, and political situatedness of different sorts of actors; nation-states, multinationals, diasporic communities, as well as subnational groupings and movements (whether religious, political, or economic), and even intimate face-to-face groups, such as villages, neighborhoods, and families" (Appadurai 1996:33).

The global cultural flows occur in and through the disjunctures among these landscapes as "*each of these landscapes is subject to its own constraints and incentives [...], at the same time as each acts as a constraint and a parameter for movements in the others*" (Appadurai 1996:35). Together, these landscapes are described in extension of Benedict Anderson's work on imagined communities (2006) as *imagined worlds*: "*the multiple worlds that are constituted by the historically situated imaginations of persons and groups spread around the globe*" (Appadurai 1996:33). As collective representations are social facts (Durkheim [1895] 2005), Appadurai states that the current round of globalisation is marked by the shift that occurred in these collective representations, altering the role imagination plays in every day life. Related to the technological changes of the last century, "*the imagination has become a collective, social fact*" (Appadurai 1996:5). Appadurai relates the emergence of *sodalities*,

3 Briefly summarised, *ethnoscapes* indicate the new forms of transnational mobility of persons, their formation of groups and in consequence their effects on politics of and in between nation states. *Technoscapes* describe global configuration of technologies and their distribution and penetration of all sectors of life. *Financescapes* are closely linked to the new technological possibilities, as capital is shifted in highly complex, "*more mysterious*" (Appadurai 1996:34) and rapid ways around the globe than ever before, to exploit even the smallest differences in "*percentage points and time units*" (Appadurai 1996:35). Appadurai describes *mediascapes* and *ideoscapes* as closely linked dimensions of the global cultural flows, providing "*large and complex repertoires of images, narratives, and ethnoscapes to viewers throughout the world, in which the world of commodities and the world of news and politics are profoundly mixed*" (Appadurai 1996:35). This leads to a blurring of the line between realistic and fictional landscapes, which enable desires, hopes and ideas about other "*imagined worlds*" that may be fantastic objects. *Mediascapes* indicate the dissemination, distribution and production capabilities as well as the means to provide information and images of the world in various mediums (i.e. newspaper...). Here, the modes of various mediums, their hardware and audiences as well as controlling interests impose differing and complicating inflections. With the term *ideoscapes* Appadurai seizes the concatenations of the "*chain of ideas, terms, and images, including freedom, welfare, sights, sovereignty, representation, and the master term democracy*" (Appadurai 1996:36). Each of these terms travel and alter their meaning in different places, i.e. nation-states have organised their political cultures around different keywords, requiring a "*careful translation from context to context*" (Appadurai 1996:36). This is especially important in the context of Australia's nationalised culture, institutionalised by the ethnic group of settler-migrants' diaspora.

active beyond the level of the nation-state through processes generated by electronic capitalism and the new media, to what Anderson described as the emergence of nations through print-capitalism: *“print-capitalism can be one important way in which groups who have never been in face-to-face contact can begin to think of themselves as Indonesian or Indian or Malaysian. But other forms of electronic capitalism can have similar, and even more powerful effects, for they do not work only at the level of the nation-state”* (Appadurai 1996:8). Due to global pressures that engage with already politicised arenas, locality is newly produced. This has an exhilarating effect on the political construction of nation-states’ institutions, which are no longer imagined as the only territorial infrastructure of the current global economy.

2.2.2. The Nation-State: Challenging the Imaginary

The nation-state is a mode of grouping and controlling people (Abélès 2012). Historically, most human societies have been state-less (Knoll/Gingrich/Kreff 2011). Indeed, what is understood today as a modern constitutional state with territorially defined sovereignty and the monopoly of violence within this territory was only institutionalised in the 19th century (Scott 2012). Sociologist and philosopher Ernest Gellner as well as the historian Benedict Anderson analyse the cultural dimensions of the nation-state (Scott 2012). Gellner (2006) highlights that the aim of states is not only to monopolise violence but also to monopolise the definition of its legitimate culture. He analyses an apparent homogenous national culture as the product of society’s elite. These elites find their ideological expression in form of society’s nationalism (Scott 2012).

Anderson’s constructivist definition theorises the nation-state as an *“imagined community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign”* (Anderson 2006:6). The nation is *imagined* as it is impossible for all its members to know each other personally, but still *“each lives the image of their communion”* (Anderson 2006:6). It is a *community* because *“regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship”* (Anderson 2006:7). This assumed homogeneity, despite differences parallels the usage of the term culture in anthropology, which is why Appadurai (1996) rejects the term. Akin to “nation”, “culture” implies a sharing and agreement of its members *“that fly in the face of unequal knowledge and the differential*

prestige of lifestyles” (Appadurai 1996:12). It thereby discourages anthropological enquiry to focus on worldviews and agency of the marginalised, exploited and dominated.

The nation is further a *limited* imagined community, as other entities are assumed to exist beyond its boundaries. It is imagined as *sovereign* as the concept gained brisance in a time where adherents of universal religions were confronted with the plurality of claims to ontological truth outside and beside their own. Revolutionary processes of the Enlightenment destroyed “*the legitimacy of the divinely-ordained, hierarchical dynastic realm*” (Anderson 2006:7). Consequently, “[t]he gage and emblem of this freedom is the sovereign state” (Anderson 2006:7) that is, the institutionalised structure of the nation.

Regarding the augmented forms of motion and mediation in the current round of globalisation, Appadurai suggests to use the adjective “cultural” over the noun “culture”. The adjective stresses differentiation and contrasts while enabling comparisons, whereas the noun implies an objectified entity with a substance. This brings “culture” into the same discursive space as “race” – the construct it was created to combat and which is ‘mimicried’ by the identity policies of the nation-state, defined as culturalism.

Engaging with Gellner’s work, Anderson quotes: “*‘Nationalism is not the awakening of nations to self-consciousness: it **invents** nations where they do not exist’*” (Anderson 2006:5; emphasis in the original). Anderson criticises Gellner for relating the imaginary to fabrication and falsity, thereby creating a dichotomy that implicitly juxtaposes false nations to true communities. Instead, Anderson emphasises all communities as imagined and suggests that they should be distinguished by their styles rather than an assumed grade of authenticity. Gellner as well as Anderson agree that the nation-state is more than a political community, as it also defines cultural borders, shaping individual and collective identities. Appadurai focuses on the exhilarated global connections and exchanges that transcend a methodological nationalism and overcome the societal container of the nation-state.

The global cultural flows disintegrate the nation from the state: “*the hyphen that links them is now less an icon of conjuncture than an index of disjuncture*” (Appadurai 1996:39). The relation between state and nation is an embattled one and Appadurai makes the point that both became each other’s projects, respectively. This “battle of imagination” provides the ground for an amplified separatism in state politics: a majoritarianism on the one hand and an increasing politicisation of micro-identities on the other, fuelled by “*the cultural politics of deterritorialisation and the larger sociology of displacement that it expresses*” (Appadurai 1996:39). Locality is turned into a staging ground for identity as ethnic politics play on

primordial characteristics to draw lines of similarity and difference, indicating and re/defining the meaning of 'belonging to the nation'. The state becomes the "*arbitrageur of this repatriation of difference*" (Appadurai 1996:42), exacerbating "*internal politics of majoritarianism and homogenization, which is most frequently played out in debates over heritage*" (Appadurai 1996:42). These policies of homogenisation, which advocate the majority as the norm of the national society, are identified as culturalism: "*identity politics mobilized at the level of the nation-state*" (Appadurai 1996:15). Culturalist movements self-consciously employ identity, culture and heritage in their struggle with other groups. "*It is this deliberate, strategic, and populist mobilization of cultural material that justifies calling such movements culturalist*" (Appadurai 1996:15). Processes of culturalism are employed by the Australian state to mark recent migrants, especially from Asia and the Middle East, as well as the Indigenous population as culturally distinct and Other from the so-called majority population of Anglo-Celtics, identified as the national norm. Diversity is perceived as potentially threatening the equality of the "community". A point I will expand on in the third chapter and in the conclusion of my thesis where I engage with the 'cultural crisis' debate in Australian anthropology over diversity/equality as values in conflict.

There is a controversy about the impact processes of globalisation have on the nation-state. Whether or not the institution is in decline, there is general agreement that governance is changing its *modus vivendi* on a sub-national, national as well as supranational level (Scott 2012). However, there is a difference between those scholars who accentuate flows and transnational processes like Appadurai and those who refer to the continuing relevance of states, their territorial infrastructures and borders (Brenner 1999).

2.2.3. Dynamics of Capitalist Territorialisation

A number of authors indicate a change in the dynamics of territorialisation from the 1970s onwards as the Fordist mode of mass production declines and transforms into processes of flexible accumulation (Gupta/Ferguson 1997; Hage 2011). The political scientist Neil Brenner (1999) argues that each phase of capitalist globalisation requires its own territoriality, which it creates and restructures. In a narrower definition than Appadurai, it is only these institutional restructuring processes that he calls de- and reterritorialisation⁴.

⁴ Terms originally created by Deleuze and Guattari (2004).

The latest change from a Fordist mode of production to flexible accumulation patterns required a rescaling of cities and states, key to the territorialisation of capital. In the processes following the second industrialisation of the late 19th century, cities became the centre of Fordist mass production and despite broad international linkages under US hegemony, these urban dynamics were closely connected to nationally defined economic growth. Until the 1970s, Brenner argues, processes of de- and reterritorialisation have mainly occurred *within* the territory of the state, shifting the geographical scaffolding. The national scale was viewed as a container for capital accumulation and urbanisation during the 20th century to such a degree that the historicity of the nation-state was neglected and its borders naturalised instead. *“It is this state-centric configuration of world capitalism, premised upon a spatially isomorphic relationship between capital accumulation, urbanisation and state regulation, that has been unravelling since the global economic crisis of the early 1970s”* (Brenner 1999:431-432; see also Graeber 2011). This tie between state structure and capital movement is eroded now, *“leading to new geographies of global urbanisation and capital accumulation that no longer overlap evenly with the geographies of state territorial power”* (Brenner 1999:432). An indicator for this restructuring, as suggested by Appadurai and others, is the increasing influence of international organisations and institutions on a supranational level (such as the World Bank, IMF, International Court of Justice etc.) as well as the formation of new regional alliances on an interstate level, such as Mercur Sur, the EU, the Arab Liga, ASEAN or AFTA. Furthermore, actors on a subnational level emerge, i.e. NGOs that might take over the provision of services that are classically delivered by states.⁵

Brenner comes to a similar conclusion as Appadurai, when he makes the point that the geographical consequences of the post-1970s round of globalisation lead to a changing relation between state and nation. However, Brenner disagrees with Appadurai’s idea of the decline of the nation-state, as global cultural flows are not regarded to undermine the state’s role in the territorialisation process of capital. Whereas under a Fordist mode of production the national economy was privileged, currently no specific scale is favoured. “[N]eoliberal

5 The apparent hierarchical order of space – local, regional, national, international and global – is here a sheer matter of convenience as it goes beyond the scope of this thesis to deal with the orders of space in a more reflective manner. Just a short example: “subnational” agents like NGOs may act on a globally meaningful level, apparent in transnational alter-globalisation movements, which demand the attention of the new global public sphere on a regular basis, at least since 1999. Here, the World Social Forum, which is neither an organisation, nor a united front platform, emerged out of the ‘Battle for Seattle’, USA in November 1999 and demanded “Another World is Possible” (Goetze/Deseke 2011; http://www.forumsocialmundial.org.br/index.php?cd_language=2&id_menu=; [accessed 01 Sep 2012]). Currently, the Occupy movement mobilises people, especially since the 2008 economic crisis (<http://occupytogether.org/> [accessed 01 Sep 2012]).

globalisation is re-scaling state territory rather than eroding it” (Brenner 1999:440) by processes of deterritorialisation, such as the denationalisation of the national economy, and processes of reterritorialisation, such as the hierarchical restructuring of the state’s regions, i.e. cities, regional centres and rural areas. This ongoing rescaling of territoriality is stressed as the current expression, materialisation and adaption to capital’s need for a new geographic base. This thesis is not the frame to discuss the debate over the nation-state’s future, but the shifting scales of territorialisation are relevant in the context of Australian agriculture, where rural regions are subjected to processes of reterritorialisation (Brett 2011).

As a political scientist, Brenner primarily focuses on organisational patterns to identify the changing scales of (state) institutions and networks. By consequence, his state-centric view fails to capture the cultural dimensions of de/reterritorialisation processes and Brenner cannot examine the way these changes impact on the nation. Alternatively, Appadurai focuses on the cultural dimension of the term *deterritorialisation* by including the imagination as collective practise. However, he does not use the term *reterritorialisation* in his classic work *Modernity at Large* at all. Here, another political scientist, Allaine Cerwonka (2004), extends the usage of the term-pair to recognise new forms of identification in relation to place. Outlining Anderson’s insight that nations are constituted by their “*imagined organic connection between people, culture and place*” (Cerwonka 2004:2) she conceptualises deterritorialisation as an uprooting experience that is followed or paralleled by a shifting understanding of national belonging, due to the need to re-conceptualise and re-imagine society and territory; processes she labels as reterritorialisation reflected in the spatial everyday practices of people.

2.3. Globalising the Australian Nation

I begin the third chapter with a deconstruction of the key ideology in Australian nationalism, identified as *egalitarian individualism*. This ideology stresses homogeneity as precondition for the value of equality, where differences and diversity within society are perceived as a threat. I describe the arguments of *terra nullius* through which the British Crown legitimised its claim to the Australian landmass and outline the proceedings that lead to the legal annulment of this myth of dominion and the establishment of the Native Title Act. I continue with a debate pushed forward by powerful pastoralists, members of the Anglo Celtic majority,

who represent themselves as minority threatened by Native Title land claims. This form of self-imagining is identified as *uncanny* and mirrors insecurities occurring during the national attempt to present itself as post-colonial. I demonstrate that although Indigenous land rights are broadly discussed, land titles are de facto not given to the majority of claimants. Consequently, I relate the threatening potential of reterritorialisation felt by Anglo-Celtic Australians not to their loss of land to Indigenous Australians, but to *postcolonialising* processes that question their legitimacy to the land and their being in place. The difficulty of narrating Australian colonial history is exemplified in a short reference to the “History Wars” that rage in academia and the public sphere. I end this chapter with the positioning of family farmers within the national imaginary and indicate economic developments leading to the decline of family farmers’ influence.

2.3.1. Australian Nationalism: Egalitarian Individualism

Australian society is a result of processes of British colonisation. The situation differs from post-colonial societies such as India, where the colonisers posed a minority diaspora that eventually left the country. The settler-colonialism of the Australian kind is comparable to other settler-states, such as the US, Canada or New Zealand, where the colonisers formed the majority population that remained in the former colony after the country’s independence. Kapferer and Morris (2006) argue that Australian society was from its conception a modernist project of the British colonial state, which differentiates Australia from other settler-states and marks its historical particularity. The colonial state formation and the peculiarities of the penal society are historical sources for the development of Australian egalitarian thought and practice. The ideology of ‘egalitarian individualism’ is at the centre of Australian nationalist imagination since before the federation of the colonies in 1901, which created the Commonwealth of Australia in formal independence of Britain (Kapferer/Morris 2006).

Australian nationalism did not emerge out of the political struggle with the colonial hegemon; instead the antagonisms among the Anglo-Celtic settler-migrants were reconstituted in an idealism that stated unity, producing a sense of an idiosyncratic national identity. “*In effect the ideology of Australian national identity emerged as an imagined resolution of difference as sameness, or unity of project*” (Kapferer/Morris 2006:255). The inner frictions among the Anglo-Celtic population are rooted in British society, but developed a new dynamic in the Australian diaspora. This is one of the characteristics of *ethnoscapes* and

ideoscapes as identified by Appadurai (1996): the emerging political culture of the nation-state was constructed by an altered formation of similarity/difference, with the idea of Anglo-Celtic unity despite conflict at its centre. Effectively denying class-conflicts, the lines of rupture between Irish and British, the contradicting interests of small and large landholders, as well as between owners of capital and the sellers of labour power, were muted and suppressed in Australian social order. The national identity marked Australians as classless and egalitarian in cultural distinction to the colonial hegemon, as the English were presented as class-ridden and hierarchical. The imagined homogeneity is fundamental to the ideology⁶ of individual egalitarianism and its ideals of equality, whereas differences are regarded as a potential threat to those egalitarian values⁷.

The formation of egalitarian individualism as the paramount ideology of Australian nationalism and its institutionalisation in the newly founded state was exclusively a project of the most powerful members among the settler-migrant community. The 'White Australia' policy came into being with the 'Immigration Restriction Act'. It was one of the first pieces of legislation, crafted by the 'Commonwealth of Australia' in 1901. This policy framework of "protectionism" demarcated who was allowed to enter the country; its defining category was 'whiteness'. It did not only govern the immigration flow, but was combined with mechanisms that distributed financial benefits within the nation (Cerwonka 2004). The White Australia policy enforced distance to Asia, while encouraging flows of people between Great Britain and Australia⁸. Whiteness was assumed to be the basis for self-governance, associated with "civilisation" that is bound to geographical location. The "unity of project" of the Anglo-Celtic nation-state maintained strong ties to the British "homeland" and excluded people that

6 "Individualism as an ideology (i.e. a discursive system of value – our concern here) constructs the individual subject as the primordial and generative centre of all social and political realities. Egalitarian individualism insists on the fundamental equality of all human beings in nature and represents social inequality (often described as hierarchy) as the contradiction of egalitarian ideals" (Kapferer/Morris 2006:251).

7 The combination of a form of nationalism that stresses "ethnic homogeneity" with the ideology of individualist egalitarianism is not a specifically Australian phenomenon. In fact, it was deeply embedded in all sorts of European types of nationalism in the 19th and early 20th century and also includes those settler nationalisms apparent in Israel or the US.

8 The trope of "Asia" consists of both fear and admiration, and is expressed in three narratives: the demographic danger that Australia might be over-run by Asians; the 'environmental adaption benefit', the idea that Asians like other "brown-skinned" people are better adapted for the Australian climate; and economic worries that Australia might be bought up by rich Asians (Cerwonka 2004). The fear of Asia is constituted differently over time, but is still available in current debates about national identity. Fears of Asia are 'old white fears', mirroring Anglo-Celtic Australians coming to terms with the continent's geographical location, far away from the imagined homeland of England, based instead in the Pacific. As "Asia" was used as a marker of difference since the early days of the colony, contemporary attempts by governments to stress Australia's closeness to Asia functions to 'unsettle the settler state' (Cerwonka 2004). It provokes a reimagining of Australia's geographical location and place in the international landscape.

were marked by differences, played over primordial criteria. To lessen shortages in labour and capital, both needed to foster industrial growth, the White Australia policy framework was broadened by a redefinition of whiteness. This allowed migrants from Italy, Greece and Lebanon to enter the country after the 2nd World War. From the 1960s onwards, processes of decolonisation aimed to empower Indigenous people who gained citizenship in 1967. Since the 1970s, Australia became “*less white*” due to “*decolonization and economic necessity*” (Moreton-Robinson 2003:26). Kapferer and Morris analyse the “*inner tension between egalitarian thought and practice*” (Kapferer/Morris 2006:250) as the capacity of egalitarian individualism to assert the rights of the individual and the community by simultaneously denying it. Reflecting on Gellner’s ideas (2006) mentioned earlier, this form of nationhood is a product of Australia’s elite. It suppresses differences of class or gender but marks and identifies itself along racialised boundaries of inclusion/ exclusion such as “whiteness”. The cultural hegemony of Australia’s elite is maintained by mobilising “culture”, employed as a primordial given indicator of difference, in its policies of culturalism as analysed by Appadurai (1996).

The increased deterritorialised global cultural flows and capitalist reterritorialisation of institutions and regions are linked in the Australian context to the crisis of the state and the restructuring of the nation. Neo-liberal and neo-conservative demands, which arose in the 1990s for the protection of “the community”, followed the period after the Native Title Act in 1993 and the election of the conservative Howard government (1996-2007). It is marked by the appearance of the politician Pauline Hanson and her neo-nationalist One Party movement in 1996-1998. Hansonism “*emerged as a reaction to the set of historical forces that threatened the ideological terms of Anglo-Celtic dominance*” (Kapferer/Morris 2006:265). A special feature of this *nationalist egalitarian individualist discourse* is the singling out of the Indigenous population, new immigrants from Asia and the Middle East⁹ as well as refugees. Imagined as homogenous groups, they are instrumentalised to contrast an apparent fragmentation of the dominant population, exemplified in the breakup of rural communities and increased urbanisation since the 1980s (Brett 2011). Hansonism appealed to those parts of the population most affected by the capitalist reterritorialisation processes in socially and economically peripheral rural areas (Brett 2011). Hage (1998) analyses the tendency of white

9 In 2005 “riots” occurred at Sydney’s Cronulla beach. The “riots” however, took on the form of a pogrom as mostly male members of the Anglo-Celtic majority population were chasing and bashing Australians of apparent Middle Eastern descent (see Hage 2011 for a however problematic analysis).

Australians to view themselves as governing subjects of the nation, which order (public) space by placing “ethnics” in a hierarchical positioning that leaves the white¹⁰ hegemony untouched. *“Bound within a virtually inescapable dialectic of difference and similarity, egalitarian discourse of the Australian kind has as its potential not only a socio-moral hierarchialising of peoples and their practices, but also a tension towards their systematic exclusion”* (Kapferer/Morris 2006:250). *“Third World-looking people”* (Hage 1998:18) and Indigenous peoples are perceived to threaten the imagined homogeneity of the nation and therewith the equality within the logic of egalitarian individualism. *“The egalitarian state required the minimisation of racial and cultural difference”* (Kapferer/Morris 2006:265). The Indigenous Studies scholar Aileen Moreton-Robinson states that Indigenous peoples are the ‘classic other’ within Australian society (Moreton-Robinson 2003; see also Hage 1998). Their positioning within the national space differs from those of migrants:

“In the Australian context, the sense of belonging, home and place enjoyed by the non-Indigenous subject – colonizer/migrant – is based on the dispossession of the original owners of the land and the denial of our rights under international customary law. It is a sense of belonging derived from ownership as understood within the logic of capital; and it mobilizes the legend of the pioneer, ‘the battler’, in its self-legitimization. Against this stands the Indigenous sense of belonging, home and place in its incommensurable difference” (Moreton-Robinson 2003:23).

Indigenous peoples received no government legitimacy in the formation period of the nation-state, as *terra nullius* neither acknowledged their institutions nor societies or engagements in land cultivation. This lack of legal and official recognition denied the Indigenous population their capacity to negotiate *their own terms of existence* within the state (Kapferer/Morris 2006), leaving them at the edge of the nation’s consciousness (Brett 2011). In fact, Indigenous peoples were subsumed under “nature”: they were seen as a part of the strangely twisted environment (Carter 1987).

The “scientific” search for social laws of society by British structural-functionalism of Radcliffe-Brown’s branch, as previously described, further enforced a construction of Indigenous Australians as Other. Radcliffe-Brown argued against evolutionist assumptions that placed hunter-gatherer societies in the first stadium of an imagined linear evolutionary progress that creates a temporal and cultural distance between the primitive Other and the modern Self (Fabian 1983). In contrast, Radcliffe-Brown aimed to demonstrate that Indigenous Australians are not “uncivilised” and “chaotic” but do have a social structure.

¹⁰ Whiteness is understood as outlined by Ruth Frankenberg (1993): *“a position from which white people view the world, as a privileged structural location and a set of cultural practices”* (Moreton-Robinson 2003:38).

Conversely, he thereby introduced the structural-functionalist epistemology into Australian anthropology's framework of enquiring human diversity. This fostered the dichotomy between settler-migrants "society" and the Indigenous peoples "culture" as two incommensurable "complex wholes" in the nation-building process, a legacy still present in Australian anthropology (Maddock 2012; Hinkson 2010).

These arguments can be situated within an ongoing discourse about similarity and difference, of which historic policies of protectionism such as the White Australia framework are but a part. The egalitarian ethos that historically has been at the centre of Australian nationalism remains in its central position (Kapferer/Morris 2006). However, it is actualised by contemporary shifts that members of the Anglo-Celtic elite perceive as threats to their cultural hegemony¹¹. Policies that address the disadvantaged situation of Indigenous people such as the Native Title legislation as well as ethnic minority rights "*created a sense among the 'silent' and hitherto non-ethnically marked majority population that they were the victims of inequalitarian programmes*" (Kapferer/Morris 2006:263). Here, the period of One Nation marks a shift in nationalist egalitarian thought and practice: the descendants of the first diaspora in Australia developed a sense of being the majority population and started to imagine, define and mark themselves as Anglo-Celtic. This had not been formulated so clearly in pre-Hanson years. "*The cultural turn among majority Australians was one influence on the displacement of difficulties driven in global political and economic transformations onto populations whose existence was conceived to subvert or threaten the social, moral and now consciously realised cultural hegemony of majority Australians*" (Kapferer/Morris 2006:264). This process of an increasing cultural self-awareness of society's structural elite who implements its ideas about nationhood at the level of the state (Appadurai 1996; Gellner 2006) is recognised as an identity formation process that constructs and defines the Self by negating the Other. "*Thus, implicit in egalitarianism is that the ideals of egalitarian unity are most likely to be achieved where there are similarities in essence, for example, in cultural orientations and practice, rather than where there are marked differences*" (Kapferer/Morris 2006:263). Whereas the essential and racialised sign of inclusion to the nation was "whiteness", in the post-Hanson period the marker is termed "Anglo-Celtic". Culture, defined

11 Here "*Hansonism realised an inherent contradiction at the heart of Australian nationalism: that its egalitarianism underpinned the social and political dominance of the majority population [...] that assumed the superiority of its values. This assumption was problematised in the circumstances both of the new Aboriginal policies (especially after Mabo and Wik High Court decisions that overruled the doctrine of terra nullius) and in the context of multiculturalism and increased immigration from Asia*" (Kapferer/Morris 2006:263).

by Appadurai as “*the process of naturalizing a subset of differences that have been mobilized to articulate group identity*” (Appadurai 1996:14-15) is employed in identity politics at the level of the nation-state. In the context of increasingly deterritorialised global cultural flows, national elites are “*concerned with encompassing their ethnic diversities into fixed and closed sets of cultural categories to which individuals are often assigned forcibly*” (Appadurai 1996:15). This culturalism is the attempt by the nation-state’s elites to naturalise sets of differences that mobilise group identities to ease the governance of the thereby differentiated and homogenised demographics. This naturalisation and not mobility itself enlarges the potential for conflict.

In the following section I briefly summarise the historical development of how the Anglo-Celtic ethnic group imagined itself by constructing, devaluating and negating the Other. I will focus on the Indigenous population of Australia, as it is more relevant to my rurally-based case study than, for example, Asian immigration; however, this should not be taken to mean that Indigenous Australians are the only Other relevant to the construction of white Australian identity (Hage 1998). Furthermore, I extend the term reterritorialisation, to capture not only institutional and regional restructuring but also the restructuring of the subject’s place within the nation. These processes can be analysed as postcolonialising reterritorialisation, where not only the material goods of society but also the placement within the nation’s imaginary are redistributed and reterritorialised.

2.3.2. Indigenous Land Rights: Postcolonialising Reterritorialisation

The process of becoming a post-colonial nation implies the confronting and reworking of persistent ideas about superiority of the Self vs. inferiority of the Other. The post-colonial moment gives rise to feelings of guilt vis-à-vis collective memories of theft and murder, suscitating a psychological response to the denial of the bloody colonial past (Gibson 2002).

The Native Title Act challenges Anglo-Celtic migrants belonging to Australia as it questions the legitimacy of white settlement. The British colonial administration worked actively to create a rationale for the dispossession of Indigenous peoples, which is expressed in the legal fiction of *terra nullius*: this persistent myth of a *land inhabited by no one* goes back to the writing of the Swiss philosopher and jurist Emerich de Vattel (1714-1767) and his work “*Law of Nations, or the Principles of Natural Law*” (1758) and the thinking of the English philosopher John Locke (1632-1704). Their reasoning provided the moral basis on which

European Empires claimed land. De Vattel stresses the will of a group of people to form a political society and to establish public authority in the territory, the “*whole space over which a nation extends its government*” (De Vattel [1758] 2008)¹². Locke argued that “the savages” had done nothing to cultivate and exploit the land, that they neither had unifying structures nor an established public authority; hence the land could not be regarded as their property. By contrast, the European monarchies intended to establish order to exploit the land. Therefore the symbolic possession of hoisting the king’s flag was seen as a valid and legal act by which existing people became subjects of the crown. These arguments of course are ethnocentric, racist and white supremacist fantasies that do not correspond to reality. They say nothing about Indigenous peoples’ life in 1788¹³, but a lot about the European enlightenment.

The legal fiction was only overpowered by the High Court Mabo decision in 1992¹⁴ that rejected the traditional doctrine of Australia being *terra nullius* at the time the Crown claimed sovereignty. The institutionalising of the nation-state structure in 1901 did not develop a new legitimacy for settler-migrants’ being in Australia, but established its sovereignty by maintaining the colonial claim to land morally and legally enabled by *terra nullius*. Mabo’s claim to his ancestral land exposed the British understanding that Indigenous people had no history of cultivating the land before European contact as a fictional construction of dominion. This new understanding of the historical development of the Australian nation created insecurities and feelings of deterritorialisation among settler-migrants, by “*unsettling the settler state’s moral and legal claims to the Australian continent*” (Cerwonka 2004:11). Moreton-Robinson (2003) explains the reason for this unsettling through the relation between dispossession/theft and belonging legitimised by *terra nullius*. The moment *terra nullius* is deconstructed as a tool of dominion, the legitimacy of the Anglo-Celtic diaspora’s very being in place is damaged. “*The non-Indigenous sense of belonging is inextricably tied to this original theft: through the fiction of Terra Nullius the migrant has been able to claim the right*

12 http://oll.libertyfund.org/?option=com_staticxt&staticfile=show.php%3Ftitle=2246 (accessed 30 Aug 2012).

13 See Gammage (2011) for an extra-ordinary detailed account of the sophisticated practices of land cultivation by Indigenous peoples over the entire Australian continent and surrounding islands.

14 The Meriam people, notably Eddie Mabo as the common law only recognises individuals not groups, maintained that they had Native Title rights over the Murray Islands. They began legal proceedings (Mabo 1) as the Queensland Government passed the Coast Islands Declaratory Act 1985 - an attempt to extinguish any rights and interests that the Meriam people may have had before its enactment. However, the Murray Islanders argued that the 1985 Queensland Act denied their right to own property and equality before the law. By a majority of 4-3, the High Court of Australia held that the Queensland Coast Islands Declaratory Act was invalid, because it was inconsistent with the Racial Discrimination Act of 1975. The High Court enabled the Meriam People to proceed with their claim (Mabo 2) and judged in June 1992 by a majority of 6-1 that they were entitled to the possession, use, occupation and enjoyment of (most of) the land of the Murray Islands.

to live in our land. This right is one of fundamental benefits white British migrants derived from dispossession” (Moreton-Robinson 2003:25).

The High Court decision prompted Keating’s government (1991-1996) to craft legislation to define parameters for the land rights of Indigenous peoples. The Native Title Act came into being in 1993. The Keating government also issued an official public acknowledgement of the genocide committed against Aboriginal people (Cerwonka 2004; Tatz 1999). That act of recognition, however, was not realised as the Howard Liberal/National government (1996-2007) came to power¹⁵.

The Native Title Act’s significant limitation is its ineffectiveness concerning pastoral leasehold properties, which account for approximately 40% of Australia’s land area. *“Pastoral leases have their origins in NSW and were developed to control the unauthorised use of land for grazing by squatters. The system was formalised by 1847 and [...] gave the lessees the right to engage in pastoral activities, or be compensated”* (Damania 1998:174). The question of whether statutory leases extinguish Native Title rights was decided in the Wik ruling in 1996. The High Court found that pastoral leases do not bestow rights of exclusive possession on the leaseholder therefore Native Title could co-exist. However, *“[e]xisting pastoral leases, and the rights granted under them, are valid. In cases where the rights of the pastoralist and native title holders conflict, the rights of the pastoralists prevail over native title rights”* (Damania 1998:173).

Prime Minister Howard refused to give an official apology to Indigenous Australians: he argued that, instead of stressing the negative aspects of the past one should emphasise the good and relaxed Australian way of life everybody could enjoy in the present (Cerwonka 2004). He further created a 10-point plan to decrease the power of the Mabo and Wik decision. Therewith, *“[t]he compromises made by Indigenous representatives to reach agreement on the Native Title Act 1993 have been seriously undermined by the passing of the Native Title Amendment Act 1998, which was implemented with no consultation with the Indigenous peoples”* (Behrendt 2002:1). During the 1990s settler-migrants’ fears over loss of land were fuelled by agendas of pastoralists and mining representatives (Cerwonka 2004; Gelder/Jacobs 1998). Fears reached a climax in the “Mabo Hysteria” that led to widespread bulldozing of Indigenous sites in rural areas.

¹⁵ The Howard government revoked many reforms to Indigenous Affairs issued by the previous Hawke (1983-1991) and Keating Labor governments, mainly in four key areas: self-determination, reconciliation, native title and the stolen generations (Gunstone 2008).

Gelder and Jacobs (1998) provide a discourse-analysis of Indigenous claims for sacred land in the national public sphere and therewith an example of how redistributional processes of belonging and ownership are discussed within that sphere. In a similar vein to Cerwonka (2004), they regard Indigenous land claims as an uprooting element of Anglo-Celtic Australians' national identity: "*We take indigenous claims for sacred sites and sacred objects over the last twenty years as crucial in the recasting of Australia's sense of itself*" (Gelder/Jacobs 1998:xi). In their deconstruction of the post-colonial narrative unfolding in the wake of the Mabo and Wik court rulings, Gelder and Jacobs state that especially for pastoralists and mining company representatives, the rejection of *terra nullius* was perceived as a loss. During the period of the "Mabo Hysteria" an elite of powerful pastoralists, members of the Anglo-Celtic majority, represented themselves as a threatened minority under pressure while accusing Indigenous Australians of being expansionists (Gelder/Jacobs 1998). They argued that the Indigenous population would, if compared to the majority, gain too much. The legal academic Larissa Behrendt (2002) analyses contemporary perceptions of the Mabo ruling as the following:

"Aboriginal people, in getting recognition of a property right, are seen as gaining something rather than having recognised something that already exists and should be protected. Aboriginal property interests are seen as a 'special right'. Aboriginal property interests are seen as threatening the interests of white property owners. The two cannot coexist" (2002:5).

Pastoralists demanded a new legal framework that transformed their leasehold land into freehold property; they called for "certainty". Properties with freehold status are usually held by family farmers and cannot be claimed under Native Title legislation.

Drawing on Freud, Gelder and Jacobs analyse these debates in terms of the *uncanny* effect they inherit. The uncanny indicates the disturbing experience of unfamiliar familiarity, of simultaneously being and not being at home, of being in and out of place. Gelder and Jacobs relate these feelings of defamiliarisation to the post-colonial moment that renegotiates spheres of belonging within the nation's space. Questions of coexistence are deeply geographical and negotiate being-together-in-place (Howitt 2006:49). However, the debate does not have the actual material consequence of a widespread redistribution of land ownership: from 1993 to 2011 approximately 1,300 land claims were lodged, but Native Title was only granted in 121 instances (Turnbull 2012). As most Indigenous peoples do not have land-rights or legal ownership over their sacred sites, Moreton-Robinson (2003) criticises Gelder and Jacobs for privileging the semantic and metaphorical over the empirical and substantive. In consequence it appears legitimate to represent Australia as post-colonial. Instead, the apparent

incorporation of “the sacred” within the national imaginary is viewed as a “*sentiment of belonging [that] is furthered through white possession of the ‘Indigenous sacred’ as well as Indigenous lands. This is a problematic view of postcolonialism for it rests on the premise that the Indigenous population and white Australia have equal access to symbolic and material power*” (Moreton-Robinson 2003:30). In contrast, Moreton-Robinson defines the current condition of Australian society as *postcolonialising* to stress the processual character of becoming. Moreton-Robinson distinguishes the Australian context from other societies such as India, Malaysia or Algeria, where the differing specificities of the colonial experience are theorised within post-colonial studies. “*These nations do not have a dominant white settler population. In Australia the colonials did not go home and ‘postcolonial’ remains based on whiteness*” (Moreton-Robinson 2003:30). The term postcolonialising stresses not only the Australian particularity of the historical experience of colonisation, but also emphasises that “*Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples are situated in relation to (post)colonization in radically different ways – ways that cannot be made into sameness*” (Moreton-Robinson 2003:30).

In many ways the discourse of *terra nullius* continues today, as the settler-nation-state needs to reframe the legitimacy of its claim to territory. Drawing on Gelder and Jakobs as well as Moreton-Robinson, I therefore define the current processes of Australian reterritorialisation as postcolonialising: the post-colonial is a project in the state of becoming rather than an existing actuality. The uncanny marks the processes by which the settler-nation-state reframes its legitimacy to the territory, which is the Australian continent. The threatening dimension of this form of reterritorialisation is not the actual loss of land to Indigenous peoples, but the questioning of settler descendants very being-in-place.

An example of the threatening dimension of being questioned in this manner are the “History Wars”¹⁶, an ongoing public debate over the interpretation of British colonisation and the development of the Australian nation. The debate reflects the difficulties of how to deal with the colonial past, and how to interpret and establish a chronological order of events and its (violent) characteristics in the establishment of the nation (Macintyre/Clark 2003).

¹⁶ Some of the key publications related and referred to as „History Wars“ are the following: „After the Dreaming“ (1968) by W.E.H. Stanner; „The Destruction of Aboriginal Society“ (1970) by C.D. Rowley; „The Other Side of the Frontier“ (1981) by Henry Reynolds; „The Aboriginal Tasmanians“ (1981) by Lyndall Ryan; the publications by Keith Windschuttle such as „The Fabrication of Aboriginal History: Volume One: Van Diemen's Land 1803-1847“ (2002), The White Australia Policy, (2004), “The Fabrication of Aboriginal History: Volume Three: The Stolen Generations 1881-2008”; and „The History Wars“ (2003) by Stuart Macintyre and Anna Clark among others.

In a simplified manner, two lines of arguments can be distilled. The first string of arguments represents settler – Indigenous relations marked by minor conflicts. It describes events not underpinned by racist or malicious policies. Furthermore, voices with the explicit aim to protect the ‘reputation of the nation’ guided by a white supremacist ideology accuse especially critical scholars of *treason* and aim to damage their reputation in the public sphere by avenues provided by the media (Macintyre/Clark 2003). The second line of arguments describes the settlement of Australia as *invasion* or *conquest* marked by violent conflicts at the frontier in forms of *warfare* between the British settler-migrants and Indigenous peoples, involving frequent and significant *massacres*. It describes Indigenous people not as passive but as actively engaged in the *defence* of their territories, i.e. by tactics of *guerrilla warfare*. Some authors describe the situation as a *war of extermination* and *genocide* in consequence of British imperialism and colonialism (Tatz 1999).

The “History Wars” concern not only discussions about Australia’s national identity in the post-Mabo era, but also challenge the methodological nationalism of historians. It questions the biases active in researching and writing history, the hierarchising of written over oral sources and the implicitly or explicitly stated political agendas of those who interpret them. Usages of terms such as *war* or *invasion* mark a standpoint in political discussions, so does the estimation of statistics concerning the density of the Indigenous population prior to British settlement: authors who stress a sparse Indigenous population prior to colonisation might not see the need to discuss violent practices of extermination. By contrast, a high Indigenous population leads to questioning the reasons for their decline, which eventually leads to debates about colonial settlement practices¹⁷.

Although Prime Minister Kevin Rudd (2007-2010) reduced some of the consequences of Howard’s influence, the amendments passed in 1998 still provide the state with the power to deny Indigenous Australians the right to directly negotiate with the representatives of mining or infrastructure projects on their land (Cerwonka 2004). Sovereignty is reserved for the state. The Native Title Act has further limitations as it does not deliver a legal frame for Indigenous peoples to claim land, where they have been forced off their territory and pushed into reservations: they have to prove a continuous connection to the land. Claims have to be preconditioned by sets of arguments, sources and evidence accepted by the Australian state. The court prefers written data over oral histories and demands any land claims to be supported

¹⁷ Reynolds (1981) and other historians estimate that 20,000 Indigenous people were killed in *direct* frontier violence, compared to approximately 3000 settlers.

by documents written by explorers, public servants, historians, lawyers, anthropologists etc. *“According to this regime it is Indigenous people that do not belong anywhere unless they can prove their title according to the criteria established by the state”* (Moreton-Robinson 2003:36). For Moreton-Robinson *“[t]he nation state’s legal land-rights regime is still premised on the legal fiction of Terra Nullius”* (Moreton-Robinson 2003:35). Although Indigenous Australians are the only groups of people who have not gone through a recent migrancy experience, the author suggests *“we have in effect become trespassers in our own land until we prove our Native Title”* (Moreton-Robinson 2003:36). The formal apology for past wrongs inflicted on Indigenous peoples was stated on the 13th of February 2008, by the newly elected Labour government under PM Kevin Rudd. The original document is on display in the Australian Museum in Sydney, which is famous for its collections of natural history and “indigenous cultures”¹⁸.

2.3.3. Farmers’ Marginalisation: Environmental-Economic Struggles

Agriculture and pastoralism enjoy the special attention of the nation: early settlers, squatters and explorers are the community’s heroes due to their role in ‘conquering’ nature in the days of white settlement. They explored and domesticated – cultivated – the unknown continent and built the affluent modern nation *despite* the harsh conditions of nature. Farming viewed as a spatial practice created the white nation according to its foundational myth of *terra nullius* (Moreton-Robinson 2003). However, family farmers’ positioning differs from those of big landowning pastoralists (Juan 2010). Farming is no longer the backbone of Australia’s economy and is subjected to neoliberal pressures, particularly in the current era of global capitalism and its processes of regional reterritorialisation as indicated by Brenner (1999). The family farmer as a signifier of the nation is in the process of being replaced with less burdened symbols, neither associated with the colonial past nor with the future of an extreme changing climate. Kapferer and Morris (2006) exemplify the ideology of individualist egalitarianism in the analysis of two developments in Australian nationalist imaginaries and practice: the ‘pioneer legend’ and the ‘Australian tradition’.

“The pioneer legend depicts the pastoral pioneer as the hero in a battle with nature in which individual perseverance and effort overcome hardship. As Hirst has put it, the pioneer legend is the core element in Australian nationalism as it deals, ‘in an heroic way with the central

¹⁸ <http://australianmuseum.net.au/> (accessed at 30 Aug 2012).

experience of European settlement in Australia: the taming of the new environment to man's use ... Their enemies are drought, flood, fire, sometimes Aborigines... '(1978: 316). Not only does the pioneer 'show the way for following generations', but also gives historical witness to the egalitarianism and camaraderie that emerged across class lines between owners and workers in collaboration against the hardships of an unfamiliar and hostile Australian environment. 'Pioneer' largely refers to the smallholder, who developed the land and shared the early hardships with his workers. The 'bush' is more than an escape from unsatisfying society: it is the ideal community central to the reproduction of a national subjectivity and differentiated from class- and conflict-ridden city and society" (Kapferer/Morris 2006: 253).

The 'Australian tradition' is linked to the origin of labour and union movements in the country as the bush is depicted as the early site of workers' struggle. The White Australia policy had roots in the rural labour movement as it was viewed to protect workers' interests and maintain their homogeneity. Both narratives, the pioneer legend and the Australian tradition, are firmly grounded in the environment of 'the bush' of rural Australia and display the opposition between the state associated with the city and the people associated with countryside, that is "real" Australia (Brett 2011). 'The bush' is a complex heterogeneous historical category in the national imaginary: it is not reproduced as an idyllic peaceful refuge in nature, but instead it is perceived as a place where one is confronted with the hardships of the environment. 'The bush', however, had simultaneously a liberating potential, a space where convicts could escape subordination and enslavement by the authorities. One could escape the government's repression and experience mutual help and mateship (Kapferer/Morris 2006). This is well exemplified by the romanticisation of bushrangers, such as Ned Kelly. Bush ideologies not only persisted because country people migrated to the city, but because these sentiments encompass characterisations of urban experiences. Hardships are integral to experiences of modernism - that is, industrialisation and urbanisation: personal loneliness and the wilderness experienced in the bush translate into forms of individual alienation in the city (Kapferer/Morris 2006). Rural Australia is staged as the primary scene to reproduce individualist egalitarianism and the support of values such as citizen service and mutual help in times of crisis¹⁹.

The political scientist Judith Brett (2011) analyses the history of the relationship between city and countryside in Australia, how it shaped the political institutions and political culture as well as family farmers' decline of influence from the 1980s onwards. The countryside

¹⁹ The countryside-city divide is a general feature of northern European national traditions within a wider class of nationalisms. Northern and central European nationalisms appeal to the countryside as the central area of "the nation's good life". By contrast, Mediterranean nationalism emerged out of its Roman legacy. This tradition appeals to the city as the locus of its ideal good life (Cole/Wolf 1999).

provided the city with basal resources and therefore needed to be compensated and supported for the costs of remoteness and sparse settlement. These premises were anchored in Australian politics in the two decades after Federation and were in place till the 1970s and 1980s. Brett indicates that Australia's Indigenous population was not included in the agreement. Implicitly, Brett shows that the value of *fair share* follows distinct lines of exclusion. It only applies to members of the Anglo-Celtic community and is encompassed in the promise of Federation: "*A nation for a continent [...]: a political community claiming and inhabiting its territory, with its citizens enjoying an equality of rights as members of a modern democracy*" (Brett 2011:19). To adjust to this goal, there were built in mechanisms within the political system combined with a socio-economic protectionism. Brett analyses three arguments with which representatives of the countryside reasoned for the support of the agents in this locality:

"First, Australian exports were almost entirely rural, with the economy riding on the sheep's back until at least the 1950s. Second, to be a nation and defend its claim to the continent, Australia needed to fill up its empty spaces with people who were prepared to live away from the comfort and convenience of cities. And third, country people made a larger contribution to the nation's distinctive and characteristic virtues than city dwellers" (Brett 2011:26).

The first argument is about the economic power based on rural production. Australia was one of the wealthiest countries in the 19th century, mainly because of the export of fine wool. The rural based economy generated jobs in the cities, the gateways to the international market. The protection of the industry provided jobs and was regarded as a nation-building strategy. The second argument displays the need to fill up the vast landmass with white migrants, a guiding principle in Australian policies. One reason for this was the uncomfortable awareness of being a small population, if compared to the Asian countries in the north (Cerwonka 2004). Here, the white fear that the nation would not be able to defend its territory against the 'Yellow Peril' was omnipresent, especially after the two World Wars (Brett 2011). To reach dense settlement a range of expansive demographic policies was implemented. Many of the new small landholders, enabled by Soldier Settler Schemes after each World War, gave up quickly as they lacked sufficient amounts of land and capital. Debates arose on whether Australia's geography could sustain intense farming and close settlement, but those voices were deemed "*unpatriotic*" and "*determinist*" (Brett 2011:30). Decentralisation was sustained until the 1950s and proponents argued that "[w]ithout such a policy Australia will cease to be a nation, and will become a collection of City-States perched precariously round the edge of a de-populated bread bowl" (Brett 2011:29). However, the policies introduced after the 2nd

World War supported the modernisation of the agricultural sector to render production more efficient, thus less people were needed to work the land.

The third argument for the special positioning of the rural population in the Australian nation is based on a set of agrarianism beliefs, suggesting “*that rural life is more natural and virtuous than city life; that everyone depends on food produced by farmers; and that farmers are particularly hard-working and independent people and so more morally worthy than many city dwellers*” (Brett 2011:32). Agrarianism includes the assumption that it is “*the country rather than the city [...] where one looked for the true face of the nation*” (Brett 2011:32).

After the 2nd World War Australia’s nation-building strategy shifted its focus from the countryside to the city and from agriculture to industrialisation. Although the agricultural sector was flourishing, its general proportion in the national economy declined. After the 1960s artificial fibres reduced the price for wool and minerals replaced the former leading export commodity. With the declining importance of the modernising agricultural sector in the international market, the numbers of the rural population also plummeted. Given the transitory character of mining, the industry does not provide the same longevity as farming as it is not bound to permanent settlement. Unemployment and inflation led to an Australia-wide recession in the 1980s. The modernisation program, implemented by the Labour party, opened up and restructured the Australian economy. One of the key arguments was that there were too many small farms, although this was the result of earlier policies. To increase agriculture’s contribution to the national income, “unviable” small farms were recommended to “*exit the industry*”, to “*get big or get out*” (Brett 2011: 49). As a result many farmers borrowed heavily to expand the size of their middle ranged holdings and got hit hard by the increase of interest rates in the 1980s and 1990s. “*Neoliberalism treated farms as businesses, and farmers as business owners and entrepreneurs. Farmers were told they were personally responsible for their farm’s viability, and consequently its failure*” (Brett 2011: 49). This new attitude is mirrored in the redefinition of drought in 1992; it is no longer viewed as a natural disaster that farmers need compensation for, but a risk in need of appropriate management strategies. Farmers who were overpowered by devastating dry years were thus no longer perceived as “heroic battlers of nature” but as bad managers (Juan 2010). Suicide rates in Australia have been highest among the rural population (Brett 2011).

The rationalisation since the 1980s and 1990s led to a restructuring of the government service delivery sector. This effected the rural population in two main ways: the waning of basic

public services led to a lack of access to bank foyers, post offices, hospitals, schools etc. in small towns. The second effect of the push for centralisation was the overall loss of jobs. The support Hanson received in rural Australia is linked to the fact “*that from the 1980s policies of deregulation had increasingly led to impoverishment in rural areas and small towns and growing migration from them to the cities*” (Kapferer/Morris 2006:261). The decline of public services in rural areas and small towns as well as the privatisation of essential government services generated fears of the loss of status while emphasising the perception of the decline of the rural population. Hansonism was an expression “*of critical shifts in the social order*” and voiced the “*perceived threat to the dominance of the Anglo-Celtic population in whose interests an egalitarian nationalism had largely worked (and still does)*” (Kapferer/ Morris 2006:261). Farming as a spatial practice not only created the national territory by cultivating its harsh and wild nature into agricultural land, but also turned settler-migrants into key subjects of the nation. This positionality is altering in times of globalisation that effect the postcolonialising processes in the Australian nation.

3. Into the Field & Yards: Case Studies from Little River

The case studies from my field research are arranged in three chapters, each divided in three sections. The first chapter provides an insight into the historic establishment and contemporary management of farms as places, relevant for farmers today. I introduce you to the family farmers I have met as well as their ancestors. Thereby processes of continuity and change are revealed and the entanglement between places and biographies outlined. The second chapter aims to give you an insight into differences among community members, economic constraints they negotiate and pressures active in the restructuring rural community. The third chapter engages with imaginings of temporality, how the colonial past is narrated and the future for agricultural endeavours is envisioned. I thereby hope to clarify conditions of the present, when I elaborate the symbol of family farms as anchors in space and time.

3.1. The Establishment & Management of Place: British Farming Systems

In this first chapter of my empirical encounter, I provide an introduction to the contradicting forces family farmers in Little River are entangled. In particular, the differing narratives of the Lee family's past in Australia demonstrate the construction of belonging to place, and suggest how understandings of history and farmers' labour, understood as spatial everyday practices, are connected to the farm as a home. Farmers' interpretations of the family history not only provide an insight into the Australian colonial story but also indicate the symbolic meaning of farms as places today. The stories surrounding William Lee, the first Australian ancestor of the farmers I met and worked with in Little River, is an example of this. His historic achievement in his descendants view is the symbolic and material establishment of the place they belong to. I start with a sketch through time that offers a perspective on the establishment of a network of stations in the 19th century by the practice of land squatting. I outline the relation between frontier violence and the emergence of pastoral tenure in Australia by tracing William Lee's involvement in the politics of the time²⁰. I continue with the arrival story, taking place in the 1950s of the English born mother of one of my informants. Her observations of cultural similarities and differences between Australia and England provide an impression of station life from the 1950s onwards. Fragments of the stations William Lee established in the first half of the 19th century are still in family ownership. In the second section you will meet the descendants of William Lee. I describe the changing ownership relations over time by summarising the two split ups of the family holding that occurred since my key informants took over the management of their farms. Short biographical extracts of farmers' life aim to provide background information to embed the processes of increased social change that occurs in rural Australia. I conclude the first chapter by describing farming systems, entangled between their English heritage and the need to adapt to Australian climate conditions. This field of tension is further sharpened by economic constraints that contradict the requirements for developing environmentally sustainable practices of agriculture. Both, the historical legacies as well as new challenges like the environmental and economic constraints make it difficult nowadays for family farmers to determine their 'place' in Australian society. To understand the historical rootedness of their struggle, it is necessary to

20 Due to the limitations of a magisterial thesis, I cannot include exciting historical sources which I only have begun to process, such as newspaper articles from the early days of the colony, all digitalised by the National Library of Australia (<http://trove.nla.gov.au>), the historical records of the privately owned Lee Family Archive, as well as the works of the historian Ida Lee, published at the very beginning of the 20th century.

go back in time, when the places that are important for farmers today were framed and named by settler-migrants.

3.1.1. Rural Squattocracy: The Emergence of Pastoral Tenure in NSW

In 1770 James Cook arrived on the Australian east coast in his ship HM Barque Endeavour. He claimed the east coast on 22 August 1770 under instruction from King George III of England, naming eastern Australia 'New South Wales'. The 1st Fleet arrived at Botany Bay in January 1788. Under the command of Captain Arthur Phillip 11 ships brought around 1,350 convicts and crewmembers to establish the first British Colony in Australia. As Botany Bay was regarded unsuitable for settlement, the colony moved north landing at Sydney Cove on 26 January 1788²¹. Governor Phillip formally proclaimed the colony on 7 February 1788 at Sydney. The 1st Fleet struggled to survive. Supplies were scarce and the soil around Sydney Cove was regarded to be unfertile for settlers' farming practices. The first farms developed 25 km upstream to the west, in what became to be known as Parramatta. Nevertheless, the settlement depended on trading food with local Indigenous peoples. The 2nd Fleet, known as the 'Death Fleet', arrived in 1790 and provided food and supplies for the starving first arrivals. 278 of the convicts and crewmembers died on the second voyage (compared to 48 persons on the 1st Fleet). The settlement concentrated in today's Sydney region and was mainly a male endeavour as there were around four times more men than women²². In total 160,000 prisoners were shipped off to Australia. The penal colony lasted for approximately 60 years in the areas of major settlement. It ended in 1840 in NSW and in 1852 in Van Diemen's Land, which became a colony in 1825. Free immigrants founded Western Australia in 1830. South Australia became a colony in 1836. The economic development included the expansion of agriculture, i.e. Van Diemen's Land started to export grain to NSW in 1815. Roads, bridges, government buildings and other infrastructure facilities were mainly built by convict labour. In the early 19th century, enterprising colonists successfully introduced (Spanish) Merino sheep as a source of the fine wool increasingly demanded by the expanding British textile industry²³.

21 Officially named "Australia Day", this date is newly inscribed in settler-history (Fieldnotes II.,2011) and marked by celebrations. Critics call it "Invasion Day" and do not celebrate but protest.

22 <http://australia.gov.au/about-australia/australian-story/european-discovery-and-colonisation> (accessed 31 Aug 2012)

23 <http://www.nationsonline.org/oneworld/History/Australia-history.htm> (accessed 31 Aug 2012).

William Lee was born on April 1st in 1794 on Norfolk Island to Sarah Smith, an English convict of the 2nd Fleet. His sister Maria was born on the 27th August in 1796. Norfolk Island was settled in March 1788. The island, located in the Pacific Ocean between Australia, New Zealand and New Caledonia, served as a labour camp providing food and resources for Sydney²⁴. William and Maria's father most likely arrived in Australia as a convict of the 2nd fleet. The various versions of his life provide the material for family legends; they are also published in regional historical media (Roberson 1993; Pickard 1991). One story has him arriving to the Colony under the name James Lee as a marine private 1st Fleeter (Molong Historical Society 1974). Another narrative reports him as convict of the 2nd Fleet (Pickard 1991), and in a third variant William Pantony, Sarah's second husband, is described as the founding figure of the family, William Lee being his illegitimate son (Binney 2005). Sarah's life story also remains sketchy and fragmented. In one version she returns to England; in another account she dies at sea in the attempt of the journey (Molong Historical Society 1974). Most likely she died on Norfolk Island in 1804 (Pickard 1991). After the death of his mother, William sailed with his foster father William Pantony to Van Diemen's Land in 1805 (Spurway 1992). They returned to Sydney between 1809 and 1811. Later on, William Lee was placed in the care of Lieutenant William Cox at Windsor, an engineer well-known in the early days of the colony²⁵. Maria grew up in a different household and married James Bloodworth in 1812 in NSW. Lee helped Cox to build the first road from Sydney into the interior over the Blue Mountains in 1814. Family members also speculate if their ancestor joined Gregory Blaxland, William Charles Wentworth and Lieutenant William Lawson²⁶ on their inland exploration in 1813, due to his apparent knowledge of the region that lay beyond the official area of government approved settlement²⁷.

24 The population peaked at around 1,100 inhabitants. By 1814 the first settlement of the island was evicted and its inhabitants shipped back to NSW (<http://www.pitcairners.org/settlements.html> ; accessed 31 Aug 2012).

25 It is not known how long William remained with Cox. Lee's foster father William Pantony was murdered on the 8 May 1819, at Richmond at age 67 by Matthew Finnighan.

26 Governor Macquarie, the 5th Governor of the colony sent them inland to explore what lay behind the Blue Mountain Range. They found the great plains of the interior, well fit for grazing enterprises. Consequently, the Governor ordered the establishment of Bathurst. Blaxland, Wentworth and Lawson were foundational figures in the early phase of the settlement. Wentworth, educated in England, became a pioneer landowner, explorer and politician in Australia. He was also a lawyer and founder of the University of Sydney as well as the still published newspaper "The Australian". Lawson was one of the largest landholders in Bathurst/ the Mudgee district by 1835.

27 In 1821 William accompanied Lieut. Lawson on his first journey to Mudgee. He also joined George Cox and Richard Lewis on their journey northward and eastward of Bathurst.

William was known as Smith or Pantony and had only adopted the name Lee by 1818. Apparently William Lee managed to catch the attention of high profile men of his time²⁸. Recommended by William Cox as a suitable settler, Lee was provided with one of the first ten land grants, each of 134 acres²⁹ by Governor Macquarie, behind the Blue Mountain Range in 1818. These ten land grants in today's Kelso established Bathurst, the first inland settlement of the colony, around 200 km west of Sydney. In 1820, approximately 114 adults inhabited Bathurst; 100 men, 14 women and 15 children in 30 houses (Taussig 1976).

I asked one of William Lee's descendants which role the Australian history plays for him. A nice discussion emerged to which I return later, but he first related the Australian history to his ancestors by stating that they were probably a part of it. He regards William Lee as the founding figure of the family tree, but continued how ambivalent apparent established facts are and that they would still find out about their relations.

"We first thought that the original Lee was a First Fleeter. But we don't think he was, we think he was actually a convict and his wife definitely was a convict. And it made me think of how tough they must have been. Because if they came out in the 2nd Fleet, that was slave ships. They were paid whether they got there dead or alive. And they survived. I think that's a great testament for their toughness and their willing to go on. And [their son William Lee] eventually became part of the establishment, which is quite amazing in one generation" (Interview 15, 2011).

William Lee prospered considerably after his modest start on Kelso's river flats. Governor Brisbane increased Lee's grant to 300 acres and during the 1920s he further acquired "Capertee" as well as other holdings in the Bylong Valley. In 1821 the pioneer married Mary Dargin, a settlers' daughter from the Hawkesbury River. The Lees had seven sons and four daughters³⁰, who became known for their stud breeds³¹, their grand mansions in Bathurst and

28 In 1818, William Cox was appointed commandant to magistrate the country westwards of the Blue Mountains. Apparently he only visited Bathurst twice in his 18 months office period. The Governors in the relevant time frame are the following: Governor under King George III (1760–1820): Major-General Lachlan Macquarie (01.01.1810-01.12.1821); Governors under King George IV (1820–1830): Major-General Sir Thomas Brisbane (01.12.1821-01.12.1825), Lieutenant-General Sir Ralph Darling (19.12. 1825 -21.10.1831); Governors under King William IV (1830–1837): Major-General Sir Richard Bourke (03.12.1831-05.12.1837) Governors under Queen Victoria (1837–1901): Major Sir George Gipps (24.02.1838-11.07.1846), Lieutenant Colonel Sir Charles Augustus FitzRoy (03.08. 1846 – 01.1855). (<http://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/prod/web/common.nsf/key/HistoryofDemocracyinNSW>; accessed 31 Aug 2012).

29 Apart from William Lee, the men were George Cheshire, James and John Blackman, Richard Mills, John Abbott, John Nevill, Thomas Knite, Thomas Swanbrooke, and John Godden (Taussig 1976). Sources vary regarding the amount of land given out by the Governor, stating 50/ 100/ 134 acres, respectively (<http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/lee-william-2346>; accessed 31 Aug 2012).

30 They are: William (1822-1884, married to Annie Kite; inherited 'Rivers Creek'); John (1824-1909, married to Hannah Dargin, owner of 'Bylong'); Thomas (1826-1893, married to Fanny Eleanor Tindale); Maria (1829-1923, married to James Brady); James (1831-1921, married to Jane Mary Bloomfield and the later owner of 'Rivers Creek'); Georg (1834-1912, married to Annie's sister Emily Louisa Knite); Elizabeth (1835-1905, married to Georg Lord); Edward (1837-1888, bachelor); Henry (1830-1874, married to Kate Dargin); Eliza (died in infancy) and Mary Jane (1843-1910, married to Robert Austen).

the management of the pastoral realm, estimated by their descendants to have reached a size of 100,000 acres³² in its hey-day, stretching from Bathurst to Wellington, NSW. William Lee's pastoral holdings engaged in large scale grazing enterprises, breeding wool sheep and Shorthorn cattle. In fact "[s]o many cattle had Lee blood in them by 1870 that there was scarcely an old-fashioned Shorthorn stud in N.S.W. or Queensland that was not influenced by them" (The Farmer and Settler, 1955). William Lee is considered to be one of the pioneers who brought livestock over the Mountain Range into Australia's interior. He was thereby among the first settlers who introduced the colonial industry of pastoralism to the vast landmass of Australia. Lee built one of the first brick stone houses west of the Blue Mountains, "Bellmont" in 1828, and his sons established the grand mansions of "Leeholme", "Karralee", "Walleroi" and further acquired "Woodlands"³³. All the original Lee properties in Bathurst and Kelso are no longer in family possession.

Sources in the archives of Orange and Bathurst are quite limited, contradictory and confused. Established facts often got revised at a later stage as false or misinterpreted, mirroring more the longings, projections and the romanticism of settler descendants and their situational placement in a specific era, than empirical truths of times passed by (Pickard 1991). A fine example of this is the biography of William Lee, published in the 'Australian Men of Mark' in 1888. It states that William was born in Cumberland, England and migrated to Australia at an early age. This polished heritage might be explained by the fact that convict ancestry was looked down upon and covered up. This only changed fairly recent in the last decades or so as the wife of one of Lee's descendants pointed out.

Norma: *"Maybe it's more common here to track one's ancestors, because Australia is a settler state."* May: *"I suppose it wasn't something that anybody was interested in until 10-15 years ago, maybe? Now people actually want to write family histories and there are all those sites where you can track them. And I think access to records, wasn't that great until recently, so it wasn't easy to do it. A lot of people hid things and didn't really want to talk about it, but that has also changed. Now society is much more open so people become interested"* (Interview 4, 2011).

31 George, one of Lee's sons, also became a prominent horse breeder. "The Barb", foaled in 1863 at "Leeholme", was a thoroughbred racehorse, famed for winning the 1866 Melbourne Cup and the Sydney Cup twice. For the pedigree of this race horse and further information on Lee's horse breeding enterprise see Binney (2005).

32 100 000 acres convert to $\approx 405 \text{ km}^2$. To get a feel for Australian dimensions, the current size of NSW covers a landmass of 800 642 km^2 .

33 "Walleroi" was put down in the 20th century; contemporary "Leeholme" stands empty and falls apart, whereas "Karralee" passed out of the hands of the Lee family in the early 1930s and became a school in 1942. It currently inhabits the "The Scots School".

Despite the increasing interest in family histories, conflicting imaginations of the past as well as the unsteady ground of shifting meanings newly attributed to past practices prevail and are mirrored in the conversations I had with farmers.

Next to the war of extermination in Van Diemen's Land, today's Tasmania, the massacres in the Bathurst region are regarded as the bloodiest of the colony, which might be due to lacking official recordings. In 1824 Governor Brisbane declared martial law in the Bathurst region to "re-establish order". Settlement was only allowed in restricted areas and expansion into the land beyond prohibited, which caused dissatisfaction among the pioneers. William Lee squatted the area, which came to be known as Little River around 1820. Based 100 km apart from Kelso, fragments of the huge holding are still owned by his descendants, now in the 5th generation. The land grant of 2430 acres was not received till 1826, and the homestead "Rivers Creek" was built only after, approximately in 1831. Lee took up further stations on the Bogan, Lachlan and Castlereagh Rivers. From the mid-1820s, the occupation of Crown land without legal title became more common and due to the success of wool as an export product to England, the increased occupation of land for pastoral endeavours in cattle and sheep became lucrative business opportunities. Squatting was a widespread practice by the mid-1830s and the Colony's government shifted its policy from opposition to regulation and control. In 1836 squatters were granted grazing rights for an annual licence fee. The term 'squatter' soon referred to a person of high social prestige who occupied Crown land under a lease or license to graze livestock on a large scale. By 1840 squatters or graziers were recognized as being amongst the wealthiest men in the colony. The term indicated elevated socio-economic status of a class with a rural entrepreneurial attitude: "squattocracy" is a play on the English "aristocracy", whose lifestyle squatters dwelled in³⁴.

In July and August 1842 Lee occasioned a sharp clash between the graziers and Governor Sir George Gipps, when a public meeting of squatters at Bathurst protested against Lee being deprived of his pastoral licence for the Bogan district (Parson n.D.). The new Governor led a different course regarding the settler-Indigenous relation. The shift in policy occurred at an earlier stage, when Gipps had just arrived in the colony and was informed about the brutal slaughter of Indigenous people at the 10th June 1838, in northern NSW. The violent act came to be known as the Myall Creek Massacre.

"Despite the fact that the Myall Creek Massacre was just one of the countless massacres that took place right across the country from the earliest days of British settlement in 1788 through to 1928, it

34 http://www.sl.nsw.gov.au/discover_collections/history_nation/agriculture/life/squattocracy/index.html [accessed 28 Aug 2012]

stands alone in its historical significance. It is so significant because it is the only time in Australia's history that white men were arrested, charged and hanged for the massacre of Aborigines. Due to the fact that it was so thoroughly investigated and documented at the time, it provides irrefutable documentary evidence of not just this massacre but also of how commonplace such massacres were at the time" (www.myallcreekmassacre.com).

In the aftermath of the Myall Creek Massacre, Governor Gipps aimed to enforce the government's sovereignty in the new territory. As a case in point, Lee lost his license when his stockmen pushed beyond the limits of the official area of the colony into open country. In 1842 seven stockmen in William Lee's service were involved in a massacre of Indigenous people at the Bogan River (Parson n.d.). They had cattle driven further to the east away from the licensed area into the prohibited areas of the unknown, apparently in search of water as they were suffering from drought. The 1840s are inscribed in settler-history as the "Hungry Forties". Indigenous people attacked the party in defence of their territory. The surviving stockmen summoned the police and in revenge a massacre of Indigenous people followed.

Lee's case became prominent as the starting point of the growing dispute between the colony's squatters and Governor George Gipps. The squatters argued that Lee's stockmen were forced to abandon the licensed station due to the drought. Further they stated that Lee was not aware of the prohibited area, and that he was denied an opportunity of defence (Parson n.d.). Gipps hold Lee responsible for the unlawful action of his men and in consequence morally guilty for the slaughter. He refused either him or his son a licence for the district. "The Australian" newspaper, founded by William Wentworth, in its issue from the 26th Aug 1842 accused Gipps of failing to prove a case against Lee. Nevertheless, the Legislative Council rejected the squatters' petition for an amendment to the Crown Lands Occupation Act (Parson n.d.). One of William Lee's descendants, however, explained to me that in a further step, William Lee was represented by Wentworth in court in England. The lawyer managed to win the case and the pastoral license was re-established.

The dispute between the squatters and the government continued because the graziers demanded certainty of tenure and pre-emptive rights, which they finally gained in 1847 under Gipps' successor. Governor Charles Augustus FitzRoy acknowledged their claim for secure land tenure and distributed the most suitable land for agricultural and pastoral purposes. This formalisation of the pastoral system in 1847 laid the foundation of nowadays-pastoral tenure system in Australia (Damania 1998). Therewith, the massacre at the Bogan River and the debates and politics that followed William Lee's case mark the origin of pastoral tenure in

Australia. Thereafter, squatters prospered and their status as members of the colony's elite was legally cemented.

One of William Lee's descendants gave me a photocopy of a historical feature in the newspaper from 1964 titled "Massacre set off War of Extermination" (Daily Mirror: 18th May 1964). The article describes the events at the Bogan River from a settler perspective and through the lens of the 1960s white Australian society. However, the descendants were not aware about the relevance of Lee's case and how it relates to the foundational processes of pastoral tenure in Australia. William Lee himself was involved in local politics and became an elected member for Roxburgh in the first parliament in NSW from 1856³⁵ till 1859. At the time of his death, his estate stretched over an area of 18,509 acres³⁶. The pioneer William Lee died in November 1870, 76 years of age, leaving an ambiguous legacy.

After his death the size of William Lee's pastoral holding increased through the work and marriage policies of the second generation. William Lee's son James (*1831 Kelso – 1921 Rivers Creek) is the direct ancestor of today's farmers in Little River. He bought out his older brother William's shares to become the sole owner of "Rivers Creek". In the 1920s the Lee property "*was quite a substantial estate*" (Interview 9, 2011) and all children inherited an equal part of the family property. The holding was continually divided in every generation – and over the five generations from William Lee to his descendants today, there have been a lot of children. James had four sons as well as three daughters³⁷. His son Sidney (*1867 Rivers Creek? - 1945 Molong) built "Bellmont" in Little River in 1907 and married his second wife Isobel Bessie Black in 1915. Sidney and Isobel had three sons, Jim, Jock and Graeme³⁸ as well as a daughter, Barbara Jane. Jim and Jock are the fathers of the people running the places today. The brothers took over the management after they returned from the 2nd World War.

Jim met his wife Hazel on a ship from England to Australia, where she worked as a children's hostess. Hazel, a lovely English lady who is in her 80s now, lives in the nearest country town today, inhabited by approximately 1,500 people. I visited Hazel together with her son James,

35 A position gained over W.H. Suttor of "Brucedale." I coincidentally met the mother of the farmer who is running "Brucedale" in the 5th generation today. We started chatting at the heritage museum „Ida Trail's House“ in Bathurst. Ida Trail was one of Georg Lee's descendants.

36 valued at £41,000. Lee held properties in the County of Wellington, Lane Cove, Emu Plains, Bathurst, on the Lachlan River and O'Connell plains.

37 They are: Fleurette Eliza (1858-1926, married Percy C.M. Weston); Carolina ("Carry") Georgina (1861-1943, married WH Edmonds); Minnie Mary-Jane (1862-1944, married Frazer E. Churchill); Frederick Henry (1865-1924, married twice); Sidney William James (1867-1945); Bertram Charles (1871-1909, bachelor); Harold Charles (1873-1926, married Katie Haynes).

38 (who died young of leukaemia)

his wife and kids to spent a Sunday family afternoon together. Hazel migrated to Australia in 1954 to marry Jim and to live at the sheep station “Bellmont”. I asked her how it was to arrive in Australia in those days, how she perceived the country life, the similarities and difference between the English and the Australians she had met and how she adjusted to fit it. The following is a shortened version of our conversation.

Norma: *“And coming from England, how was it?”* Hazel: *“It was rather strange. I remember going up the big hill behind “Bellmont”, looking around: all that belongs to us. In England there would have been a village here or a church there. Anyway, Jim...he was great. He was the only reason I was here. I didn’t want to come to Australia.”* Norma: *“Did you find the culture very different?”* Hazel: *“In some ways yes and in other ways no. When I first came out here, I discovered that James’ mother - she had the same upbringing as I had. Even though we were so different, same sort of ideas. That was rather strange. Otherwise there were things that were completely different. And they are very formal, too, the Australians. More formal then sudden English.”* Norma: *“You reckon?”* Hazel: *“Yeah, they were. The way we dressed on the beach in England? Oh no, you wouldn’t do that in Australia. And also I was surprised, because the daughters-in-law, called their mother-in-law Mrs. Lee or Mrs. Somebody. I thought that was most extraordinary. Because in England you would call them...well, whatever you want to call them. I think people thought that I was very strange. I didn’t speak the same as they do, I speak Jinglish.”* Norma: *“Do you think for Australians in those days the connection to Britain was important?”* Hazel: *“Oh yes. They still called England their mother country. ‘We’re going home’, when they went there.”* Norma: *“Did you find it difficult [to fit in]?”* Hazel: *“A little, sometimes, sometimes. I was homesick, too. But you know, I was very much in love with Jim and so that came first. I figured in fairly well, I think. John Perchill for example, he was English. He never did fit in.”* Norma: *“What kind of person was he?”* Hazel: *“I suppose he was rather posh, rather aristocratic. He was a well-bred English man after all. But they weren’t used to our well-bred English men. People were nicer to me because they’ve got to be nice to me because of Jim”* (Interview 13, 2011).

The Lee family was well situated in the 1950s and the wordplay of squattocracy was still common. However, “a well-bred English man” might have let the rural graziers known that they were not equal to his kind. I asked Hazel about their social entertainment and she told me about the dinner parties they had at “Bellmont“, which “*did get a little muddy*”. The opulent meals of three courses with drinks being served before, during and after, were something Hazel could agree with. It must have been exciting for her, as she stated that “*I haven’t really done any entertaining before.*” However, the tradition of serving supper after the enormous meal in the late evening was something she found “*completely unnecessary*” and she stood up for not having it. England just went off the food rationing after the War and Hazel enjoyed the cream, butter and milk they produced at “Bellmont”, but everything had its limits. I was curious if Hazel dwelled in the Lee family history much and what it means to her, however,

she gave quite a sober perspective.

Hazel: *"I've given up the Lee family history. It's a bit hard sometimes, people ask you about various people, but I think they've given up now, more or less. I've been in here since 57 years or something and they've been my family. I can go back occasionally, not very often. I still kept in touch with my family with Christmas cards and things. So, yeah...I really felt a Lee, you know. They are half English and don't forget it."* Norma: *"Because they were one of the first families here in the district?"* Hazel: *"Yes, I am proud of that, yeah, that's right. I didn't know that, when I married Jim. I didn't marry Jim because of the prestige or whatever, I married him because I liked him. Now, there are many more people traveling and marrying people in a different culture, in a different country. But back then, there weren't many around"* (Interview 13, 2011).

Being through the migrancy experience only recently, Hazel had another encounter with what was considered to be appropriate:

Hazel: *"When I first came, that's a thing they did criticise me for. They said my tennis dress skirt was too short. I was a married woman after all. And somebody said, it's just because I had better legs than they had. It wasn't all that short. I bought it in a very good shop in London. What I would have done, I bought the shortest pair of shorts and wear them...but I didn't back then. Ridiculous. But they wanted everybody to be just like them. They were a bit insular. Now not so much, because so many people do travel. And the young do all sorts of things now, but in those days it was a little bit"* (Interview 13, 2011).

Hazel managed to fit in fairly well after all. She had four kids, ran the household with the help of a maid and a cook, and maintained a vegetable garden. A gardener cultivated "Bellmont's" luscious Cottage Garden with a hedge and English roses. Jim employed approximately five full-time workers at the time, who lived with their families in cottages on the property. The station life was busy with people stopping by and staying the night over: *"I don't think people did have a job then, really"* (Interview 13, 2011). Beside tennis games and dinner parties, the big landholders enjoyed picnics at the races, polo and holidays at Sydney's beaches. Jim and Jock used to jointly cultivate the family estate of 10,000 acres together with their sister Barbara. Barb probably did the bookkeeping and I found many ledgers engraved with her name in the family archive. The business was formally organised in the partnership Lee & Co. till the 1980s.

3.1.2. The Farming Family: Ownership Relations over Time

In this section you meet the descendants of William Lee, the owners of the medium sized farming properties of "Karra", "Rivers Creek" and "Bellmont" in Little River. I provide short

biographies of Reid, James, Dave and Helen and summarise farmers' everyday practices that simultaneously keep the business running and generate a home. These activities are connected through time by the work on the land by enfolding generations and enriched by farmers' imaginations of their family's history. Nevertheless, when Reid, James and Dave took over in the mid 1980s/early 1990s, individual ideas about how to run the property drifted apart, causing frictions and tensions within the family and their business. In the following, I describe the two break ups of the family holding that occurred in 1997 and 2010. Whereas the split up in 1997 meant a reshuffling of ownership relations, creating the three distinct properties of "Rivers Creek", "Bellmont" and "Karra", the second splitting meant the exit of a family member out of the landowning community. As I am particularly interested in the ways places hold and generate meaning and how farmers develop a sense of belonging in relation to their family's past, I will return at a later stage of my thesis to the reasons that forced John to sell his property.

Reid, born in 1957, is a calm and thoughtful man with a sharp mind and an incredible dry humour that made me burst into laughter more than once. He has an older brother, Arthur, and a sister, Bronwen. Reid went to the now closed public school Bridgewater in Little River. He continued his education in King's School in Sydney, a privileged boys' boarding school, founded in 1831 by command of King William IV of England. Reid's ancestor, William Lee's first-born son (confusingly also named William Lee) was one of King's founding pupils. Reid was not the only one to attend King's, his cousins James and Dave, as well as other sons of the big landholders in the area were also sent.

After his final year, Reid went to Western Australia for 12 months to work as a jackaroo. Jackarooing can be compared to the work of a farm hand and Reid described it as an apprenticeship for farmers, which is still a common thing to do. He also worked on a livestock-exporting ship that transported sheep to pre-revolutionary Iran (he did not leave the boat). Reid continued his education at Sydney University, studying agricultural economics. He met May at the university and they got married after they finished their Bachelor degrees in 1981. Reid started to work in a merchant bank as a future commodity broker for a while and then worked for the Department of Agriculture.

May studied agricultural economics as well and amongst other things she also worked for the Department of Agriculture after she had finished her studies. May has a rural background, but her family was not engaged in farming, instead they provided services to landholders. Her father, an agricultural scientist with a focus on sheep nutrition, had also worked for the

Department of Agriculture. May's grandfather had been a 3rd generation shearing contractor, who organised teams of shearers and coordinated their travelling between properties. May and Reid's first son was born in 1984, followed by two more kids in 1985 and 1988.³⁹

Together with his young family, Reid returned to Little River in 1985. He had been pressured by his father Jock to give up his well-paid job in the city to come back to the farm. *"Dad had been pressuring me to come home. He said things like 'If you don't come back here, I'll give it all to James' that sort of thing. 'If you don't get here by the time you are 25, you will never learn anything. Once you're 25 nobody will tell you anything.' He used to say it like that. He also said 'Don't expect you gonna get the same wage you get down there at Sydney'"* (Interview 1, 2011). Although May and Reid sacrificed a lot of income, they regarded the rural lifestyle and the prospect of raising their kids in the countryside as a good trade off.

May continued working till 1997 as a contract lecturer and course builder for agribusiness courses at the Orange Campus of the University of Sydney. Additionally, May gained her master in economics; her thesis entailed a productivity study that researched the return rates in agriculture. May only stopped working off the farm for five years but returned to wage labour in 2003, when Little River was hit by drought. Reid started to work the land under the management of his father Jock, his uncle Jim as well as his sons⁴⁰. Dave and James had already returned to the country, but were not married yet.

James is a very tall man with piercing blue eyes, a mocking humour and an empathetic understanding of and interest in people's stories. James was born in 1957 in Orange; his siblings are Dave, Julia and Charlotte. Just like his cousin Reid, James went to the Little River public school and to King's. In 1976 he enrolled in a law and arts degree at Sydney University. Although he had the notion of becoming a lawyer, James found his arts subjects much more inspiring and finished his Bachelor degree in English and History. After his university studies he came back to the farm and started to work on the place. He was not paid a wage, but enjoyed his time immensely, as there were a lot more people on the land, not only in the rural communities but also on the farm itself:

James: *"Back than there were lots of good blokes who worked here, all 2nd World War blokes of my father's generation. Really good blokes, they worked hard. Their standard of living, by today's*

39 None of the kids are interested in taking over the farm. The oldest currently writes his PhD in English literature, the second just started to work for a stock-broker, having finalised a degree in Commercial Law at Sydney University. The youngest is about to finish her law and arts degree at the Australian National University.

40 I cannot state the degree of Barbara's engagement in the management and work of the place as I only found her accountancy books and the farmers I spoke to rarely mentioned her.

standard of living, was a lot lower. Most of them had a hut like that shed over there, you know, where the dogs are. They have grown up in the Depression, they've been to the 2nd World War, and they were happy to have a job and a roof over their head, a place to bring their family up. So the expectations were very different from today. And they were all good people. They were honest and hard working and I had a lot of time for them, yeah. Yeah...I learned a lot from those blokes. We used to ride horses more then, for stock work. But also fixing stuff, welding, cementing, fencing, just general stuff, I really enjoyed it. But I wasn't hands on with running the place or doing the book-work or anything" (Interview 12, 2011).

James remembers that Barbara, Jock and Jim maintained a well running business when he was growing up: *"In those days, as a family, we were pretty wealthy, because it was wealthy times. It wasn't squandered wealth, it wasn't Mercedes cars and that kind of stuff."* Norma: *"So not that representative?"* James: *"No, but wealthy in a sense that we could afford a cook. But then later as we grew up, Mom was doing the cooking and the girl sort of doing the stuff Molly's doing now"* (Interview 12, 2011).

In the 1980s, James entertained a couple of journeys to Europe and beyond. In 1982 he went to Germany with the *Agricultural Exchange Association*, to work on a farm in Schleswig Holstein. He returned to Little River in 1983, a year after the drought, and went for another journey in 1986. This time, he financed his travelling with some lucky investments in gold. He attended a language class at the Goethe Institute in Germany and went on a trip that started in Nepal and took him to India, Pakistan, Cashmere, Iran, Syria, Jordan, Turkey and all the way via Yugoslavia and Austria to England where he visited his relatives. When he returned to Australia, James absolved a class in welding and in 1988 inscribed in an external agricultural course through Armidale University to learn about the management of agricultural businesses. Later on, James undertook a third journey to England and continental Europe. He finally returned to the farm in 1992.

The running of the farm business came along with a certain division of labour among the family members. Reid's wife May explained to me that, traditionally, *"Reid's father had done the cropping, and so Reid was expected that he would also do the cropping. And James would do the sheep and Dave would do the cattle. And those expectations weren't necessary what everybody wanted to do, so there were all those frictions"* (Interview 4, 2011). After five years, Reid, having a young family with three kids, started to get uncomfortable with the situation of running the place together with his father Jock and uncle Jim, as well as his cousins James and John:

Reid: *"I was starting to spend a lot more money than I was earning on my farm. And I could see the farm could perform a lot better, I was convinced. We started benchmarking in about 94, I think, and*

my father and uncle, both alive, and people like accountancies and stock and station agents... People like that, they piss in your pocket..." Norma: "What does that mean?" Reid: "It means they say what they think you want to hear. They don't tell you the truth. And I remember someone saying to me 'Your uncle Jim Lee has forgotten more about sheep than most people will ever know.' Sort of saying, he knew more than anyone. And I had always believed that. I had always thought they were pretty innovating. And they were; we were the first into performance recording cattle and this sort of stuff. Pretty switched on, and you know, I think it was important we were big farmers in the district, so we had a lot of land. I started this benchmarking and in the first year, just in the group around Orange, we were third from the bottom in our profitability" (Interview 1, 2011).

It came as a shock to Reid, when he realised that the family farm actually did not perform well. The family narrative describes the family as progressive, innovative and early adapters to new conditions. However, the benchmarking suggested that they had *"probably dropped 10 years behind the pace as far as running the farm is concerned"* (Interview 10, 2011). As a trained economist, Reid realised the potential of the farm:

Reid: "If you have got five million dollars worth of assets tied up in a farm, and you make 1% return on that, you are making 50.000 dollars per annum. A lot of farms, that's about what they do. If you can make that 5% per annum you are making 250.000 dollars, and you do that every year. Over ten years you have accumulated a million dollars ahead of what the other bloke has. And these are the differences. It's pretty crippling important that you perform. So anyway, that's what was driving me" (Interview 10, 2011).

Properties are formally organised, i.e. as a partnership or as company, regulating who has which claim to the land and its profits. May explained to me that the ownership patterns of the land can be organised in different legal entities: *"you can own the land as an individual, or you could own land in a company, or you can own land in a trust"* (Interview 4, 2011). The business Lee & Co. owned the land as a company, but the claims to the income were distributed by a partnership:

May: "In this business all the land was owned in a company. And they did it that way to avoid death duties; this was in the 1960s. All the kids were actually given shares in the company and they knew what their land ownership would be right from the beginning. And then the operating parts of the business, where would the income flowing in, and the costs going out and all the accounting stuff that happens, they had a partnership. And again you can have different ways of setting these up. Lee & Co., even though it is called company, it was a partnership between Jim, Jock and Bab. And then, Dave was a partner, Reid, Reid's sister, Reid's brother, all became partners, I became, everybody was... all the children were partners as well" (Interview 4, 2011).

Formally, Jock owned "Karra", Jim owned "Bellmont" and Barbara owned "Karralee". The latter two properties were named after the original homesteads in Bathurst.

May: *"Although - there was a bit of shuffling. Did Reid tell you the history of why he ended up on this land and James ended up down on "Bellmont"? [Jock] and [Jim] drew straw for who would get the homestead. At that time there was only "Bellmont", and "Karra" and a farm called "Karralee" owned by Reid's aunt [Barbara]. "The River" where Dave lives, wasn't in the farm. And they drew straws who would get "Karra" and who would get "Bellmont" and Reid's father won to get the choice. And he chose "Karra", he didn't want the old dark homestead, he didn't like house. So, that's why. They built this [cottage] and lived here till they had built ["Karra's" house in the 1950s]"* (Interview 4, 2011).

William Lee's "Rivers Creek", was always in family possession, but in the hands of a cousin of Jim. When he died "The River" was bought back by Jim, Jock and Barbara only in 1972, with all the heavy wooden English furniture and old paintings of William Lee and his wife Mary Dargin still in it. The house has a pompously featured Dining Hall, not much in use today, a Smoking Room, which happened to be my office during my stay, and a Billiard Room, which now inhabits the family archive, disused furniture and dust. I spent quite some time in the archive and while I took my field notes afterwards sitting outside, I mocked myself for being the anthropologist on the veranda.

James and Dave's father Jim strongly opposed the idea of splitting up the family holding into distinct properties. However, when he died in 1995, a lot of changes were about to happen. James had to develop a farming system with his brother and the new dynamics challenged everybody for a while to adapt. Reid pushed forward the idea of splitting up the property. As soon as everybody got used to the idea, he went into a partnership in 1997 together with his wife May and his father Jock to run "Karra", including the paddocks of former "Karralee", which they leased from the family. May gave up her job to dedicate herself fully to the modernisation project she and Reid had planned for "Karra".

When Reid's father Jock died as well in 2001, Reid and May bought out Reid's sister's share of "Karra". Bron gave them a good price, which allowed Reid to continue the farm business. Reid's brother Arthur is not interested in agriculture, however he still holds shares of "Karra" worth 600 acres, which Reid leases from him. The split up of the family farm in 1997 left May and Reid as well as James and Dave with 5000 acres, respectively. In 2005 May and Reid sold 2000 acres, to be able to buy the area of "Karralee" owned by Barbara's children instead of leasing it from them. "Karra" is now a middle-range property, consisting of 3300 acres.

Dave is a tall and husky man, born in Orange in 1961. Dave did not pursue a further education after he left King's in year nine or ten - which was not particularly his decision, although he

enjoyed being out of school. Dave stated that he was never fond of school and glad to be back on the farm, where he worked as a contractor in lamb marking and mulesing for 8-10 months. He then left Little River for a big trip to the Northern Territory and Queensland, where he worked on various properties. When he returned to Little River, he stayed for a couple of years and worked on the family farm till he left again, this time for a 15 months overseas trip to Europe and America. He did some random work on his travels, trying to engage in different businesses unrelated to agriculture, such as building, painting and whatever he came across. He finally returned to the farm in the early 1980s.

Dave had worked the land ever since, but by the end of 2010, he came under such severe pressures, which finally forced him to sell his property. The second brake up and most recent shift in property relations occurred in 2010 after the long period of drought in the first decade of the 2000s. Dave sold “Rivers Creek” to James and his wife Helen, the owners of “Bellmont”. Although Dave and Bella as well as their three young kids, still live at “The River”, they neither work the land nor do they have any production animals left. Their dogs stroll over the place and Dave maintains his racehorses, which, however, are not in training. The breeding of racehorses is an old Lee family tradition, but Dave mainly does contract work for other farmers now, such as lamb marking. Bella’s family has a farming background as well, and her two brothers manage a cattle feedlot in Northern NSW. Bella herself is not particularly interested in agriculture and she works as a part time teacher in a secondary school. Nannies, mostly female backpackers, often stay for a couple of weeks at “Rivers Creek” to help Bella with the kids and the household.

In this new constellation of ownership relations, James and Helen maintain 2500 acres of “Bellmont” as well as the 2500 acres of “Rivers Creek”. In addition, Helen bought another paddock of 900 acres in 2010, leaving this bunch of the family with 5900 acres of land. James and Helen were only able to buy “Rivers Creek” because Helen sold up her farm in Wellington, which she had inherited from her parents. Although she had to buy out her sister, she managed to maintain her property to continue her Angus cattle stud breed.

Helen is a short but resolute woman with long curly black hair, a sharp tongue and an enquiring mind. She was born in 1963 in Campsie, on the mid North Coast of NSW, into a farming family with a strong interest in cattle and a love for the natural sciences, especially geology. After the cattle crash in the 1970s the family moved to Wellington, NSW, some 50 km north of Little River to be able to diversify their farming enterprise. After school, Helen went for eight months to Minnesota (US) and for four months to England. When she returned

to Australia, she started a four years science degree in Botany. Originally, she planned to continue her education with a PhD, but her supervisor was on sabbatical leave and the botanist reorganised her plans. She worked for the Department of Agriculture but loathed it, and when she came back to the farm, the 22 year old decided that this is what she prefers to do.

Helen: *"It wasn't a difficult decision at all. It seemed to be quite a straightforward one. I love being outside, I love working with animals, it was what I preferred to do. Not such an easy decision, socially. All of my friends were down in Sydney, but it was the right decision. We had cattle stud and I got involved with the breeding of that. Mom and Dad where quite progressive in that they had an equal partnership, they were partners in business. And my mother spent every amount of time outside as well, she wasn't just a housewife. They had equal share in decision-making and things. Dad did more of the physical work like fencing but as far as cattle handling were concerned...they were equal. So when I came home, I was pretty lucky actually, in that they made me a partner. And I took over the genetics and the marketing of the stud"* (Interview 11, 2011).

In fact, Helen started quite a career in the world of cattle breeding. In 1991 she won a three months scholarship for the University of Illinois (US) in the national championships of cattle judging. In conjunction with a group of people, she imported semen from an interesting Angus cattle bloodline in Canada. She learnt enough about the North American cattle show business to discount an increased influence in her stud breed – at a time where the fashion took over that *"if it is from North America it must be good"* (Interview 11, 2011). While already overseas, she took the chance to also look at various cattle herds in England. As a marketing strategy, Helen presented her cattle in regional shows as well as in the representative Sydney Show; they also donated steers to schools. She was involved in a couple of projects and institutions, such as the *NSW Angus Society Committee* and the *Bungalong Breeder Trust*, among others. Helen not only participated in environmental projects, but also started the local Landcare group in Wellington. She brought the tree cover up from a very low 1.1% to 3% in the massively over-cleared area and was NSW Rural Woman of the Year in 1997. When her Mom suddenly died in 1998, her father decided to retire and Helen took over the management of the farm business. She employed a farm hand as well as a working manager. The property was set up for the specific needs of the breeding enterprise; it was a modern site with an infrastructure concentrated around the house. It included double fenced paddocks to provide the necessary distance between bulls and laneways to handle the cattle more efficiently. When she married James in 2003, the farmer decided to move to Little River:

Helen: *“That’s one of the issues of being female, you are expected to move to where your husband wants to be. It’s far more common than the other way. If you married somebody that has a farm, I think the normal thing to do is to move to where the husband’s farm is. All married women here have moved to ...well, where they are. They could do their jobs no matter where they go of living. Whereas I had my own farm, which you can’t pick up”* (Interview 11, 2011).

In 2010 Helen sold her property in Wellington to be able to buy “Rivers Creek”. *“That was purely a decision based on practicalities, on head not the heart”* (Interview 11, 2011). Due to the recent mergence of two farming systems, James and Helen still are in the process of figuring out their priorities and routines of running the farm.

Helen: *“The grazing system here seems rather unplanned to me. The animals do rotate but it’s too slow a rotation, they are in the paddocks for too long. Up in Wellington I knew up to two, three paddocks in advance where the stock would be going next, for each of the different mobs. Here, I don’t think it’s planned ahead enough and often it seems to be a bit adhoc. It’s one of the weaknesses of our system at the moment. It depends on who turns up for work on which day so...I think it makes planning ahead very difficult. So we are doing things that are critical rather than things that are important. That’s something we have got to organise better”* (Interview 11, 2011).

“Bellmont’s” infrastructure is old and ideas about how to modernise the property need to be evaluated with the background of debts and the longing to preserve family heritage. At the moment “Bellmont” entertains the Angus cattle stud, a commercial Shorthorn herd, a fine wool enterprise that requires Merino wool sheep and a prime lamb meat production that requires meat sheep. They also do some cropping, but as most farmers told me, this is merely a practise to clean up pastures from weeds. They own approximately 5000 sheep, and 400 Angus and Shorthorn cattle. The latter are the progenies of the old cattle herd, which William Lee had brought over the Blue Mountain Range.

The couple has a three-year-old daughter and Helen – somewhat late in life, as she pointed out with a smirk – only gave birth to their son in September 2011. This however means that she cannot dedicate all her energy to the farm management, which results in a lack of labour power on the property. The time I lived at “Bellmont”, Helen and James depended on workers occasionally showing up to help them out in the everyday work schedule. Those workers were retired men who could spare some afternoons. Eric, for example, is in his 70s and worked for James’ father as a full time stockmen in the 1970s, but only for three or four years. Jeff works for James and Helen almost on a daily basis, he is the father of a young rural worker I met during lamb marking. I helped out myself as a farm hand, but lacking experience and being there only for a short time, I did not replace the need for a skilled farm hand that could fulfil tasks independently. Helen and James have some help in the household, as do most farmers I

have met. A cleaner shows up once a week, and Molly, a young British backpacker in her early 20s, stayed for eight months at “Bellmont” to work as a nanny⁴¹.

To better understand farmers’ everyday practices, the following section describes the pressure to continuously modernise the farming system and the difficulties of maintaining a British approach to agricultural production in the Australian climate.

3.1.3. Modernisation of Farming Systems: The Native/Exotic Species Debate

Australia's agricultural landscapes are diverse, including eleven broad agro-ecological regions. Little River is based in what is often called the sheep/wheat belt of Australia. The temperate slopes and plains of the belt reach from South Australia over Victoria and through NSW and change into the subtropical slopes and plains of Northern NSW reaching up through Queensland. Although the belt is prime agricultural land, the soil nevertheless consists of different quality levels that require different farming practices.

I provide an overview of farming practices, focusing on modernisation strategies exemplified at the property “Karra” as well as the two farming systems that can be contrasted as High Input Farming and Holistic Farming Management. Farming systems consist of a range of practices that emerge from a combination of formal constraints on the one hand, i.e. economical forces to make a living, paying off debts or buying out a sibling as well as environmental limits of soil quality, topography, pasture and weather specific obstacles such as droughts or floods. On the other hand, farming systems are informed by the farmer’s set of values, one’s organisational skills and their ideas about the future development of the agricultural industry in Australia. Having this in mind, I asked farmers how they would describe and classify their approaches to farming. This is closely connected to the construction of place and belonging, as farmers’ working sites are also their homes. To choose a certain farming technique thus means to make a choice about home, which forms a part of Self.

41 She earned 120 dollars a week, having only Sundays off, which she used to attend church in Orange. Molly cooked, cleaned, did the washing, went for grocery shopping, watched over the baby and entertained the whirlwind of a daughter. She helped James out with the sheep, did the mowing, took the pony for a ride and had a glance or two at the cattle as well as generally entertaining everybody with her good humour and cheery attitude. Backpackers are a convenient labour power for Australian society, especially in the agricultural sector and I was astonished by the number of “*international girls*” that worked as nannies in the area of Little River. In the hunt of adventures backpackers work in underpaid jobs, easily subdued to exploitation. However, they do not seek jobs to send money back home to their families, but they long to spend it on bungee jumping, national park tours, kite surfing, diving and above all drinks.

Different farming modes of production, of course, require different farming systems and practices: a cattle stud breed faces other challenges, i.e. in marketing and securing a bloodline during drought, than a prime lamb enterprise or high input cropping. All the farmers I have met are “mixed farmers”: multiple enterprises in one place allow a certain flexibility to adjust to the shifting price regimes of commodity markets and unreliable climate conditions. As Helen indicated earlier by comparing the set up of her place in Wellington with the working routine of “Bellmont”, the more focused the enterprise is, the better equipped the farm can be. Infrastructure needs to organise the vast space to smoothly run the business.

Modernisation processes are expansive and often families lack the money to make their property more efficient. A related factor, that might keep farmers awake at night, is the repayment and management of debts. As most, if not all middle-sized properties have acquired debts, at least since the last decade of drought, farmers employ services of agricultural banks to manage best, i.e. by locking in the interest rates of a certain amount of their debts.

Every farmer has his or her own way of managing the place, organising the work schedule and maintaining a successful business in tune with the weather and the markets. Not only physical tasks are manifold: the handling, treating and breeding of animals⁴², cropping and pasture improvement, general maintenance work required by i.e. fences, paddocks, the water pipes, windmills and the various sheds, machines and tools. Farmers also participate in skill enhancement classes (so called ‘Field Days’) to keep up with science latest insights.

Furthermore, there is the administration side of running the property. “*Doing the books*” involves planning, recording and bureaucratic tasks as well as the development of (drought) risk management strategies. Farmers need to chronicle the movement of stock through their paddocks and estimate the recreational time of pastures. In certain time periods working teams need to be synchronised i.e. for lamb marking or shearing: the shearing of 5000 sheep is not a minor operation to coordinate and requires the work of at least 20 people for around six weeks.

Additionally, farmers need to keep track of the markets and the agricultural development in Australia as well as international occasions that might influence prices. A recent example in this regard was the World Food Price Crisis in 2007/2008, which led to an escalation of primary commodity prices that benefited farmers, but also generated riots and social unrest in over 22 countries. “*The farmer is a price taker, not a price maker*” (Fieldnotes I.&II. 2011)

⁴² The animals I have encountered in Little River are sheep, cattle, horses, dogs, chicken, alpacas and one or the other aviary.

and people might employ agents to evaluate the sale yards that offer best prices for their primary products. Another way of selling stock is provided by online services that operate like eBay.

Further tasks add up if one takes the running of the household and the well-being of the family into consideration – the intensive physical labour makes hungry, and five meals a day, including morning and afternoon tea, are somewhat the norm. Most farms maintain their own veggie garden as well as a garden for recreational purposes, often in the form of an English cottage garden. A lot of homesteads also have pools and tennis courts that need maintenance work. The ‘white sport’ used to be more popular in the old days and provided the get-togethers of the landholders’ community.

Every farmer tries to be the best possible steward for the land: they all have a deep interest in maintaining the soil’s quality. One obvious reason is that their livelihood depends on the land’s fertility. This is also true for past generations, however, their ideas about “best practice”, such as massive clearing of land, proved not to be the most sustainable ideas to maintain healthy estates. Farmers today engage in Landcare programs and aim to leave the estate in a better condition for the next generation. They plant trees and try to diversify the species on their properties – at least in some paddocks.

The Australian agricultural sector has been subjected to modernisation strategies since the 2nd World War. Those strategies concern the type of crops planted to feed stock, i.e. “improved pastures” that are enriched with exotic species of grasses as well as better technological equipment, more efficient space management techniques, such as laneways, and “improved” animals through the selection process of sophisticated breeding regimes. In consequence of various modernisation strategies combined, farmers have managed to increase their production rate, as Reid told me: *“A 90 year old neighbour, he reckons that Sidney Lee used to carry 5000 sheep on 6000 acres, whereas I carry 5000 sheep now on 2000 acres, or 3000 acres. That’s sort of a doubling of the carrying capacity, which should be about right. So we doubled our capacity to make money out of an area of land”* (Interview 1, 2011).

After 10 years of working the farm conjointly, the split up in 1997 allowed Reid and May to start their modernisation project of “Karra”. In effect this meant a re-organisation of space and an adaptation of production to the demands of the market: the logistics of the farm were newly arranged, i.e. the former eight paddocks were subdivided into 23 areas and the couple build three km of laneways that allow one person to move a not always willing mob of cattle or sheep: *“It’s just more flexible”* (Interview 10, 2011). One has to keep in mind the vastness

of the properties, as well as the difficulties to move around mobs of 2000 sheep, or a herd of 50 cattle or just one self-confident and quite territorial bull of say 800 kg. The utilisation of farm paddocks meant that those areas that previously could not be farmed because stock had to be pushed through, now form a part of the production system. Furthermore, a well-equipped infrastructure allows the farmer to manage the place by him/herself. Although Reid today employs a full-time farm hand, a lot of farmers try to cut out the expense.

Another step in the modernisation project of “Karra” included the readjusting of the production circle: Reid and May sold most of their cattle and while everybody else was exiting the wool sheep industry⁴³, they went right in into the sheep market, but into its terminal side. “Karra” now focuses on a prime lamb meat production, owning approximately 5000 sheep. Reid does not maintain a breeding pool; he buys his ewes in and sells not only the lambs, but also the old sheep for meat. “Karra” sells some of the wool, however, this is regarded to be mainly a by-product – meat sheep are not suitable for a fine wool production. Reid also maintains cattle for beef production, but he is no longer engaged in a Shorthorn breeding enterprise, one of the areas the old Lees have been famous for on an Australia-wide scale. To produce prime lambs, the sheep need to be on high nutrient feed, such as sub-clover pastures. It is regarded to be more nutritious than the native grasses, i.e. Red or Kangaroo Grass. However, sub-clover is native to Britain and does not grow in Australian soil naturally, as it lacks the amount of phosphate the plant needs. The import of sub-clover from Britain is regarded as “pasture improvement”. Farmers that employ this modern strategy of pasture improvement need to add fertilisers, such as the manufactured superphosphate. Its main ingredient is a natural form of the element phosphorus that is found in fossils of sea creatures and in bird droppings (guano)⁴⁴. The limited resource became a driving force in the growth of Australian agricultural production. Superphosphate first went on sale in England in 1843, but William Lee probably did not import it, as his property had some phosphor mines that got exploited over the generations. Reid explained to me the role of pasture improvement for his farm and Australian agriculture:

Reid: *“Sub-clover was introduced in the Australian farming system in the 1950s or I don’t know, probably before wool, but it really took off in the 50s. So, the sub-clover and superphosphate meant that we probably tripled our production in this country from before the War to after the War. We are refining that ever since, so we’re reducing paddock sizes, so we can manage the grazing better. And*

43 After the collapse of the Wool Reserve Price Scheme in 1991, there was a government introduced Sheep Reduction Scheme that led to the killing of vast numbers of sheep.

44 <http://www.teara.govt.nz/en/superphosphate> (accessed 24.07.2012).

we've improved the species of clovers and grasses. So because of technology, it's more productive, more nutritious for the stock, than it used to be" (Interview 1, 2011).

This modernisation strategy of the meat production circle is related to an extended controversy going on in rural NSW – whether farmers should provide exotic grasses or native grasses to feed their stock. There are two ideal farming systems that can be contrasted: the most productive, High Input farming on the one hand and the sustainable approach of Holistic Farming on the other. However, none of the farming systems I encountered in Little River applied the framework of one system alone. Instead farmers combine practices and adjust approaches according to their priorities. Reid characterised his farming system as the following:

Reid: *"High input. If you want to put a label on it, mine would be high input, high output. Tight system. I know for a fact that you can't compare it with Georg's, which is a very low input system. He is following the philosophy of a consulting firm that advocates a holistic management system. It involves not putting fertilizers in, managing your pastures with your grazing system. You have small paddocks and you graze paddocks for short periods of time and rest them for a long period of time"* (Interview 10, 2011).

In contrast to the holistic approach Georg and other farmers in the area follow, Reid's high input farming system includes the usage of superphosphate to adapt to economic necessities generated by the choice for "exotic" animals for meat production. Reid describes his uncle Jim and his father Jock as early adapters, he knows that phosphor fertilizers have been used on "Karra's" paddocks at least since the 2nd World War.

Reid: *"And so now we have improved pastures, with exotic species of grass here. And if you talk to Sarah [another farmer in the area], she is very against all that. She thinks we should be encouraging the grazing of native pastures. There is quite a big movement for that. I am not convinced. I'm happy to lock up 50 odd hectares under a Landcare project. That means, I'm not going to spread fertilizer, I'm not going to graze it for six months. What are the other things I've got to do? I'll be keeping the total stocking rate low. I just manage it for environmental benefits, but I reckon, I can afford to do that because I'm running the rest of the country all productively on exotic species pasture and I'm spreading fertilizer"* (Interview 1, 2011).

This indicates a conflict between environmental sustainability and economic efficiency. However, Reid is also very passionate about Climate Change. He writes comments for the rural newspapers and discusses the issue with other farmers who *"don't believe in Climate Change"* (Fieldnotes II., 2011). I asked him if his farming system does not stand in contradiction to his conviction that Climate Change is a fact caused by human agency and an issue not only for farmers – a position not commonly held by the majority of Australian farmers:

Reid: *"Given the history here and given my financial situation, cause I had to buy out my sister and my brother of some part of the country, buy my aunt and cousins out. So, I have been trying to make as much money as I can for about the last 12 years. I took the advice of a particular farm consultant who recommended that we farm with as many stock on the farm as we can and making grasses and pastures as productive and as good as we can. And that way generated as many revenues as we can... So people would describe it as a high input system"* (Interview 10, 2011).

Bob, another mixed-farmer in the area, owns his middle-range property in the 4th generation. Just like Reid, he engages in prime lamb and beef production, owning 2000 sheep and around 500 head of cattle. Although Bob emphasised that he follows in parts the Holistic Farming approach, his farming system is not that different to Reid's. They both use exotic pastures and are driven to increase the farm's output. When I asked Bob if he makes a difference between native and exotic species, he reacted defensively, and I realised how heated the debate must be within the community. Nevertheless, he started to explain:

Bob: *"I'm yet to be convinced that the native plants that are here are good enough for the production system that I have. In other words, if I want to turn on fat lambs, steers and heifers, I don't think that the native grasses are good enough. That's a personal thing, it's not necessarily..."*

Norma: *"Probably when you have native grasses you also need native animals. And farming kangaroos is probably not an option."* Bob: *"They don't like fences. And pretty hard to sell. You sort of got it. We are working on a British farming system. Australia is...we've got this huge influence of British farming systems on the Australian landscape. We run British bred cattle, with the influx now of European and Asian, like exotic animals. Traditionally, we farm barley, wheat and oats and all of that. They're all British, they all come from England grazing systems. Whereas when we would have been settled by the Spanish... If the Spanish had gotten here first, we might have olive trees, the whole grazing system could be totally different."* Norma: *"I guess that's one of the challenges nowadays to find out..."* Bob: *"...what is best suited"* (Interview 5, 2011).

I have not met a farmer who is only using native plants on the property or solely applies the Holistic Management framework. The approach was developed by the Zimbabwean ecologist Allan Savory as a global strategy to reverse Climate Change through agricultural practices. Developed in the context of Africa,⁴⁵ the concept includes a range of practices to avoid soil degradation, restore water catchments and create firebreaks. The rotational grazing system is one of the practices the Holistic Farming approach puts forward and farmers apply those strategies they regard to be most useful in their context. Helen stated that rotational grazing was the common thing to do in the area around Wellington and Reid applies this grazing technique as well. Bob runs his animals conjointly in what he calls a "flerd" – a flock of sheep

⁴⁵ <http://achmonline.squarespace.com/> (accessed 16.August 2012).

and the herd of cattle, an uncommon thing not many farmers like to do. This practice of increasing the competition for feed among the animals is a further suggestion of Savory.

Bob: *"This is how nature intended us to graze. When you are driving around Orange, you'll see some paddocks that look like golf courses. And that's because people just graze them till they are flat on the ground. When you eat it right down till the grass, the root will actually physically fall off the plant. I've got paddocks here, [the fherd] won't come back for 90-120 days. If we had no rain at all, there is still a root reserve there that will grow something. So I know, I got at least one more lab of feed on the place that'll keep me going"* (Interview 5, 2011).

Not to turn one's place into a "golf course", but to maintain a solid root foundation of the plants which allow them to recover quickly, is essential to sustain healthy estates and to maintain a business during drought.

I also talked to Georg who, according to Reid, applies a very low input system. However, Georg also stated that he is not depended on making profit out of his land in the Central West. He owns further properties in Queensland that engage in large-scale grazing enterprises. Georg: *"I think you find that landholders are perceived to be environmentalist vandals. And it's completely the opposite. There is no point in us environmentally harming our country, cause it's our livelihoods, and it's our lives. They are trying, but it doesn't get perceived very well in the metropolitan areas. I don't know what goes through Greenies head sometimes"* (Interview 9, 2011). Negative perceptions of the Green Party are common among farmers as another landholder stated. *"Greenies in Australia... that's just another word for communist"* (Fieldnotes I, 2011). However, the pastoralist did not engage in a low-input farming system due to Climate Change. He is not convinced that the environmental change is caused by human agency. Georg explained to me the serious issues of water scarcity and wondered if there might be a way of getting *"these massive rivers"* that flow in the Australian north, down south into the sheep/wheat belt: *"if only they could find some way of bringing it south and putting it into a water system down south, but it's very hard"* (Interview 9, 2011). The pastoralist continued to explain his take on Climate Change and thereby entertained a rhetoric strategy that reminded me of the uncanny self-imaging of pastoralists as farmers, as indicated earlier in my thesis. *"Those trees love carbon dioxide. So, the more carbon dioxide gets pumped into the air, the better plants grow. They should be hammering bloody, I don't know... the jungles instead of... a poor old farmer that has a couple of cows that fart"* (Interview 9, 2011). This man is neither old or poor, nor a farmer and he does not own a couple of cows but over 30,000. In fact, the pastoralist is in his early 30s and belongs to a

family that runs one of the ten largest and oldest pastoralist enterprises in Australia. They own over 1½ million acres up in Queensland, sheep but mainly cattle grazing on a large scale.

The modernisation of farming systems, which lead to increasing agricultural productivity since the 1950s, is heavily dependent on artificial fertilisers such as phosphate and another limited resource, that is oil. Here, phosphate is considered to have the same peak as oil, “*which is a bit of a worry*” (Interview 1, 2011). How to imagine present agricultural everyday practices effective over vast distances without being able to use (cheap) fuel? Phosphate is just as essential for family farmers’ current farming systems under pressure to increase their productivity. Modernisation strategies and the constant call for economic growth manipulate animals, plants and soil - framed as commodities, resources or assets – and might conflict with environmentally sustainable approaches to maintain healthy estates. The colonial industry introduced sheep/wheat/cattle into the Australian environment and farmers have to engage with the heritage of British farming systems. “Karra’s” soil has been cultivated for over 60 years with the artificial supplement of phosphorous, which has consequences for its chemistry and composition of nutrients. The native eco-system has been suppressed, to give space for the colonial economy, the traditional production of sheep/wheat/beef. It is an ability of many native Australian plants that their seeds can endure in the ground for decades and regrow when conditions allow to do so. One example are gumtrees that might look dead for over 30 years, but can flourish again – leaving botanists pondering over their estimated age, adjusting numbers upwards (Gammage 2011). The dichotomy of “infertile native” vs. “more productive, efficient and improved exotic” pastures includes a value judgement, based on the economic framework family farmers’ have inherited. Farmers cultivate their places according to ‘demand and supply’, aiming to be more efficient. Modernisation strategies do not rupture the colonial economy of British farming systems, but mean its adjustment to present capitalist premises and imperatives. The hierarchisation of “exotic” over “native” pastures reveals a symbolic meaning against the background of postcolonialising debates in the Australian nation. Australian agriculture can – and in fact has to – adapt to what is best suited to its various environmental regions, especially in times of Climate Change. However, what counts as “best practice” is not only a matter of personal engagement with the place but also a matter of national dispute.

3.2. Being In and Out of Place: The Changing Local Community

The second chapter of my empirical encounter provides a perspective on differences within the local community. In distinction to the city, the rural locality is perceived as engagement with the “real world”. Most of the farmers I worked with have an university degree of some kind and they were further aware of being members of the majority population or “*old Australians*”. I describe the work processes I experienced during lamb marking and shearing to describe encounters and differences between farmers and the rural workforce. Thereby I engage with class as a muted marker of differentiation. I specify landholders’ community by outlining markers of prestige and their historic development. Lead by the interest why more and more family farmers are forced to sell their property, I describe the context for their decisions and offer possible reasons for the decline of middle-ranged properties. Generated through discussions about increased costs of living among workers, I reflect on the rising value of land related to a growing competition for agricultural land. This complex process effects inheritance patterns and is further linked to urban sprawl around regional centres, increasing interest of mining companies in agricultural land and Climate Change which impacts on farmers’ prospects to remain within the agricultural sector. Although national debates during the 1990s entertained the possibility that farmers lose their land to Indigenous peoples, there is no hint that Native Title is a factor in the redistribution of agricultural land in NSW.

3.2.1. Working at Home: The Rural Workforce and the Landholders’ Community

The local community life has been objected to rapid transformations. The restructuring of rural Australia in the last 30 years lead to massive changes within one generation engaged in the agricultural sector, but the consequences, opportunities and hardships are distributed unequally according to subject’s positionality. Family farmers differentiate themselves from others in accordance to their properties’ size, its locality and in contrast to the city. Another marker of difference is their ownership of the means of production and their employment of the rural workforce. Although class differences are downplayed and muted by farmers, the rural workforce is quite aware of the divide. Next to the farming family there are external people involved in generating a living on the land, such as farm hands, nannies, contract or casual workers, agents and consulted experts. Except for nannies, who live on the properties,

workers need to be mobile to reach their work stations. The decline of people in rural NSW is not only mirrored in “*former thriving and vibrant country towns*” (Interview 5, 2011) that are now much less crowded, but is also reflected in the demographics on the farms whose depopulation follows a distinct pattern along gender lines. The generation of women on the farm that are in their 40s and 50s now have experienced a significant change in lifestyle, not only if compared to their mothers’ generation but also in recent decades.

When I asked farmers in Little River about multiculturalism in Australia, they mostly shrug their shoulders, and referred to it as a city phenomenon. Although farmers had opinions about this development and some of them perceived the processes as sharpening the rural-city divide, many referred to multiculturalism’s main consequence as an improved cuisine and a wider ranged variety of food. A farmer stated “*the dynamics of who Australians are is changing, that’s for sure. [But] I think if you get over the Great Divide it’s predominantly your old colonial... call it that... a lot of those kind of people [migrants from Middle East and Asia] don’t wanna live out here*” (Interview 9, 2011). Helen explained that often migrants are not interested in living in rural Australia. She reasoned that a lot of them come from a peasant background themselves and would migrate to Australia to provide their kids with opportunities available in the cities, enabling them to achieve careers as lawyers or doctors. She further observed the changing relation between the city and rural Australia:

Helen: “*Not that long ago everybody in the city either had a relation or friends on the land and there was a lot of interaction. Now, the majority of people in the cities don’t know anybody on the land. I think, if they ever think about it, they like the idea that there are farmers out there. But they don’t really have much understanding of how we operate. They don’t have anything to do with the land. They don’t know what the issues are, what the challenges are. I think there can be a stereotype of farmers being a bit too dumb to do anything else. I have heard in the advertisement field that farmers are trusted. So if you’re doing an advertisement and you want people to believe you, you put a farmer in it. But a lot of people think, farmers are poorly educated and a bit too dumb to do much else. There are probably not that many of us that are university educated (laughs) although a lot of the people are that you have spoken to.*” Norma: (laughs) “*Yeah, almost everybody has an university degree.*” Helen: “*Probably more and more do have a degree or some sort of a further education. But it’s still probably the general impression, especially in the city, that farmers are a bit slow*” Norma: “*What would you think are the new symbols of the Australian society? If it’s not all the outback images and bush legends...*” Helen: “*It’s iconic, isn’t it?*” Norma: “*Yeah, yeah, it is.*” Helen: “*Probably the beach babe? (laughs) I think Australians would like to consider themselves as... Well, a typical Aussie. Sort of self-reliant and innovative and tall and lean, but that’s not the case. And even amongst farmers I noticed, that there are a lot of people on the land now that are*

overweight. It's because so much of it is mechanized now, a lot less is physically done" (Interview 11, 2011).

When James and I talked about my interest in the particularity of place he described the community in Little River as the following: *"I guess we are all white Anglo Saxon Protestants here, or Catholics for that matter. And landowners. And we all had some sort of further education"* and I ensured him that *"I will write about that"* (Fieldnotes II., 2011).

Before I knew James and Helen, I ended up on their property "Rivers Creek" to do some lamb marking. 900 lambs needed to be vaccinated, castrated, their ears clipped and marked and tails cut off. The ambiguous practice of mulesing was not done to this mob as they were meat not wool sheep. Mulesing is a bloody process during which the skin around the tail and the back legs is cut off. The scared skin prevents the breeding of flies. Their nesting maggots eat the sheep alive otherwise. If mulesing is done, lamb markers administer a local anaesthesia and the lambs are said to recover as quickly as they do after the castration and other processes. However, the lambs are obviously shocked, in pain and "go down" immediately, after the workers leave them off the machine.

The whole day we stood around this metal construction that looked to me like a combination of a miniature carousel and a women's doctor's chair, providing the space to treat six lambs at once. James and Jeff drafted the ewes from the lambs 20 meters from where we worked and the constant 'baaa' sound of nearly 2000 sheep rung in my ears. The routine work and repetitive body movements reminded me of an assembly line, where everybody including the animals, has a task relationally adjusted to the group's working pace.

In the burning sun, the three workers were obviously quite amused by my presence and the fact that I was working without getting paid. The men earn 150-200 dollars a day. They work in a team three or four days a week since *"a couple of years"* (Fieldnotes I., 2011). I asked them why they do not work in the mines and their unison answer was *"because of the lifestyle"* (Fieldnotes I., 2011). Nevertheless, they were longing to get the job done, already talking about the beer they would enjoy in the next country town's pub: *"The pub brings us through the day"* Bill mentioned (Fieldnotes I., 2011). When I took a brake crawling half under the utility vehicle ("ute") to get some shade, he looked down to me saying: *"Maybe I should also go back to school, must be better than this"* (Fieldnotes I., 2011).

The ute stood next to us in the middle of the paddock and its radio was turned on loudly, playing "Hits Non Stop". The workers danced and sang along to the songs they liked, "I Need

a Dollar”⁴⁶ was one of them, throwing lambs around “freestyle” as hours ran late. When the radio host started talking about a “sustainable economy”, Bill looked at me with an interrogative gaze: “*Do you learn about that as well?*” – “*Sort of, I guess*” I replied and made a joke about sustainable vodka consumption. However, Bill would not let me slip away this easily and pressed me to explain my interests. I said I study anthropology – “*aha*” Bill replied – and I continued: “*It’s about comparing societies, finding out what people actually do, what is important to them and what their life worlds look like. That’s the reason why I want to work with farmers, learning what their work is like*” (Fieldnotes I., 2011). The workers quite enjoyed that and burst out into shaggy laughter: “*They don’t do any work! We do!*” I must have looked really puzzled, so Bill continued: “*They are just driving around in their utes. And they like to take people with them to open and close the gates. So they won’t even have to leave the car*” (Fieldnotes I., 2011). That situation sounded familiar to me and I started pondering over the division of labour on the farm. Of course farmers do work. However, as the owners of the means of production they surely can decide the timing and tasks they fulfil themselves and for which jobs they get casual or contract workers in. Workers do the most intensive physical labour, which also might be due to farmers advanced age, or they come in, if more hands or special skills are required.

On another occasion, I worked in the old wool shed at “Bellmont”. James had called for the shearing of 500 wool sheep that kept approximately 14 people busy over the course of four days. These workers too travel together from job to job in a flexibly knitted group. Their team consisted of six shearers and four shed hands, who I called “runners”, due to their constant moving around and switching of tasks. One of them was a young woman in her early 20s and the two of us were the only women in the shed. The team of workers looked rough and quite worn out.

The day’s work started around eight am and lasted till the afternoon, finishing up around three or four pm. The wool shed is a massive wooden building with a corrugated sheet roof and a wooden floor. The riffled floor provides the base for a small labyrinth of yards through which the sheep are pushed till they are crowded in the boxes next to the shearers’ workstation. The sheep needed to be dragged out of the boxes and each one passed through the line of combs – “*all 19th century technology*” (Fieldnotes II., 2011) – where the six shearers worked non-stop, sheep after sheep, taking breaks only in a two-hour rhythm. The shearers were standing and had to bend over the sheep, which they hold between their legs on its back. A sheep might

46 By the musician Aloe Blacc (2011).

weight around 50 kg and only some animals endure the process calmly, as often not only its wool is cut but also its wrinkled skin. It is a very hard physical work, and the two shearers who did not work with a “hock” – a construction that hangs from the ceiling and carries part of their weight, while simultaneously stretching their backs – had deformed features. When I asked James about their humps, he commented it to be “*a very sad choice*” to work without a hock (Fieldnotes II., 2011).

Next to the shearers and “runners” there were four or five people “on the table”. The runners or shed hands collected the fleeces and threw them onto the table, where we had to pluck the dirty stained, low quality edges off by “skirting the fleece”. The runners also kept the floor clean by collecting bits and pieces of wool to put them into different quality baskets – fluffy white and very soft under-wool, stained pieces destroyed by maggots or shit and a middle ranged quality in-between. One lad also handled the collected wool, pushing and pulling the nearly man-high bails around. He weighted them and finalised the packing by spraying the quality indicator on the bails. James has a wool classifier certificate and an official symbol that indicates the different standards of “Bellmont’s” fine wool. During the main shearing period, when 5000 sheep need to be treated, James gets a wool classifier in to do so, as he is busy with the work coordination and the moving of stock. This time the farmer did the wool classification himself.

James also worked on the table, together with a man of the shearers’ team, myself, Jeff and Eric, who helped out for a couple of hours. Being busy with hands full of wool and the nasty little thistle that get caught in it, I tried to adjust to the quick sequence of ever-new fleeces on the table and did not really engage in conversations. However, the men standing around the seven m² table exchanged information and gossip concerned with: who has married whom?; what’s their background?; how is xx doing?; do you know xx up in Northern NSW?; what kind of mate is he?; is he still working for xx?; for whom is he working now?; does he ever work with xx?

After 11 am it started to get hot and stuffy in the shed and the constant buzzing of the shearers combs and the sound of the animals contributed to a noisy and intense work routine. Again, the body movements appeared to be choreographed. In the evening, when I lay in bed, thankful for not seeing any more wool, I still felt the movements I had made all day, my body echoing the repetition.

During the breaks James and I went over to the house to have tea and biscuits with the family. One lunch break we stayed in the shed, sitting at the table of its simple and spacious kitchen,

but only one of the workers joined us. The rest of the team lay down on the floor of the shed, smoking, staring and having a bite or two. Not many conversations happened and at least I certainly enjoyed a bit of quiet after the hammering of the machines. When I switched jobs, the runners took the chance to make some fun of me. No longer at the table, I was told to sort the nasty parts of the wool, separating maggot pieces from stained wool. With the maggots still alive, the shitty pieces seemed to be the nicer option. The runners smirked at me, when passing by: “*Got yourself the best job, hu?*” I engaged with them in a cheery manner, but time was too short to develop some kind of relationship.

In the afternoon of the final day, after the workers had gone, James and I were left with the cleaning up of the shed and the pressing of the rest of the fleeces. Eric stayed as well and the two men handled the wool, while I was busy with tidying up and not falling asleep. Later on James commented on the attitude during the working process, mentioning a spirit of “*wool shed equality*” and mateship. He explained that this way of relating to each other was also highly valued among the soldiers in Gallipoli, Turkey, the Anzacs who fought in the 1st World War⁴⁷. I pondered over his comment and critically suggested that James still is the boss who employs them all and owns the production facility. He agreed, but emphasised that he is working with them and that there is no room for being stand offish or bossy. He also said that he does not give orders, that he asks them if they could do this and that. However, he is the one who coordinates the work process and determines when and what needs to be done. Shearers also get paid per sheep “*this is why I count them out in the end*” – apparently mateship does not mean that you can be a fool (Fieldnotes II., 2011).

Even though a lot of the farm work of treating animals reminded me of an assembly line, there is much more freedom available in the outdoor work of the farm than in the tightly scheduled production line of a factory. Farmers work at home, they set the pace, have breaks whenever they feel like it and delegate the work they cannot do or do not want to do. That means if they can afford paying wages. A part of this freedom is also available to the rural workforce. They chose with whom they work based on working conditions, wage and sympathy. Of course this choice depends also on their financial situations and if they are desperate, in urgent need for cash.

Farmers are not able to compete with loans paid by mining companies. In consequence, full time workers are rarely employed and the money is invested in the modernisation of properties instead, rendering them more efficient and manageable by one person alone most

47 The 1st World War marks „the birth of the Australian nation“ and the Anzacs are annually honoured with celebrations at „Anzac Day“.

of the time. Nevertheless, the lack of labour is a general problem in rural NSW, as John explained to me:

Dave: *“One of the biggest challenges is labour. [Kids] are going to the cities and the mines are soaking up everyone else. A huge problem is gonna be labour, I think it’s here now. And the young bloke you get on a farm now obviously is on dope, because he can’t get into the mines, cause they do drug testing and what have you. And who wouldn’t be in the mines? You double your wage, at least to what you get paid on a farm”* (Interview 3, 2011).

In comparing the present conditions to the past of his childhood, Dave further stated: *“All those good old stockmen are gone. Along came the motorbike - and everyone can ride a motorbike. But the good old stockmen had their horses and five or six dogs. They knew what they were doing. You know, time has changed. Probably for the better, well, its more efficient, but...yeah, I don’t know”* (Interview 11, 2011). One of the reasons, Reid and Bob as well as others invest in smaller paddocks, improved stock moving routes fenced with lane ways that allow the practice of rotational grazing, is that it is much less labour intensive. Bob: *“If I need labour, I employ people casually. You just employ people strategically as you need them. And you know who those people are? Farmers on other blocks of land who have got a bit of spare time. So it works quite well”* (Interview 5, 2011).

A couple of days later, I sat down together with Reid for our second interview. While we were talking about the modernisation of breeding processes and how sophisticated it had become, we touched on the issue of increased costs of living. Reid: *“So those processes [of cattle breeding techniques] increase the rate of change, but everybody is doing it. So more beef is produced, so the price per kilo of the beef is always falling in real terms. Food is much, much cheaper now as a proportion of someone’s income as it was 50 years ago”* (Interview 10, 2011). This statement stood in contradiction to what workers had mentioned. I told Reid about a shearer I had met in the next country town’s pub and the way he had reasoned, based on beer prices, that the costs of living had risen. He had stopped shearing in 1998 because of his damaged back. The shearer explained that he could buy a beer for one sheared sheep, but now two sheep were worth one beer. During the 1990s the wider comb was introduced and together with better sheds, this allows a much faster shearing process. The unions had opposed the introduction of the wider comb and in consequence the shearers had opposed and boycotted the unions. The shearer however, could not explain their arguments⁴⁸.

48 The unions might have opposed the introduction of the wider comb in the 1990s as it meant an increase in productivity. This in turn might have lead to the development that fewer shearers were needed, rendering them unemployed. However, I encountered the situation nowadays

Reid: *"So the costs of living have risen relatively to shearers' wage. The shearer is a wage earner. I would imagine beer prices, yeah, but I would suspect that other categories of food... Food actually in the last years is getting pricy. And it's gonna keep getting pricy. Whereas things like flat screen TVs and cars are getting cheap. But Dad used to say a bail of wool in the 1950s would buy him a car."* Norma: *"One bail?"* Reid: *"I think so. Might have been one or two. Wool was extraordinarily high priced in the 1950s. In real terms, we've only just passed the price in money terms, not taking into account inflation. If you take account of inflation the price of all now is way over what it was in the 50s. All agricultural products are like that, if you take account of inflation. If you take inflation out, the price chart of all agricultural prices go zshh, like that. All up and down, but the basic trend is down. And the cost of a lot of things like fuel, labour in general terms, it's generally up. Cause the standard of living is high. The shearer might be right about his cost of beer, but generally speaking, even the lowest paid wage earners, and that's the farm hand, pretty much, he is at the bottom of the heap, is better off now, than he would have been 20 years ago"* (Interview 10, 2011).

To better understand farmers' financial situation, I asked the farmer to explain me the hierarchy and distribution of wages he pays rural workers⁴⁹ and I went on to ask about his own income.

Reid: *"No, I don't pay myself a wage, really. Oh well, we do in those benchmarking accounts that you saw. My wage is, I think I take out 60,000 dollars management pay. It's not quite what the manager of Westbank gets. But we are making good return on our assets. I do make more than that, but most of that... We've got to make that, because we are paying off debts. We don't spent any more than 60,000 dollars a year. So you can say that's our wage and that's for, I suppose the average is a 50h week. I take holidays, May likes to dispute that, but say... I wouldn't take a month holidays, but say 49 weeks... it's 25 dollars an hour. That's what I put in my benchmarking, when I'm charging for my time. Which is ridiculously low, because Sarah, who works in the Landcare group, she is at 33 dollars an hour. Mat, as I've said, he is on 20 dollar, but I give him a 100 litres of fuel a month and he gets a lamb and stuff like that. So he is on better than that, but yeah. The farm hand is on the basic wage. There are probably people earning less... migrant workers working in service industry somewhere. Mat is working here because he likes the lifestyle. He could be earning twice as much or certainly 35 dollars an hour when he was back working for the engineering company."* Norma: *"Or for the mining companies."* Reid: *"Or working in the mines, yeah"* (Interview 10, 2011).

The increasing costs of living were a subject of many conversations and related to pricy primary commodities and the increasing value of land. I return to this process at a later stage of my thesis. For now, I continue with another perspective on the local community, not only

as a general lack of rural workforce, including shearers. A farmer told me that there are only a few shearers left as *"nobody wants to do this hard job anymore"* (Fieldnotes II., 2011). New avenues of generating an income are available.

⁴⁹ Reid estimated that a shed hand earns 140 dollars a day. A full time farmhand earns 20 dollars per hour, which adds up in 160 a day for five days a week. A shearer might make 416 dollars a day or about 360 dollars for crouching. Contractors with particular skills make 45 dollars an hour or more, mechanics 55 an hour.

engaging between the changing relation between city and countryside and the differences between the rural workforce and landowners, but also the historical markers that indicate farmers differences towards each other in terms of status and wealth.

Helen: *“Australians are likely to think of themselves as being the lean, sun bronzed Aussies, which would basically be the people, the rural people. But there has always been a bit of a divide between two different sorts of farmers. There is always been the wealthy squatter, the large landowning fraternity. And then you’ve got what they call the cockies, the small farmers that battle and have to make do. It’s always been a bit of a divide between them. Even now you can sort of still see that to a certain extend.”* Norma: *“So which status would you put to yourself? Are you landowners or cockies?”* Helen: *“Originally the very first [family member] that came out was a landowner and he had convicts assigned to him. But we come from a side of the family that got disinherited, because we didn’t change religion. In a way, it’s more of the cockies’ side of things, whereas the Lees have always been squatters”* (Interview 9, 2011).

During one of my first days in the field, Mat told me: *“I don’t know if you noticed, but every cocky hoards stuff”* – *“Who does?”* – *“The farmers, we call them cockies”* (Fieldnotes I., 2011). In my confusion, I thought he was referring to the farmer as a “cock”, which in bawdy speech refers to the male genital. In fact, the English adjective “cocky” is used to describe somebody, often a young man, who is excessively proud of himself, indicating that there is “much testosterone around”. In Australia, however, the term is related to the Crown Lands Act of 1861, introduced by the NSW Premier John Robertson to reform land holdings.

The Act aimed to break squatters' domination of land tenure by making small areas of land cheaply available to small farmers or “selectors”. The 19th century term “cocky” for a small farmer originated when the bill was being discussed in parliament. One member complained that the Act would ruin the country by spreading selectors over the land like cockatoos, eventually damaging the land, leaving it worthless. In the common understanding of this origin story, a small farmer is the one who works hard, ploughing and sowing his small selection of seeds only to see the ground white with cockatoos – cookies – who grub them up again.

After the introduction of the Act in 1861, squatters and selectors or cookies, struggled over the issue of landownership. Avenues of corruption enabled graziers to maintain their holdings by turning selectors into “shared farmers”. Reid told me the story as the following:

Reid: *“The government was trying to break up the landholdings of the squatters, such as William Lee. He came out as a young man and he stood on that hill and said ‘Righto, this is all mine now. No one else owns it.’ They didn’t acknowledge that the Aborigines might have owned it. And they brought up their sheep and cattle and just spread them out. And when some law and order started to*

come to the place, these fellows said, 'Well, I have a claim to this. I've been here first, it's mine.' And the government would legitimise that, but [wanted to put in] small settlers, immigrants from England or soldiers. Both after the 1st and 2nd World War, they talk about soldier settlers schemes, small blocks of 800 acres. Earlier on they thought that people could make a living out of even smaller blocks, like 600 acres. And of course what happened the squatters said 'You put in a settler block here on this country of mine. I finance you'. Cause the government used to sell it to them [the selectors] in cheap rates. But the squatter would say 'I finance you' cause the settler wouldn't been able to make a go of it, cause it was too small, and it would revert to the squatter cause he had the finance on it" (Interview 10, 2011).

One of the paddocks Reid sold in 2009 is still called "Cranky Bob" and he assumes that Bob was a cocky, a selector *"who didn't want to play the game with William Lee"* (Interview 10, 2011). As the paddock only passed out family ownership recently, it is obvious who gained ascendancy. May further explained to me that community life depends on class affiliation. *"It depends on what class you were. Say Reid's father and uncle: they weren't community men as such. They were wealthy landholders. Their entertainment was picnic, races, or social functions not necessarily going and helping in the school or helping in the fire brigade. No, they weren't that level"* (Interview 4, 2011). Her words echo Hazel's memories about forms of entertainment graziers dwelled in the old days and the careful maintenance of status. I asked May how the Lee family history is related to prestige:

May: "I think the prestige is associated with the size of the land holding... so for the Lees - they are here for a long time. The Lees were wealthy; they had one of the biggest farms in the area, so that prestige grew. But there are stories and what was true and what wasn't true in that family history... People have lived here for a while and there is a lot of history that's been collected and held on to and interpreted in different ways. The prestige is, it's the fact that they were wealthy relatively to other people. And that's changed in this generation. Probably, this is the first generation that that's changed" (Interview 4, 2011).

The size of the landholding, the ability to generate wealth out of it and having done so as a family since the settler diaspora arrived in Australia's interior are the generators of respect, recognition, prestige and status in the local community of landowners. However, this generation experiences a change in lifestyle and the former affluent landholder community is subjected to financial pressures. One aspect of this change, most visible since the decade of drought in the early 2000s, effects women's working patterns. The number of farmers' wives who tend to work off the farm is increasing. This has multiplying effects on isolated communities, family life and social interaction.

Norma: "I have heard that there is a change especially in your generation...women usually did the housework and the administration of the farm, so more of the office work. And now because of the

drought they are forced to get an extra income, to work off the farm. Some people mentioned that, so I was wondering if you observed that as well, if you came across that trend?" Helen: "I don't know if it's just because of the drought. I think expectations of spending power have probably gone up in the last generation, so people like to have more ready money to spend. There is certainly a lot of farmers that have wives that work off the farms. And I have them heard referred to as being the best paddock on the place..." Norma: "Wohoo..." Helen: (laughs) "Caus' they are the best income. I think part of that is sort of a wider community thing that women expect now to have their own money and be able to work. Previously, the wife would stay at home and look after the kids, whereas these days this is much more of a personal decision. A couple of girls that decided just to look after the family, while the family is young, before the kids go to school, and might go off to work later. Whereas there are others, they can't wait to go back to work because they like having money, but I mean there are also families where they do need that cash. And the farm...the 10 year drought was pretty crippling, especially further west. So if a farmer can marry a teacher... (laughs). That's a good match. I know a number of women that work off farm because they like to keep their brain active in a different way. And they might not necessarily have any knowledge or interest in the farm itself. It probably was a more general thing that the wife would do the books as you say and the husband would do the work outside. I come from a different background so that's why I've always been a bit more hands on with it. I mean, James's and my background is totally different, he comes from a very patriarchal group. I don't know, women didn't have much knowledge of the farm or much interest either. So James was used to it being the men that do it. It does take a bit of adjustment for him to count in the females" (Interview 11, 2011).

Farmers' wives increasingly work off the property to take on jobs in town. Formerly, the farmer was running the place and his wife was likely to engage in manifold responsibilities, such as the household, watching over the kids, maybe doing the bookwork of the farm and depending on interests and the husband's inclination, the woman might have engaged in the outdoor farm work as well. Also a lot of women tended to organise community events, which is still the case, although less time is available and responsibilities might pile up. Further, the farmer would have employed a couple of full-time workers on the property. Whereas a place like "Bellmont" might have been a home for five families till the 1970s, living in various cottages on the property, today only the farming family inhabits it. This has multiplying effects for small country towns, beyond which lay the farming properties. With the wife working in town and many rural workers gone, the farmer continues to run his place by himself, the fully modernised property allowing him to do so. Loneliness and a lack of social interaction might become problematic, especially in hard and depressing times during droughts or financial worries. There are generally less people on the land and a shortage of labour is just about to kick in, as kids do not necessarily take over the family business and young men in the rural workforce often need the higher wages available in the mining

industry. However, I also spoke to workers who prefer their rural lifestyle over the tight schedule miners have to follow. The rural lifestyle is related to freedom, whereas the city (in this context mostly Sydney), is seen as a great place to visit, but living there is often described in negative terms: an artificial place crowded by paper shufflers who lack the knowledge of the Australian climate, or as a place for daughters to have a great time, while the son is plugging along back on the farm.

Lines of rupturing the “rural community” follow markers of difference according to the place where one lives, i.e. the city or on the country, the latter being home predominantly to settler-migrant descendants. Class differences between landowners and the rural workforce are not expressed explicitly, but where the farmer might emphasise the equality among mates, workers are quite aware of their differing position. The different statuses of landowners have developed historically. Squatters who engaged in large grazing enterprises were members of the societal elite, whereas cockies had to make do and often quickly lost their land again. Middle-sized farms seem to vanish, whereas small “lifestyle properties” proliferate. So do huge land holdings owned by internationally operating companies or indeed foreign governments. The latter are new agents in the field of agricultural business, causing anxieties about food security and future ownership of prime agricultural land, especially in times of an increasing uncertainty of environmental patterns..

3.2.2. The Loss of Place: Reasons for Selling up Home & Heritage

“Farmers are asset rich, but cash poor”, or so the saying goes (Fieldnotes I./II., 2011). If a farmer sells his or her property, it is assumed that they can easily live off the interest. However, it is a tough decision to give up the rural lifestyle, one’s community, home and heritage. What are the reasons that middle-sized landowners come under such a severe pressure that they are ultimately forced to give up their holdings? Debts, the lack of money and cash pressure, caused by inheritance issues, climate conditions and the markets, are identified as the key factors forcing farmers to sell their land.

Succession issues are not new to farmers. Yet the framework in which inheritance patterns are debated changed in the last 25-30 years, which were subjected to heavy droughts and a neoliberal restructuring of the agricultural sector. May works off the farm for an agricultural bank, providing inheritance consultancy for farmers. Drawing from her experiences, she shared her observations with me: *“So, I would have done 300 meetings and there would*

have been three families in 300 that would have been able to pass their farms on to all their children equally. And that the children had the same chances and the same standard of living as the parents before them” (Interview 4, 2011). Properties get too small to provide a living for all people involved. The ideal of equal distribution of land among one’s children is confronted with the inability to do so in practice. It is no longer economically viable to maintain the pattern. It is mostly the sons who continue to run the farm, which means that they have to buy out their sisters’ shares. Nowadays, there are a few female farmers, but their low number merely indicates an exception to the norm.

One evening I discussed the inheritance patterns of “Bellmont” with Helen and James. I asked James if it just came naturally that he and his brother took over the management and if his two sisters had no interest. As it turned out, one sister was actually happy in Sydney, but the other one had a great interest in the land and happened to work on the property quite often. Nevertheless, involving Char in the management was never an issue. Helen: *“James, did you think of paying her as a station hand?”* James: *“Not really, because we were so worried about the debts and all that. Especially in the early days.”* Helen: *“And why not her instead of somebody else?”* James: *“Well, we could have. We could have. Anyway, we didn’t”* (Interview 12, 2011). I asked James if he thought about it as a male-female issue, which he denied. He argued that he wanted his sister to have her own life, to get married and not to be dominated by her older brother. He stated that it was more a *“sibling thing”*. James further stressed that he enjoys working with women on the land and that he does not have any prejudices as other farmers do.

James to Helen: *“I mean, if I really had a thing about females I wouldn’t have let you classified all those cattle.”* Helen: *“What do you mean, you wouldn’t have “let me” class the cattle?”* James: *“Well, the Shorthorns...”* Helen: *“50 % decision.”* James: *“But there wasn’t 50% decision. I said you do it, cause I know...”* Helen: *“But for you to say you wouldn’t have **let** me do it...it’s the gender thing that Norma meant.”* James: *“Ahhh, semantic... I just let you do it and I’m happy with it, because I know you do a good job. It’s not about ability. I think many women are far more particular about what they are doing and the way they are doing it.”* Helen: *“You are quite right about your sister, you would have dominated her, but I think it’s interesting that you didn’t even consider paying her”* (Interview 12, 2011).

James admitted that he had made mistakes due to inexperience. His other sister has had the chance to buy a business in Sydney but he refused to borrow the money to support her. *“We should have done it, I think that’s my greatest regret, that we didn’t borrow money and buy the business for her. Because she would have run it really well and make good money out of it. But I just didn’t have the... I was dead scared of the debt”* (Interview 12, 2011).

Inheritance issues looked different for Bob, and his family resolved the generational change less problematically than other farmers.

Bob: *"I only had one brother and my sister was settled when my grandfather died. We further had that place out west. We sold that in 1990 and that bought my brother out. I was very fortunate: in 1990 I was a very young man to know what my direction was. I was 30-something old and I knew what I owned. Maybe not really what I owned but what I owed. Cause I was left with a debt. With Reid and May, their boys don't seem to be interested in the land. Reid is interested in the land, but I can't see them staying there forever. Dave has made that decision already. So, it's hard. Then there are people, other families that go the other way, they buy up to get bigger"* (Interview 5, 2011).

"Get big or get out" are the two strategies the government suggests for middle-sized farmers to adapt to the new conditions in the rural sector. Thinking about the split up in 1997, Dave told me that he wanted to go the other direction and extend the size of the family holding. He summarised his reasoning to sell his farm to James and Helen in 2010 as the following:

Dave: *"There is a lot of reasons why I sold. But one of them was, there were too many snouts in the trough, not enough land for the amount of people that wanted to get a living off it, basically. And - 10 years of drought and everything else, I had enough. I had an agreement with my brother, he had first offer, if I wanted to sell...and I had first offer, if he wanted to sell. And I just decided, with three children, there wasn't gonna be a future. Which is pretty ordinary, cause that's all I've wanted to do, was being a farmer, but financially... and you know, I feel great now, really. I'm not dwelling on it. I feel a lot better as if I hadn't sold it. There is some sort of a future now. It's getting harder and harder on the land. It's a hard way to make a living, unless you've got more of it. I wanted them to advance here and buy more country or do something, but, I don't know, they didn't wanne do it. Which is a shame. So, that's how it's going on"* (Interview 3, 2011).

May states that when she and Reid returned to the country in 1985 there were a lot of farms around, but now after the drought many medium sized properties are gone. May explained the situation as the following:

May: *"People have been going into a lot of debt in the last eight years. So that impacts on what is possible for farming families going into their future. Australian agriculture is not constant. When you look at the fluctuations in incomes, it's just constantly changing. And they are talking about Climate Change and I suppose it makes fluctuations even greater. But... you know, everybody is in debt, people are in debt. That's a situation, everybody being in debt so quickly"* (Interview 4, 2011).

What remains are some bigger family farms⁵⁰ and James and Helen just made the step "to get big" and doubled the size of their holding. However, big landholdings are increasingly run by

50 In fact a relation of James, Dave and Reid owns one of the biggest family run properties in the area. The owners are the descendants of Sidney Lee's sister.

(international) corporations. Furthermore, the numbers of small lifestyle properties, owned by people who work in the next town, are increasing. Those “*hobby farmers*” (Interview 6, 2011) are on the land for its beauty, they do not engage in agricultural production. A farmer, whose property is situated close to Orange, described how he indirectly comes under pressure by hobby farmers. *“If we could buy a farm for 2000 dollars an acre, we’d be able to make a living and pay debts money back that we would have had to borrow. But when it is some 5000 dollars an acre, so that’s the general valuing, we just can’t do it. So we’re forced to sell”* (Interview 6, 2011). The city sprawl around rural centres such as Orange leads to increasing land prices and a reduction of productive agricultural land. To remain economically viable, this farmer wants to expand his productivity by buying additional land. However, he cannot do so as prices of land are too high. If a bank would grant him a loan, which is unlikely in the first place, he would not be able to pay the money back. Helen told me about another dimension of the phenomenon of increased land value. The statistics indicate that farmers are older now, the average age being 57 years. Helen wondered if Australian agriculture might get into trouble, when farmers want to retire but newcomers cannot enter the farming business.

Helen: *“One of the things we didn’t talk about that is a bit of an issue is the ability of younger people to get involved in agriculture. The price of land is higher than the returns you can make from it. And so if you have got people that want to buy a farm and make a start in agriculture they really need some backing to be able to do it. And not everybody is able to get the backing, that capital.”*

Norma: *“I spoke with Mat, he is the farm hand of Reid’s. And I asked him, if he wants a farm of his own. I think, you know, he said it’s kind of a dream. He also said ‘Oh no, it’s way to expensive, I can’t borrow the money from the bank’.”* Helen: *“Even if you were able to borrow the money... how would you pay it back? Because the profit to be made from the land is low compared with the interest rates. And the only way you get your money back is if the value of the land increases, the capital value increases. But then you only realise that when you sell the place again. To be able to borrow the money to buy a place you then don’t have the money to keep running it.”* Norma: *“So what is the way in? Inheritance or marrying in?”* Helen: *“Yeah, they are both good ways. Or else - go and do something else for a number of years, make money and then buy. A number of shearers used to do that. Cause if a shearer works hard he can make good money. Or else go and work in finance or something and then come back in 10-15 years and have enough money”* (Interview 11, 2011).

Therewith, not only newcomers are prevented to enter the agricultural sector, but also middle ranged farmers are forced to exit the industry. This is directly related to the main reason farmers put forward for their loss of land: debts. *“Farmers gamble on the weather and the markets”* (Fieldnotes I./II.,2011) and Australia just came out of a long period of drought. The

counting of years varies, but everybody agrees that a range of average to devastating dry years has coined the first decade of the 2000s. In addition, market prices vary and since the 1980s Australian farmers are increasingly exposed to the fluctuations of the “free market”. They are not as heavily subsidised as their colleagues in the European Union. I asked Bob to explain me the reasons farmers become indebted.

Bob: *“There has been ten years of drought and a lot of farmers to get going... especially the guys that grow crops. South west of here, they talk about blokes that are farming 4000-5000 acres putting 250,000 dollars a hectare investment into it, so that’s 500,000 dollars investment, just to put the crop in. And then they had a run with four years in a row where they got nothing. So every time they have to do it, they have to borrow money to go back into it again, against their equity. Some of their equities got down to 30 or 40 %. And that’s not sustainable.”* Norma: *“What does it mean?”* Bob: *“What you owe as a percentage of what you own. It’s pretty simple. If you had a million dollar property and you owe 600,000 dollars you only got 40% equity. When things are really good it’s a) the commodity markets are really rocking along and b) interest rates are low. Most farms can run equity about or between 60 – 100%. 100% is ideal. But. When it is a bit tough like it was during the 2000s and interest rates climb back up again, you needed an equity of 90% just so you wouldn’t go out of the back door. I’ve got a debt to clear, quite a debt to clear. So we are trying... that’s our first priority.”* Norma: *“So reasons to sell a farm would be the debts or...?”* Bob: *“My reason would be... one) lack of interest in the family farm. That no family members coming back onto it...all girls or the boys have taken up other lines of work. With two girls at some stage we’ve got to give them some form of inheritance. Somehow we have to get equity out of this to do that. We actually try to draw out equity all the time in other forms of investments, but it’s not that easy. Or two) - you are in a financial position and you just can’t stay there. And that happens a fair bit. At the moment there is big money being offered by Chinese coal mines and gas people...”* (Interview 5, 2011).

Bob indicates how a sequence of failed seasons leads to debts and the exit out of the industry. It further becomes clear that farms productivity has to grow steadily just to maintain their status quo. However, maintaining the status quo is not what farmers pressured by debts aim for. They not only need to increase their profit to be able to pay their loans back, but they also have to increase profit to supply their children with an inheritance. This may lead to practices that are pressuring the country too hard:

Georg: *“You need at least 2000 acres around here to have a reasonable lifestyle. Unless you are more intensive, but in our current situation, you would be pushing your country to maintain some sort of lifestyle. Farming in Australia it’s a lifestyle occupation. If you took in the capital asset that we work on, and you’re actually just doing it as a business... Say you’ve got a million dollar property, whatever the size, it’s worth a million dollars. Do you run it and trying make 3% on it, so return is 3% or 30,000 dollar or sell that million dollar asset and put the money in the bank and live*

of 5% - 6% or 7% interests. Alright? And a lot of places don't make any 3%, so it all weights up"
(Interview 9, 2011).

It is assumed that living off the interest gained by the selling of the farm provides an easy lifestyle, with no worries about climate uncertainty, debts and hard physical labour. However, being the owner of the means of production reduces costs of living a rural worker has to pay for:

Norma: "So it's a lot of work but not so much money you get out of it as in opposed to what you could get for it." Georg: "Yeah, but I think we are a lot healthier than people in the city. We're always active and in the open air at all times. I think it's just how you perceive your asset. If you just look at it in purely monetary terms you'll be selling your asset and live off the interest. And you could quite easily live off the interest. But when you say, you got a return of 30,000 within that, within your expenses all your food and the general daily expenses are paid for. So 30,000 is what you put in your pocket, that's your beer drinking money. I guess if you sold it and you have your 6 % or 7% return from a bank bonus or something like that, you gotta go and pay for every thing out of it" (Interview 9, 2011).

The reasons that lead farmers to sell their properties can be summarised as the following: succession issues are complicated in multiple ways. If the kids lack the interest to inherit the land, the farm is sold. If the children want to maintain the family holding, the holding needs to have a viable size to either split it up, or if only one person wants to continue with it, he or she should be able to buy out the siblings. If the property is too small, that might not be possible and the farmer needs to borrow money to pay the share, otherwise, again, the farm needs to be sold. If money is borrowed, the farming system has to be most productive to pay the debts back, including the interest rates. To be most productive, farming systems need to be modernised, which again is an expansive endeavour farmers need to borrow money for to realise it. If the weather is not rocking along and the place is hit by a drought – or floods – profit is shrinking and the landholder cannot pay back the debts and maintain the business, forcing the farmer to exit the industry. Next to commodity prices and the weather, the high valuing of land can have a disabling effect if a farmer needs to increase the size of the holding to become economically viable and is not able to do so as the pay back of debts plus interest rates is impossible. This is due to the relation between land value and return rates.

One reason for the high valuing of land is related to the city sprawl around rural centres, which take prime agricultural land out of production. Loss of agricultural land is a worry regarding food security in times of an increasingly unviable climate. The predictions for the agricultural wheat/sheep belt in Australia are not exhilarant.

Agricultural land is further interesting for big cooperative agricultural companies as well as foreign governments who buy land to secure their own population's food security. Additionally, mining and gas industries are often interested in agricultural land as many minerals and exploitable resources happen to be under prime agricultural land of which farmers only own the surface. The increased value of land also cuts down newcomers to the agricultural sector, while farmers who want to or have to sell their properties are able to gain high prices for their assets. This makes an exit out of the agricultural industry a lucrative option. Many farmers who are confronted with "get big or get out" chose or are forced to take the latter option.

However, farmers do not view their asset purely in monetary terms. They more often than not shirk away from that decision and even on "economically unviable" farms, people try to hold on to their property as long as possible. So what relates farmers to their blocks of land? What generates the meaning of place they struggle to maintain? Family farmers indicated a distinct perception of the property as a business opposed to farming as a lifestyle and a vocation. I will return to farmers reasoning behind this at a later stage of my thesis, where I summarise what family farms mean to the people who run them. Having touched on the issue of competitive land use I now continue to explore the relevance of the Native Title legislation for the process of land redistribution. In the following section, I want to engage with farmers perception of the Native Title Act and if Indigenous land claims affect farmers' places in agriculture.

3.2.3. Competitive Land Use: Agriculture, Mining, the Urban Sprawl - And Native Title?

Through the last section I described that the increasing valuing of agricultural land relates to a redistribution of ownership patterns, middle-ranged family landholders do not profit from. Pressured by generational changes that go along with inheritance issues, the need to increase productivity and the general modernisation of the agricultural industry force many to give up their vocation. Family farmers and new rural agents are entangled in competitive processes for agricultural land: the urban sprawl brings professionals into the local communities who not necessarily share an interest in agriculture. Large (international) corporations always engaged in investments in the agricultural industry, however, foreign governments that buy up land are new agents in the primary sector. Further, farmers not only compete with the mining

companies for the rural workforce, not able to pay the same wages, but also for the land itself. Mining companies buy up agricultural land and take it out of production. These multiplying processes lead to a general reduction of agricultural land, which is related to issues of food security further sharpened by Climate Change. The new dynamics suggest a process of reterritorialisation in rural Australia that goes along with a redistribution of ownership patterns of the means of production, people and capital.

How do land claims under the Native Title Act fit into the competitive scheme for land? The discourse in Australian society during the 1990s entertained the possibility of farmers losing their land to the 'traditional owners'. How do farmers view the issue today? Serious evaluations of the ineffectiveness of the Native Title Act, the tragic wrong doings in the time of the Mabo-Hysteria during the 1990s and the confession of one's own lack of knowledge were common responses. However, contemporary issues concerning Indigenous peoples were not broadly discussed, at least not in my presence. When I asked farmers if the Native Title Act has had any impact on them, they mostly denied this and further played the issue down, trying to change topic as quickly as possible.

Norma: *"We have the farmers on the land, the mining companies and the foreign investors, so companies or governments. There are hobby farmers buying up land as well. I was wondering, the Native Title, does it have any impact on family farmers?"* Bob: *"No. Very little. It's a tokenism. I don't know enough about it, but it was a socialist government and when they came in they gave them a few bits of land. Basically they pissed it up against the wall. It's just a total waste of time."*

Norma: *"So it doesn't really have any effects on farmers' lands at all?"* Bob: *"It just changed the mindset of farmers. If a farmer finds any Aboriginal heritage on his place around here, he would stay absolutely shtum and say nothing. If anything, hide it. So really what they have done by doing what they did, they've driven it underground. They've actually made the situation worst."*

Norma: *"Why wouldn't farmers tell anybody?"* Bob: *"Because you don't want the government come in and resume that they basically... If it was a huge Aboriginal relict like a burial site, the way the governments work on that is that they would come in and would basically take it over, fence it off."*

Norma: *"Then it's not part of production anymore."* Bob: *"No. They [the government] have given them [the Indigenous peoples] a number of properties and they just don't manage them. They are the worst environmental managers in the whole of the nation. They are dreadful. Cause they won't work. Look, I won't go down that side of it, cause I don't profess to know enough about it, about the Indigenous population. And the management and the science behind it all... it's just a nightmare."*

Norma: *"Have Aboriginal blokes worked on the land like in the old days say as stockmen?"* Bob: *"But not around here. This local community is very... there is no Native Claim anywhere around here. There is very few... if you go West of us there is quite a reasonable community of them. There are in Dubbo, but most of them are now in the big cities, bought in by... cause that's where the social security is"* (Interview 5, 2011).

Another farmer knew a little more about the situation and – shaking his head – admitted that people get strange over the topic:

Reid: *“There is a land claim by the tribe that was based in this area. I can't even think of their name. All from Wellington. So there is a land claim. It's only over Crown land. When I said it won't have any impact and I don't think it will but... Well, there is a traveling stock route and there is a watering point. And that is actually Crown land. And the land right claim would impact on that. So that Aborigines by rights would be able to use that land for their traditional purposes and all that sort of stuff, too.”* Norma: *“Than you couldn't use the water anymore?”* Reid: *“Yeah, no. I don't think it has any impact on anyone else's usage. It just gives the Aboriginal people some control and some... they may be able to direct that some practice aren't done there... I don't know. But I'm sure they [farmers] would still be able to use these traveling stock routes. I don't think they [Indigenous peoples] can exclude other people. It just means that they can have access to it. That's how I understand it, anyway. Doesn't really worry me. And it doesn't have any impact on freehold land.”* Norma: *“Yeah, somebody mentioned that when farmers find Aboriginal sites on their land, they shush because of the whole bureaucracy that follows. If you report it you have to fence it off and then the land is no longer part of production.”* Reid: *“That's the fear. It's like, yeah, I don't think it's founded. It's a completely unfounded fear. Basically all they ask you to do is, if you do find a significant site that, yeah, that you don't plough it up. If the site was particularly significant than the government or you know someone may try to slap some control over you, but if you find a few stone axes and stuff it is not as if you have to fence anything off. I think people get a little rather strange about this sort of stuff sometimes. But this place is... I don't think it has much impact on us myself”* (Interview 1, 2011).

Georg the pastoralist in the area has a different take on the situation. He considers his property in the Central West merely as something to take up his time during the year. The recent bushfires up in Queensland destroyed over 130,000 acres of his land and by comparison, his land in the Central West would *“just be a bit of a back burn”* (Interview 9, 2011). As the pastoralist owns vast areas of leasehold land, I was curious to find out his idea about the Native Title:

Norma: *“So have you been effected by the Native Title Act?”* Georg: *“Nah, it's too far for blackfellas to drive off. It's more than a six hour drive away from them, anyway. If you understand that. Blackfellas won't drive too far. Up on this range here [tipping on the map], we fenced it right up till that cliff, there is a lot of blackfella carvings, paints, burial sites, initiation sites... The whole. You get the whole lot.”* Norma: *“This is on your land...?”* Georg: *“Yeah”* (Interview 9, 2011).

At a later point, the pastoralist showed me some photos of his properties up north and the following is an extract from the conversation we had by browsing through his photo-gallery.

Georg: *“So this is all blackfellas stuff. They would have come down into these and done...whatever they do. It's where they used to have their ceremonies and things.”* Norma: *“So, is it a stone circle or?”* Georg: *“Yeah.”* Norma: *“Wow, that's a painting.”* Georg: *“Yeah.”* Norma: *“Do you have any*

idea what it is?" Georg: *"That's a hand. They all have a significant reason. There's some carving as well. This is where they used to initiate the young men and teach them about women. If you can see anything that..."* Norma: *"Those lines or..."* Georg: *"No, up here. What do you reckon that is?"* Norma: *"Ohh...!"* (laughs). [It looks like an abstract painting of a vagina on the wall]. Georg: *"So they used to get into all that kind of stuff as well. It's always describing women and how you treat them and what you do with them."* Norma: *"Kind of an advisory book on the wall."* Georg: *"Yeah. Just, you know, how they did it."* Norma: *"But nowadays there are no Aboriginal people on the land?"* Georg: *"No...they are all in the towns. It's too far. They wanted to...they want exclusive access to them [the sites]. But. You never give them exclusive access, because you know they're not gonna go off there, because it's too far for them"* (Interview 9, 2011).

Later on, we were talking about multiculturalism and the increasing relevance of Asia for Australia's economy, including the agricultural sector. For example, the wool I had helped to produce in "Bellmont's" shed the other day is shipped off to China, where it is further processed. Talking about international relations Georg mentioned that there are a few migrants from Zimbabwe and South Africa around, which lead him to expand his take on Indigenous land claims.

Georg: *"I guess those South Africans and Zimbabweans are probably from that... they've been... they colonised all that... African area. Where...they get a freer go here. The traditional owners over there are taking over their land. You got a bit more security here. But Native Title - really, out here it means absolutely nothing. But up in Northern Queensland... it's the same sort of thing, quiet death, not as much of an issue. You still try to work with... If somebody has got a legitimate claim, well, you try to work with them. This nature refuge up on [our property] M. D., we had one of the big hob nobs of the Aboriginal community came in. And he turned up in his Armani suit, with the gold Rolex and demanding everything. And you just going 'Mate, piss off'. Cause he's not fairing... he just wants exclusive rights to everything. And that bloke never set a foot out of Brisbane. It's all... I think it's a lot of hot air, really. But you know, if somebody wants to use your country because of his own traditional place, but... around here it doesn't happen. They've been disintegrated so much, the Aboriginal community. But up North they still got settlements of the traditional owners. And you know, we have no better interest to work with a landholder who knows how to make money and they can still do their traditional things. All they wanne do is go and spear fish and catch turtles. But most of those sorts of things are [even] further up north, up on the Gulf"* (Interview 9, 2011).

Native Title claims to land by Indigenous peoples do not have any material impact on family farmers and even pastoralists, who maintain large leasehold properties, are not effected in a dimension that would threaten their livelihoods. Nevertheless, fears over the loss of land do exist and are often projected onto Indigenous peoples, despite the more immediate threats provided by the current organisation of the economic system as well as Climate Change. This

will become even clearer in my contrasting of narratives of the colonial past in the first part of the next chapter.

3.3. The Shifting Meaning of Place: Imagining Time in Space & Space through Time

In my third empirical chapter I engage with farmers' narrations of the colonial past as well as their imaginings of future agricultural development in NSW. I further describe the ideas of an elected member of the Nation Farmers Federation (NFF) about family farmers' position in and role for the Australian nation. I conclude the chapter by entangling the farm as a place of meaning and how farmers relate to processes of continuity and change.

In the first section I briefly summarise uncanny encounters farmers have experienced in the Australian landscape, which they related to the colonial past. I continue with a contrast of two forms of engagement with the family history. Whereas the first attempt tries to silence the past, the second narrative is an encounter that aims to negotiate family stories and own assumptions in face of the new post-colonial awareness. The strategies employed to fill gaps of knowledge thereby reflect paradigms of settler Australia's understanding of itself and the Indigenous Other. This reveals patterns of thought or shapes of memory that stand in conflict with the explicit longing to better understand settler-Indigenous relations.

The imaginings of agriculture's future in the sheep/wheat belt – and family farms as places – are differentiated between short-term opportunities and long-term worries. Short-term aims regard a successful business due to high commodity prices and acceptable seasons. Long-term perspectives are less optimistic and characterised by worries about Climate Change and the structural development of communities in the Central West. The approach of farmers to their land traditionally described as long-term and holistically thinking, comes under pressure, when confronted with the impossibility to pass the land on to future generations. Although personal statements of farmers suggest interest in settler-Indigenous relations the future imaginings of an official representative of the NFF lack an inclusion of Indigenous practices in an Anglo-Celtic discourse about agriculture. Therewith, the potential not only to overcome the divide between settler descendants and Indigenous communities through a shared management of the land is overseen, but also the chance to develop environmentally sustainable approaches in agriculture by drawing on Indigenous patterns of knowledge is

ignored. I conclude this chapter by entangling the farm as a place of meaning through time not only for family farmers but also for the Australian nation.

3.3.1. The Colonial Past in the Present: Forbidden Places

“Bloody women, always have to dig up the past” (Fieldnotes I., 2011) – Talking about colonisation, squatters’ settlement on the land and frontier violence is not the easiest dinner conversation to have. An uneasy atmosphere creeps in, emotions need to be reigned in and my flow of speaking the English language turned into a stutter, fishing for the right words. Experiences of strong uncanny feelings in the landscape are not uncommon. A farmer told me about a simple drive through the countryside that ended in horror. The couple only realised after, that the overwhelming negative emotions had overcome them while passing by Inverell, near Bingara in northern NSW. Here, the Myall Creek Massacre had taken place at the 10. June 1838. The couple related their horrible feelings to the violence that had befallen the place in the past. In another occasion a farmer had his 180-year-old homestead exorcized to find relieve from the ghosts of a time long gone. The seven-year-old daughter explained me that this homestead is very old and that it belonged to the Aborigines once. When I told her that this was not true by explaining the history of the house, she countered my argument with doubts. She wondered why then she had found those spears out in the paddock and if they did not belong to Aborigines.

Another farmer told me about a trip she undertook together with her mother and friends up in Western Queensland. While their friends drove directly to the spot, the farmer and her mother parked the cars up the canyon and decided to walk down to the river flats. As she wanted to take a picture from a particular lovely spot overlooking the vast land she separated from her Mum who continued her walk. After a while, the farmer did not feel well. *“‘Gosh, I don’t feel comfortable here, I really, I don’t really feel comfortable being here’”* (Interview 11, 2011). Still thinking about what to do her Mum came back. As it turned out, she had had strange feelings, too and told her daughter *“‘something was saying to me go back, go back’”* (Interview 11, 2011). They decided to walk back up to the car in order to join their friends for the picnic. Although she could not explain what had happened to both of them separately, she assumed it to be very likely that they had stumbled into an Indigenous site, a men’s site only, perhaps. *“So I don’t know if it was because we are women, or if it’s because we’re just strangers, but we shouldn’t have been there”* (Interview

11, 2011). Whatever the case might have been, the feeling of danger was unpleasant and powerful enough to prevent the women from continuing their bush walk.

Every farmer I spoke to reacted sensitive to stories of the bloody past, but the way people deal with Australia's history varied broadly. The first evening I stayed at one of the family's properties, I sat together with the farmer and his wife as well as her Mom who visited her daughter's family for a couple of weeks. The farmer's wife had asked me during the day what I was on about and admitted that she did not really understand an anthropologists' doing. After dinner I took the chance to explain my interests. I stated that I am curious about the socio-economic changes in the agricultural sector in NSW, trying to better understand it through the lens of the family history. I continued that I wondered about the establishment of the properties and how farmers' everyday practices are related to the emergence of the Australian nation. The farmer's wife was also curious about Indigenous-settler relations and what had happen here in the old days "*I don't know anything about it*" (Fieldnotes II., 2011). The farmer immediately tried to put a lid on the conversation: "*It's the past, it's best to let it be in the past and not bringing it up. If one fellow gets interested and thinks he can get something out of it, a group might emerge and than it's going*" (Fieldnotes II., 2011). I did not respond, but the farmer's wife would not be shushed quiet. Slightly pushy in her husband's direction she said: "*But Norma has read articles about it, she knows stuff already*" (Fieldnotes II., 2011). She referred to the article in the Daily Mirror from 1964 titled "Massacre set of War of Extermination"; another member of the family had given me the copy earlier. I nodded and carefully started to summarise the article: Lee's stockmen where forced by the drought to push their stock beyond the licenced area in order to find new grazing grounds and water. By expanding to the west they met a group of Indigenous peoples at the Bogan River. Apparently – so the article says – the stockmen ordered the Indigenous people to work for them or to leave and further humiliated an elder who defied them. The Indigenous group left but attacked the camp early the next morning. The surviving stockmen retreated and after the incident became public, settlers streamed out and killed Indigenous persons in revenge. I knew that the farmer was aware of the article's content and after I finished he stated: "*That's all I know as well. Nothing more. People always ask about that massacre and Lee's involvement in it. The past should let be*" (Fieldnotes II., 2011). As the mood was friendly but quite excited, I tried to introduce a calming atmosphere. "*Family histories are always complicated. They are related to what was considered to be normal back than and to what had happened in the society at this time*

and place” (Fieldnotes II., 2011). I continued that as a German, my family history is also quite intense and that I am not on about judging farmers for crimes their ancestors might have committed. Carefully, I added that it is nevertheless important, how contemporaries deal with their knowledge of the past.

At one point of the dinner conversation, her Mom told me about an Indigenous community who lives close by her property. The farmer walked over to his wife and they started whispering. I could not help but noticing the secrecy, but continued to listen to the explanations of the friendly and chatty elder. She told me that farmers do not want Indigenous communities to know when they possess artefacts. When the couple joined back in the conversation they explained me that there is a need for silence about these things as *“Aborigines have gained quite some power these days”* (Fieldnotes II., 2011) and that one has to be careful or otherwise they might claim the land. *“Is that since the Native Title?”* I asked and the farmer confirmed that. I explained that this is not the case, legally, but he clearly neither trusted the legal framework nor the government (or me for that matter) sufficiently to believe it. He knew that I would write about the stories I encountered in the fields and yards and he gave me his approval to do so - with a smirk: *“I’m used to being in trouble”* (Fieldnotes II., 2011).

Implicitly, he explained the miserable living conditions that reign in many Indigenous communities due to the introduction of the equal payment law in the 1960s. Indigenous persons used to work on stations especially in the Northern Territories, but were only paid in natural resources such as food. The farmer explained that when the law was enforced the Indigenous stockmen lost their jobs, went on the dole and into grog. The problem would be their low resistance to alcohol and nowadays they would all bash each other up. One of the women said: *“You can really feel sorry for them”* but the farmer shook his head: *“Nah...”* (Fieldnotes II., 2011). They put forward the idea that Indigenous peoples should get up, get a job and do something.

The farmer’s wife stated that when she had travelled overseas, everybody did ask her about the Aboriginal people and that she always felt as if she had to defend herself. I replied that I had made similar experiences during travelling. That people would always ask me about the 2nd World War, but that I thought it to be normal because people are curious and expect you to know more about it or are just interested in your take on your country’s history. The woman nodded vaguely, *“I don’t like it”* (Fieldnotes II., 2011). She further suggested that I might be more used to it because there are so many 2nd World War stories around, which

confront Germans all the time with their country's past. *"Do you get confronted with the colonial history much?"* I asked in return and she denied, *"No, not at all"* (Fieldnotes II., 2011).

In fact, I have met many Anglo-Celtic Australians during my travel on the East Coast that complained about a common tourist perception of the country being full of racists. In consequence, I generally started discussions about their definition of racism. The conversation I had with the farming family developed in a similar manner and they assured me that their comments are not about being a racist. They reminded me of last week, when the farmer had written a letter of recommendation for a young Indigenous man who had worked on the property as a gardener a couple of years ago. He needed the letter because he wanted to join the army and the farmer prepared the document. *"It's not about being a racist it's about taking care of oneself"* (Fieldnotes II., 2011).

Bringing up colonial stories was perceived as "dirtying" the family history and inherently threatening, as the family history can be a source of pride and status. It further questions the settlers' right to the land and the legitimacy of farmers' being here. In an uncanny move this legitimacy was further claimed by expressing the belief that there is "Aboriginal blood" in the family. *"Have you noticed that some people are so dark? He has this theory that..."* - *"You know what?"* the farmer interrupted his wife *"I get tested. I get an DNA test."* - *"But to what would you compare it?"* the woman asked and her husband replied that there are scientists and that they have the codes. However, the trouble would be that *"people got never registered as...as...a...err..."* - *"Race?"* the Mom suggested *"Yeah"* the farmer agreed (Fieldnotes II., 2011). So the problem for the DNA scientists would be the lack of data.

The attempt to silence stories about the violence of the colonial past is paralleled by the further attempt to claim Indigenous legitimacy of belonging to place. The assumption of sharing the same blood expresses the longing for shared and "mixed" heritage, which would change the farmer's position towards his colonial family history and release him from its threatening potential. Thereby, the unjust dispossession of Indigenous peoples of their land, which enabled the development of settler's relations with the land in the first place, would be ideologically dissolved. The unsettling – or uncanny – element that characterises settler-descendants' belonging to land would be calmed and moral legitimacy of being in place re-established. This has a further, but only hypothetical legal dimension: in case of Indigenous claims to the farmland, the farmer could refer to his own Indigenous heritage. Although this

episode indicates a form of recognising Indigenous belonging and rights to land, the logic is incorporated in a rhetoric that aims to maintain and deepen settler-descendants belonging to land, precisely at a point of rupture that threatens their being-in-place. It maintains asymmetrical power-relations and ownership patterns in an Anglo-Celtic favour and can thus be described as *negative recognition*.

After that dinner discussion this side of the farming family backed off. Remaining friendly, hospitable and very kind, they were cautious not to engage in any further discussions about the colonial past with me again. It would not have been appropriate to bring up the topic again. I would just have been shut out for being rude.

In the following, I contrast the attempt to silence the colonial past of one side of the family to a further discussion that I had with other family members. These farmers engaged openly with the issue of Indigenous dispossession in intensive discussions. By criticising some of their statements, I shared my thoughts and we were able to reach limits of knowledge and be aware of it. “The participant is always right” is a saying borrowed from shop owners and I do not buy into it. At one point of the conversation, I found myself arguing for the ‘social structure’ of Indigenous societies. Silently, I gave my salute to Radcliffe-Brown and wondered about how relational and context dependent every argument is. This is why I decided to present the biggest part of the discussion I had with the farmers directly (although carefully edited), instead of abstracting and summarising it. I did push the couple in this conversation and they must have gone nuts with me. Nevertheless, both of them are deeply interested in history and especially the farmer emphasised that he would like to know more about his family’s involvement in the colonial struggle. “*The only way anybody can move on is talk about it*”. And that is what we did.

Norma: “*So which role does the Australian history play for you? Does it play any role?*” James: “*Yeah, I suppose it does. In the early days we were probably part of it, in the sense of being here a long time and all that. Also it plays a role, cause we are still finding out about our relations. We first thought that the original Lee was a First Fleeter. But we don’t think he was, we think he was actually a convict and his wife definitely was a convict. And it made me think of how tough they must have been. Because if they came out in the 2nd fleet, that was slave ships. They were paid whether they got there dead or alive. And they survived. And I think that’s a great testament for their toughness and their willing to go on. And eventually became part of the establishment. Which is quite amazing in one generation. But that’s sort of a family historical role. A lot of Australian history is pretty boring. It’s parliamentary history from 1900 on, it’s about various policies.*”

Helen: “*What about the history about exploring the nation? And all those exciting things.*” James: “*That’s 19th century history.*” Helen: “*That’s the history which really...*” James: “*They are the*

'glory days of Australia Felix'." Helen: "Yeah, yeah. But don't you think people sort of like the idea of that?" James: "They do and that's part of the... frontier, not frontier, that's an American thing. But there was Australia Felix, a huge land where one could realise ones dreams or what have you." Norma: "The frontier is an American thing?" James: "It's an American thing." Norma: "But in Australia was a frontier, too, wasn't it?" James: "There was to a degree, but it was never called a frontier. William Lee went beyond the bounds of civilisation, which was Wellington. So in that sense it was a frontier recognised by government. Once you went beyond that, you know, that was a new frontier, I suppose. And he did that, he tested all those boundaries, if you like. It's perhaps more about boundaries." Helen: "It's interesting that our frontier hasn't resulted in a gun mentality the way the American frontier has. Probably partly because the Aborigines were not as warlike as the Native Indians in America." James: "Not like cowboys and Indians, you know." Norma: "But when the American frontier was about cowboys and Indians...what was the Australian frontier about?" James: "It was about boundaries and the frontier was not stopped by the Aborigines. It was more about the environment. I mean, that sounds terrible, but what I am saying is: the European assessment in America was dealing with a group of people who actually said 'This is our land' 'You shouldn't go here' 'Don't come here'. The Aborigines being hunter and gatherers... They had their own tribal groups and it was far more fluid, so there was no organised structure as it was in New Zealand, too, with the Maoris. But the Maoris actually had a..." Norma: "Surely the Aborigines had a social structure." James: "Oh they did, yeah. But what I'm saying is, their social structure was much more loose. So many made pacts with Europeans and then were waring against their own people."

Helen: "Also there is a big difference in the carrying capacities in the lands. So the Aborigines were a lot sparser than they were in America or New Zealand. They just tended to move. And as the white people came in they moved a bit further." James: "So yeah, carrying capacity or hardship. Food resources were scarce in this country because of our very harsh environment. So the fron...if you wanna call it frontier, I suppose it's a frontier." Norma: "What do you want to call it?" James: "A boundary or something." Helen: "It's never been called the frontier. It was sort of... it was always the Outback⁵¹." James: "It's not an Australian thing. Yeah, the Outback. Aborigines weren't a major barrier of the expansion. The big barrier was the environment. The barrier where explorers died, simply lack of water and lack of this unrelenting landscape. And that's were the Aborigines were in harmony with the landscape. They understood it. They understood nature. And a lot of that we could have learnt from them, yeah."

Norma: "The idea that the Aborigines just moved back in their territories when white men came... But than they would have gotten into conflict - when they crossed their boundaries - with the next group." James: "Yeah." Norma: "But then the situation was, ok, we either have war with the next Aboriginal group or with the white men." James: "Yeah, yeah." Norma: "So just from that

51 At another stage of this conversation I asked the couple to explain the different environments in Australia, labelled as 'the bush', 'the Outback', 'the country', 'the land'. "The Outback is always a bit further on" (Interview 15,2011) and clarified that "In the old days, it's a 19th century term, the bush was anywhere out of Sydney" (Interview 15, 2011).

perspective, I don't know. There must have been a war. They cannot just have said 'Meew, ok, take our land.' James: *"There probably was."* Helen: *"But also they didn't have the strong sense of ownership... of the land either. Aborigines learnt... they don't own the land. They are part of the land. So they didn't see... this bit of land as belonging to them. If anything they belonged to it."* James: *"But there were tribal areas."* Helen: *"Oh yeah."* James: *"Some of them were at the Bogan River. Stay here while the season is good but after that we have to go back. So they went back near the farms. Probably all of them, they either integrated or married out or conflict, it could have been conflict, too."* Norma: *"At the Bogan River there was a massacre."* James: *"Oh there was, yeah. But I'm saying in here, I don't know what happened."* Helen: *"The Bogan River Blacks were a lot more warlike than a number of the other tribes."* James: *"Well, they fought for – what? – for their resources."* Helen: *"In Wellington there was a mission and the Aborigines converted. But they also brought Aborigines there from other areas, like Mudgee Blacks, too. So the Wellington ones would fight with the Mudgee ones. And so there was more conflict between the Aborigines than there was between the Aborigines and the whites."*

Here, it is interesting to notice that Indigenous people are presented as inherently divided and more hostile towards each other than against the settlers and missionaries, overlooking the fact that settlers forced them into reserves and missionaries.

James: *"But I wonder whether... with the Aborigines, and this is the great unknown for a lot of us, because, a lot of it is not written down. Not even some of it, some position. I mean, obviously if there is a massacre, it's a government report, it's written down. But. There is no such paper that Blacks were more warlike... perhaps they were just more protective of their natural resources out there. The Aborigines along this river probably could have lived there without moving too far. Cause there was water, there was fish, there was plenty of food. So the urge to protect resources was perhaps less because there was no need. Whereas out there, there was always need, even before white men came. Those resources belonged to that group. I'm not sure. And a lot of it is unwritten. I've got no stories, apart from the Blacks living up the hill [behind the farm house], they camped up there. Well, they were just there. I mean it was their land anyway. It's not as if they were allowed to be here, they were there. And there are stories of, for instance, when they had stone axes, but when white men came there was steal axe. There was no way they used stone axes after that, steal axes are far more effective. So being smart, they would use the better material, you know what I mean?"* Norma: *"Yeah, sure."* James: *"But what happened right here, I don't know... how many Blacks were here? There are family photos of Aborigines in bonnets and stuff. Probably here, maybe at Bathurst. I think a lot of them actually... they sort of became part of the, you know... in service, or what have you. But what they were paid or how they lived - I don't know."* Norma: *"So that is the thing I find...peculiar. It's not long ago, right?"* James: *"No, it's not long ago. Well, if I could speak to my grandfather, I might have known."* Norma: *"There is just so much knowledge..."* James: *"...lost, yeah. And you see, also, my father said he got three letters from his grandfather. One when he was at school and two during the war. And my father was 23 when his father died. And at that time he was away at school and off to the war"* (Interview 15, 2011).

At a later point of the conversation, we had a look at photos of James's ancestors and their properties. One photo showed an Indigenous group of women sitting in the grass in front of a house. We were not able to either identify the property, nor the time the photo was taken.

James: *"They are obviously around the station. So quite early those women were either working or had camps around where the stations were. And they do say that once the stations were established for an Aborigine it was better to be... oh, not better, but... When you're a hunter and gatherer and when there is food and flour... It makes it easier to live."* Norma: *"Eh... I know that there is this argument..."* James: *"I'm not, I'm not... Look. I know, what I'm saying sounds like as if 'Oh yes, we came and their life got better'. No! I don't think it did. But what I'm saying is if you're a hunter-gatherer and there is food available - you gonna go for the easy stuff first. Aren't you? You're not going to continue doing your... And whether they speared sheep and stuff, I don't know. Maybe they did. Cause that's a lot easier than hunting a kangaroo. I mean let's face it. If you've been eating kangaroo all your life and a sheep comes along... aren't you gonna kill a sheep?"* Norma: *"I don't know."* Helen: *"A lot easier to catch a sheep than a kangaroo."*

In the literature I came across (i.e. Gammage 2011) the killing of farm animals was described as a form of guerrilla warfare, Indigenous people engaged in to eject the new arrivals, by destroying the pillar of their economic system and basis for survival.

James: *"What I'm saying is... simply from a point of view of getting food."* Norma: *"See, and this is the thing I don't know. Because there is anthropological work⁵² saying that it's always just assumed that hunter and gatherer societies lived under pressure to find food. But there has been some research saying, well actually they lived in a very affluent way. Cause they worked - what? 3-4 hours a day? - so, each of them. So it was a small group, they were moving around. That's not a lot of time to secure your..."* James: *"...food."* Norma: *"...your everyday life. If you compare it to how much time people spend in the city, working 8-10 hours a day..."* James: *"That's not that great."* Norma: *"No."* James: *"Well, it depends where your resources are, too. It's harder to find food in the desert and it takes longer, than in a place like here."* Norma: *"Oh yeah, but we are talking about here."* James: *"Oh yeah, we're talking about here. See, Manly in Sydney was called Manly, because the Aborigines were well built, they were great. The Noble Savage all that stuff. Nowadays people think about Aborigines as the little ones that are running around the desert. But they weren't all like that, because many had more access to better food. And there were desert people who were used to the desert and there were people on the coast who were fishermen. Even amongst the Aboriginal groupings, which I think had 300 different languages... I'm just trying to say that in the sense that we talk about this disparate group of people on a huge continent with differing customs and... I know they were all related and they traded, there were well-established trade routes. Because some of the stone implements they had, geologically they weren't from that area. I'm fascinated by the Aboriginal stuff."* Norma: *"I'm fascinated by the... that they are not here."* James: *"Yeah, the lack of them."* Norma: *"Yeah, and of this silent gap, you know"* (Interview 15, 2011).

52 I refer to Marshall Sahlins' "Stone Age Economics" (1972).

These discussions are not easy and not everybody is as open about their ideas of history as these farmers were. Most people I talked to get uncomfortable, maybe afraid of being called a racist or being judged guilty of their ancestors doing, their family's past that is the Australian colonial story. As a German who grew up with her grandparents – and the farmer has a great interest in German history – I know how strange situations can get, when people are embarrassed about my country's past, fearing to shame me and biting their lips, when I mention that my grandfather fought in Stalingrad. We discussed stories about the 2nd World War while treating the sheep in the yards and I think because I talked freely about Nazi Germany, he tried to do the same when I asked him about Indigenous-settler relations. I am not on about comparing bloody frontier violence with the crimes committed under the Nazi regime. I am more interested in using my knowledge concerning the dealing with a nation's history. Germans often state/ed they did not know about the horror of the Holocaust. I wondered about the parallels, when members of the "Anglo-Celtic majority population" and especially farmers said that they do not know anything about frontier violence – or the war of extermination. I am interested in farmers' knowledge about frontier violence, how they deal with this knowledge and if they relate it to their family's past.

James: *"When I was at university we had an Aboriginal girl lecturing us. And she said what struck her was the silence of the students, cause we just didn't know anything about it. And I agree, it is a gap."* Norma: *"I think people fall silent because of a trauma. Or out of guilt and repression. I think actually that this is an indicator that here has been a war."* James: *"Maybe. And I'm certainly not trying to hide that up, I just don't know. I know of the massacre on the Bogan. But I understand what you're on about, Norma. I would like to know... I don't think my father knew anything about it, either."* Norma: *"You reckon?"* James: *"No, I don't think he knew a lot about it. My grandfather would be the one to speak to. I'd like to know what happened."* Norma: *"Yeah, me too. A lot of Germans react similar when confronted with Nazi Germany and the Holocaust. I'm just saying, it's difficult. And every time I travel I get confronted with the 2nd World War and I'm interested in it, you know, for myself. So, I can talk about it."* James: *"The only way anybody can move on is talk about it."*

Norma: *"Do you reckon this silence... I mean the knowledge, the experience wasn't passed on. Do you reckon it indicates that your ancestors might have had a feeling of guilt?"* James: *"Look, I really don't know. I would have liked to speak to my grandfather, cause he would have known more about it. And my great-grandfather, he would have known. My position comes from sheer ignorance, really. No one ever mentioned this, never mentioned the Aborigines or anything. Just didn't know much about them. But certainly, it's a bit hard for me to answer that question. I'm not doing it to protect my relations, because I haven't spoken to them about any... it wasn't an issue. It was never mentioned."*

Norma: *"This is why... I think this article⁵³ I've read said that the Native Title Act is challenging farmers or the Anglo Celtic population's sense of belonging and in the believe of having a right to the land."* James: (sighs) *"Oh yeah..."* Norma: *"So when this postcolonial idea of recognising that the Aborigines have been here before... The consequences of that is, ok then –"* James: *"Then it's not your land."* Norma: *"Yeah."* James: *"Yeah. No, I understand that. And it's strange, but as I've said earlier. Even though, on paper, I own the land, I've never felt that I really own it anyway. I think a lot of farmers are a little bit paranoid about it. Even though there may be Native Title and all, the land wouldn't be redistributed amongst a heap of Aborigines anyway. The reality is, Aborigines would have a right to hunt and fish, but they wouldn't have a right to run a farm on the land unless it was common ground, I think. So if it's Crown land. I'm talking in the terms of this legislation, they might have a chance of getting their land back and running it how they want, or selling it or whatever. Any reserve or anything like that. But anything that is privately owned nowadays, they won't then say 'Sorry, this farm...' So what do you think? Am I challenged? Am I threatened by the Native Title legislation?"* Norma: *"Nah... not in person, but I think there are feelings of..."* James: *"Oh, I think there are, people have jumped up in arms."* Norma: *"There is kind of an irrational fear."* James: *"Oh it is irrational, I agree. It is irrational. And I don't have a problem with it, because as I've said, I've come to the view over the years that, even though I technically own it... and people might say, you stole it from the Aborigines, which was the case. I mean, anybody who has got any land in Australia you could say that the Aboriginal owners where the first owners, all land, including government land, every bit of land, belonged to the Aborigines first"* (Interview 15,2011).

James: *"There was a story... When I was at school one of the kids told us - as I reaffirmed the other day, and this bloke is older than me, he's in his 60s - about his grandmother who remembers as a child Aborigines on their way into town. Fighting one another. But it was a ritual where there was one group here and one group there and they were throwing spears. A celebration rather than a fight. And she remembered that. And told her grandchildren and they actually mentioned it in school. So that's interesting. That's the only instance where somebody said they remembered as child Aborigines being in those paddocks. So that was this person's great grandmother. So really, from 1900 on... I think a lot of the white population in this area didn't know much about the Aborigines at all cause we were early settled. What happened, where did they go? But my aunt tells us, well she was born in 1916, she tells about a family group of Aborigines that lived on the hill. They used to come down and... get bits and pieces, you know. Flour and stuff and sugar."* Norma: *"When she remembered that, she must have been older than five or something."* James: *"Yeah, well yeah, that's 1920. It seems really..."* Norma: *"Fairly recent."* James: *"Yeah, it's fairly recent, that's right. And then she told me the story of Mr. Marvellous who came down [from the top of the hill behind the homestead]. Whether that was narrated to her as a little girl or whether she remembers it, I don't know and she's dead now, so, can't ask her. And I never heard that story except not long*

53 See Cerwonka (2004), Behrendt (2002), Gibson (2002), Gelder/Jakobs (1998), among others.

before she died. I didn't know about this sick fellow who came down from the hill and they were trying to make him better and he said 'This is no good' and walked back up on the hill again. I don't know. I honestly don't think my father or Reid's father knew anything about it either. I don't think there was any sort of... you know, covering up or anything. They just never mentioned it. I suppose we should have asked. I did ask my uncle once about it, but he didn't know anything either. And in the early period there was a lot of mission activity, you know, convert them. Make them "civilised", there was that attitude amongst... well it was an attitude of society and also an attitude of religion to convert the Aborigines to Christianity" (Interview 15,2011).

The farmer's wife had been busy in the yards but now joined back in the conversation. In the following we discuss similarities and differences between farmers' and the Indigenous peoples relation to the land. Further, a discussion emerged, whether or not there was a war of extermination. This crime however, is never explicitly mentioned. Also, the farmers do not explicitly relate the contemporary life circumstances of Indigenous people to the fact of colonisation. Instead, they suggest characteristics *of them* and *of their culture* that might have led to their "downfall". This echoes not only arguments common in the Australian society build on the fiction of *terra nullius*. It also reminded me of a certain structural-functionalist approach to culture and indeed some writings in Australian anthropology that collect cultural characteristics that describe two opposing or at least conflicting groups⁵⁴.

Helen: *"The thing about the Aborigines on the land, it's a central part of their spiritual life. Without land they've lost a lot of their culture. Cause their culture is bound up with the connection of land."*

James: *"And their paintings reflect that, too."* Norma: *"Do you reckon farmers' culture is similar?"*

Not in terms of how..." James: *"No."* Norma: *"... the culture looks like, but... the living is bound to*

the land as well." James: *"Well, it is. There is an emotional connection, but it's not the whole spiritual being."*

Helen: *"Your believe system, your systems of believe and spiritual... yeah, your are not bound to the land spiritually. Some people have a greater connection with the land than others, but that's due to individual personality. It's an individual personality thing."*

James: *"I mean, really, the European culture and the Aboriginal culture are different ends on the spectrum."*

Norma: *"In which regard? What do you mean by that?"* James: *"The Aboriginal is a sharing culture, what's mine belongs to you as well. Whereas the English tradition certainly, probably most of the European tradition, it's that Protestant work ethic: work hard and you will get somewhere. The Aboriginal system, from a survival point of view, was the ultimate communist system, where survival depends on the good of the whole not the good of the individual. Whereas we come, and including you, come from a culture of... work hard and make your way, you got a mercantile system, where you exchange money for goods and services."*

Helen: *"There is the idea of charity. But charity is more of a demeaning sort of thing, whereas for the Aborigines it was just a part of everyday life. And it still is which is one of the things that creates problems for them."*

54 For a disturbing discussion of Australian anthropology's 'Culture Crisis' debate see Altman/Hinkson (2010).

“Culture” is spoken of, but what is narrated, is the capitalist form of economic life and its implicit emphasis on individuals as the smallest entity of economic engagement. The hunter-gatherer economy is identified as different to the market economy farmers participate in. Lacking a more suitable alternative term or concept, the Other is marked as “communist” to describe this difference. “Communism” can be seen as the most prominent opposing economic model to capitalism⁵⁵.

James: *“So what I say is, particularly when you go back, say 180 years, the education of your average person that came out here or was here was highly prejudice with regard to the Aborigines to begin with. There was no trying to understand the culture, you know. It was ‘They need to be civilised and taught our way of living.’ That was the culture. It was more of a paternal thing. ‘They don’t know what they are doing, we’ll show them. We put them in missions and we treat them, put clothes on them and then set them out and make sure they believe in our religion’. See what I mean? And they find salvation. Very different from the Maoris, for instance. The Maoris are less shattered by the whole occupation thing. They still have very strong social ties, very strong social networks, strong cultural networks, whereas a lot of the Aboriginal networks have been shattered.”* Helen: *“Especially through this area which was settled so early.”* James: *“Yeah, especially here. The Maori still got sort of a pyramid structure, they’ve got a boss and a very strong hierarchy. I think the Aborigines...they had a hierarchy in little groups, but between groups it was a looser organisation.”* Helen: *“A group of elders that ran the tribes. So it wasn’t just one chief, but a group of elders.”* James: *“So it’s the ultimate sort of communist system in a true sense of the word, of sharing and looking after. And ironically that system was probably their downfall. From a point of view of being easily overtaken by Europeans. Cause if they had a strong hierarchical system there would have been organised and open conflict.”*

Norma: *“You know what I don’t like about the argument is, that it’s basically an argument for a strong hierarchy, like: because you can better defend yourself, you are more secure. So it’s an argument for a dictatorship, for example, that’s the strongest hierarchy.”* James: *“Oh, it is, yeah, yeah. I’m not saying, in favour of it, I’m simply saying that the circumstances, the Aborigines found themselves in, not necessarily through their own fault, their hierarchy didn’t help their situation. Whereas with the Maori it did, cause they actually had a treaty. They actually were a fearsome warrior.”*

Norma: *“But see, this is another thing. Maybe there was a war, maybe the Aborigines defended themselves, maybe they fought, but the English just said: ‘Oh no, we don’t do a treaty and that’s our war strategy’, you know. ‘We don’t do a treaty because than we have to acknowledge them’. And they stuck to Terra Nullius.”* James: *“Yeah, maybe, maybe.”* Helen: *“But there weren’t wars in*

55 I have discussed “capitalism” and “communism” or “socialism” with family farmers. Critique at the “free market” ideology was often encountered with agreement, while simultaneously stating that “communism didn’t work either” (Fieldnotes I/II., 2011). This indicates not only a narrow if not single definition of economy, but also suggests the suppression of knowledge about alternative forms of economic life, neither “capitalist” nor “communist”.

the way there were in New Zealand - and America.” James: “No, there wasn’t. No, I don’t think. There were probably skirmishes and there were massacres.” Helen: “Tasmania was pretty...” James: “Yeah, Tasmania was dreadful. Killed everyone. And that sort of thing.” Norma: “The wars in New Zealand, how were they different?” James: “They were called the Maori Wars for a start. And the Maoris combined together as one nation to fight the incoming people.” Helen: “Totally unrelated to the Aborigines, Maoris are Polynesian.” James: “The Maoris were fearsome hunters, they killed all the birds in New Zealand. Whereas the Aborigines, to their credit, they lived with the environment. So I’m not saying everything about Aborigines is bad, I’m not. Just saying they are fundamental differences between... compare the two, you can’t.”

Norma: “I’m just interested why there were acknowledged wars in New Zealand and not in Australia.” James: “Well, as I say, I know you don’t buy it, I say part of their downfall was because of their loose structure. Cause some people, some Aboriginal groups got on with the Europeans and some didn’t. That makes it very difficult to organise for an organised opposition. If part of them saying, ‘Well look, I’ve traded with them, I have got steal axes, you haven’t, so I’m not gonna fight them.’ You know what I mean? That’s what I’m trying to say. And I know it sounds like a cop out but it’s not meaning to be a hidden agenda. I’m just saying the way their society was organised, which was a very sharing and caring one, was part of their downfall, because you had a European thing coming in and you know it’s sort of divide and conquer, divide and rule. And what I’m saying is with the Aborigines it was easier to divide. And if that was a strategy, whether it was a strategy, I don’t know.”

Norma: “Divide and rule, this is the name of one of the strategies the English used to colonise” James: “Oh, of course. Yeah, yeah. There’s a woman here and she was over a hundred and she was part Aboriginal. And her children and grand children still live in town. So I don’t know if they have stories. Some of them, ironically, wouldn’t want to admit they are Aborigine.” Norma: “But everybody knows?” James: “Yeah, and one of them said to me that my aunt Minnie was part Aborigine and part of the ‘such and such’- tribe. I’d like to talk to them and see if they have any stories. The trouble is, you’re going. I mean, I’d be interested in it, too, I’d like to know more about it” (Interview 15, 2011).

Frontier violence and the involvement of early settlers in the dispossession of Indigenous peoples is not an active part in the narration of the family history. Instead, there is a tremendous lack of knowledge and sometimes fear. The couple engaged in rhetoric arguments that strategically fill these gaps with common assumptions about Indigenous Australians or hunter-gatherers more broadly. Some farmers are afraid to be confronted with their country’s past. It is associated with the losing of status and prestige that comes along with being a member of one of the pioneering families in Australia. Those worries are more broadly related to a fear over losing the land: if Indigenous peoples learn about the history of the place they might claim the land back. This indicates the uncanny sense of belonging among farmers of Anglo-Celtic descendant, as belonging to land is generated by ownership

and therewith connected to the original dispossession of the Indigenous peoples. The presence of Indigenous peoples is a constant reminder of the migrancy experience of every non-Indigenous person in Australia. Some farmers legitimatised their “being there” with the story of “having some Aboriginal blood running in the veins of the family.” The claim of Indigenous heritage has the function of disconnecting one from the original theft of the land without having any of the negative consequences many Indigenous people experience through discrimination and racism. It is an attempt similar to what I came across among many Germans who searched for Jewish heritage in their families to find relief from the hunting guilt of the 2nd World War. Finding this connection would mean a repositioning of the subject in relation to the history of the nation.

The devastating living conditions of many Indigenous communities are not read as a consequence of colonialisms and white settlement, but are explained by attributes and culture-characteristics that describe the Other: They are “*unemployed*” “*alcoholics*”, “*on the dole*” and “*lazy*”. They are “*the worst environmental managers in the nation*”. Their “*sharing culture*” was the ultimate “*communist*” way of living together, which still is a vehicle of their problems today. This culture was their “*downfall*” as they could be dispossessed due to their “*lose structure*”. Although they were “*not warlike*”, “*they fought each other more than the white men*”. And although “*they understood nature and lived in harmony with it*” they were busy with surviving due to the “*food pressures*” hunter-gatherer people suffer from. This indeed seemed to be one of the major markers of difference: *they* are hunter-gatherers, *they* suffer from a lack of resources and this is why *they* had to be mobile. Implicitly settlement is seen as a more developed form of maintaining a living. Furthermore, the subsistence economies of hunter-gatherer societies are located in the past. *They* had to give up this lifestyle marked by suffering when better – or “*not better but easier*” – alternatives presented themselves in form of sheep, steel axes, flour, sugar – farms. Farming becomes a cultural marker of difference. It is the practice imagined with an easier lifestyle due to settlement. This however stands not only in contrast to material struggles family farmers are entangled in today, but also to the narrative of the first settlers who had to battle hard to secure survival in this “*unrelenting landscape*”. This contradiction established the white *settler* nation and is central to legitimise the claim of possessing the continent: settlers *made* the landscape fertile and they established the affluent Australian nation *despite* the harsh conditions of the continent’s environment due to modernisation technologies and manipulations of *nature*. They earned the right to manage the land (see Interview 7, 2011,

in the following). It reflects the imaginings of the superiority of the Self in terms of securing survival – that is economic relations – and the inferiority of the everyday practices of the Other.

The scale of arguments is broad and some farmers stated that it was not about being racist. However, the point being is that they could not really say what racism means. The usage of the term 'racist' in Australian society has the effect of blowing up every conversation. Some farmers provided arguments that reached from biological racism to its "modern version" of cultural racism. Simultaneously, other farmers expressed their interest and wanted to learn about Australia's past, acknowledging their biases and lack of information.

Issues related to Australia's attempt to imagine itself as postcolonial are debated heatedly as it is reflected in rural Australia in the question of "native" or "exotic" farming systems, in public culture and academia with the "History Wars" and the "Culture Crisis" debate. State politics meanwhile engage in the "Northern Territory Emergency Response" and its successor policy "Stronger Futures", which critics accuse of being a return to old white assimilation strategies of *how to deal with the Other*. Experiences of strong uncanny feelings in the landscape testify to the colonial past and its violence, which cannot be silenced. Ghosts of the past will continue to haunt settler-descendants until Indigenous people experience justice.

3.3.2. Imagining the Future of Agriculture: Smoking Hot

The past is a sensitive and emotional topic, heatedly discussed among Anglo-Celtic Australians in the fields and yards as well as in lecturing halls of universities and in the public sphere of the media. What about the future? How do family farmers imagine the future of agriculture in Australia and therewith the place of their farms?

Confronted with the uncertainty of maintaining a living off the land, farmers employ "risk management strategies" to secure their holding. One idea of adjustment concerns the flexibility of the farm scale, splitting up the property or changing ownership regulations. The second strategy deals with the flexibility of the production system, its animals and pastures. Preparing a hierarchy of animals' importance regarding farmer's specific production system fixes decisions which stock needs to be sold first and which mobs can be set aside while maintaining business. In case early indicators suggest a drought is coming, the difficulty is to make quick decisions at the right time, to sell early at a good price so costs are covered and a

profit is warranted. Once hit by the drought and ran out of pastures, grain feeding is obligatory. This is expensive and some stock will die nevertheless. Once the farmer starts feeding, selling the animals is not an option. They do not have any monetary value at this point. To sell stock in time is the only option to “*stop the bleeding*” (Interview 12, 2011). A related decision concerns farmers’ choice of feeds, whether or not to engage with exotic or native pastures, the latter being much more heat tolerant. Droughts form a part of farmers’ general risk management and their estimations concerning the future of Australian agriculture.

Reid: *“I think we managed the last drought much better than past droughts. We lock sheep up, we sell sheep, we destock. Sheep is really destructing, when there is no grass. They just keep working and they eat everything right down to the crown. Half of my paddocks ended up on Isabel Westerfield’s washing, I reckon. What I did, I managed the drought with sacrificed paddocks. I lock all my sheep in very small paddocks and leave them there and hand feed them. I’m not trying to move them into my paddocks. If you get a shower of rain you don’t get enough grass anyway. Wind blows, and all the topsoil blows, but you try not to it off every paddock. Most of the nutrients are in the top 5 or 10 millimetres of soil. And it doesn’t take much wind and drought to lose that”* (Interview 1, 2011).

The drought is a slow process and the lush, green landscape that I experienced in spring at the end of the year, turns into a brown, barren vastness with swirling dust dragging in the heat. Farmers are surrounded by death and grit and instead of watching plants grow and animals nourish everything dies.

James: *“It’s really depressing. The landscape is just bare, there is nothing there. You just didn’t wanne go outside. And you feed the sheep and the cattle three days a week, so you don’t fed every day... you work out a ration. It’s better, if it’s designed well, so you can get feed carts in. The other thing - but for you, those animals will die - the responsibility to those living organisms. There is always responsibility, but at least, ok the old sheep dies or gets something, you’ve given them every chance, it’s different. But if you don’t feed them, they’ll gonna die. That responsibility, going to bed at night, hoping that you’ve fed them well, that they’ll live. It’s very depressing. You’ve got to be fairly tough and resilient. The good thing about getting rid of the stock, you don’t have to worry about it. Or you worry just about a few... it makes it emotionally less hard to deal with. So there were a lot of suicides and things like that. Not so many around here, but... I don’t know, if we go into a big drought, Helen’s stud, I don’t know what we do”* (Interview 12, 2011).

And nothing is surer, but that the next drought will come as every farmer acknowledged:

Reid: *“We had an ‘one-in-one-hundred-years-drought’ in 1982, an ‘one-in-one-hundred-year’ in 2002, another ‘one-in-one-hundred-year’ in 2006. I think the ‘one-in-one-hundred-years-drought’ measure is getting a bit out of date. And we’ll get another one in the next five years, I am pretty sure. If that doesn’t tell you something - that it’s changing - I don’t know what does. But it’s really hard. I start talking like this to people and they shut down. They just think you are a wanker, they*

don't wanna know that. Cause it's so threatening. Most of them put it in the too-hard basket and don't think about it too much. But I reckon farmers can be convinced that it is an issue and that we have to do something about it" (Interview 1, 2011).

Despite the devastating outlook of more droughts to come more often, Reid and May regard a great future for Australian agriculture – at least in short-term.

Reid: *"I reckon we could be going through a purple patch, I think prices are just ramped up. Wool has just recently got up, but lamb! Mutton, the old sheep, is now bringing four dollars a kilogram. That's just unheard of. Lamb have been selling for over five dollars a kilogram, that's double to what we were selling four or five years ago. I think it's a fundamental shift. In 2007 wheat prices went through the roof. In America they went for 40 cents a bushel and some bloke said 'You not gonna see that again'. I sold a heap of wheat and I think it now trades at 60 and 70 cents a bushel. I lost stack of money by selling wheat, although I was very excited by the price, but it just kept going up. We used to sell wheat at 120 Dollars a ton, 150 Dollars a ton. Now it's just ramped up, 200 Dollars a ton is the floor. And if you've got good wheat you're selling at around 300 Dollars a ton. Prices are... and I think it's because of China's and Asia's wealth. They are shifting their diet to wanting more protein and that sort of thing. So the demand is going up, supply is falling around the world, because of Climate Change, droughts everywhere. Russia's drought last year pushed wheat prices through the roof. So the entire northern hemisphere was drought stricken, in a lot of places. I really think prices are gonna be strong, a lot of fundamentals that. If we can get through without too many disastrous droughts before Climate Change kicks in in this place as predicted... It becomes a much more variable rainfall and we start having to reduce our production to cope and increase our costs. If that holds off for a few years, than we've got a few good years of price, than we make a lot of money. That's what I mean by purple patch. Before the shit hits the fan"* (Interview 1, 2011).

This position is optimistic only in short-term and based on economic factors that benefit the own business and life span. Other farmers stress a long-term perspective, wondering about the structural development of the agricultural sector in the Australian nation, what it means for their farms and the food security for their kids.

Helen: *"The average age among Australian farmers in family owned farms is something like 57. So what happens in 20 years time when these farmers want to retire? Are they going to be bought up piecemeal by the big companies and transformed into big company farms? Which means that they'll be run with a lot less labour, which even further reduces the population in rural areas... Or you know, in 20 years time, Climate Change might have had such an impact that people don't wanna be on the land. I don't know what the answers are and I don't think it's been thought through by the government. We should be looking at - with Landcare we started doing it - looking at a landscape approach. Rather than just looking at individual farms, sort of thinking about connectivity through the landscape. Not just patchy, but connecting. I think governments need to think in a broader way. What do they want the landscape in rural and regional Australia to look like in 20-30 years? Do they want sort of medium-sized towns, do they want villages, do they want to keep people on the*

land? Or are they happy to just have it owned by big companies and everybody else in the big towns? Cause the government has to start thinking about that otherwise it just happens adhoc and that might not be what's best for Australia." Norma: *"What do you think best?"* Helen: *"I think Australia is better served by maintaining the small towns and small villages. Cause people that have a sense of community tend to be healthier, both physically and mentally. I think it's a way of greater productivity from the land to have smaller places rather than just big places. That aside, I'm very much against this subdivision of prime rural land putting houses on it, or braking them into five acre lots [for hobby farmers], that shouldn't be happening either, because we don't have very much productive land in Australia. We really need to keep what we have for producing food and fibre"*

(Interview 11, 2011).

Farmers are aware that the land and resources such as water are under pressure in Australia. The combined processes of taking land out of agricultural production and Climate Change that further diminishes prime agricultural land are worrisome if further related to predictions about the future development of an increasing world population. *"You are looking at an extinct breed out here"* one farmer half-jokingly told me *"Hopefully not about to go extinct, but you know..."* (Interview 15, 2011).

One weekend Reid and May's daughter was back on the farm for a visit. We stood in the farmhouse kitchen and she told us about her Honours Thesis, where she engages with issues concerning genetically modified food. One of the major arguments the industry puts forward to legitimise their agenda is the aim to achieve global food security. She further stated that her reaction to all the information about Climate Change is *"panic"*. *"Australia is food secure"* May firmly stated, but her daughter criticised her for a *"narrow minded perspective"* that focuses on a national frame in economic terms (Fieldnotes I., 2011). Soothingly she added that she could understand that perspective as her parents have a business to run. Reid entered the kitchen at a later stage and having only heard the end of the discussion he also stated: *"Australia will always be food secure. We just minimise our export and distribute the food nationally. What worries me is the availability of water."* His daughter pondered over the comment and added: *"But the food production will be effected if there is no water"* (Fieldnotes I., 2011). We also touched on the issue of foreign investment and May and Reid, both educated economists, told me that there has always been foreign capital investment in Australia's agricultural industry. *"What about those new agents, foreign governments being the new investors? Does that have a new dynamic, does it matter?"* May smiled at me *"I'm just thinking about that. I don't know"* (Fieldnotes I., 2011).

During my field research I took the chance to visit the Australian National Field Days in Orange. The oldest agricultural exhibition in Australia started in 1952. The annual event

nowadays provides the space for over 600 exhibitors to present their agricultural machinery, animals, services and ideas. In the tent of the NSW National Farmer's Federation, I met an elected member of the executive council from the Orange district. As I spoke to him as a private person, his opinions might differ to the official NFF policy and he asked me for anonymity. The retired farmer had sold his family property based in the Central Tablelands to the mining industry. Since he has *"been overtaken by the mining industry"* (Interview 7, 2011) he engages in farmers' representation on a NSW state level. The NFF is primarily an industrial organisation, with a conservative and neoliberal reputation.

The interview engaged with topics concerning the economic development of the agricultural sector in NSW, its social consequences for family farmers as well as the impact of the Native Title, the changing environment and issues in need of debate such as fire practices in land cultivation. Capital investments driven by foreign governments were perceived as good business opportunities and the redistribution of ownership patterns not regarded as a threat:

"If you look at the overall ownership of land in Australia, it's probably not significant in that sense. To the individual person that's looking to retire - succession planning, generational change - it puts another buyer in the market. You may actually be able to achieve a far better return on your capital investment by selling to an international buyer. They are turning to reasonable areas of country. We are seeing them putting together property after property in the district... Once one domino falls the other ones tend to follow. So you can't blame people for taking those opportunities. Whether in the long term we have appropriate trade and economic protocols to protect our industry from going offshore, or the returns going, I'm not convinced. For instance, if we are in Japan, there is no way in the world Japan would let me buy in their lands. They let me invest there, but they make sure, they tax me before I left the... I don't think we got that right in Australia" (Interview 7, 2011).

Although Australian agriculture is *"internationally competitive"* since many years *"there are barriers"* and he called for a policy of protectionism, although *"that's a word we have to be careful of"* (Interview 7, 2011). Australia could not compete with *"some third world countries such as Brazil and their cattle industry"* (Interview 7, 2011) due to high costs of labour and the high prized Australian Dollar. He strongly emphasised agriculture's role for the Australian nation, *"23% GDP is a significant contribution"* and criticised governments, especially *"Climate Change purists"* (Interview 7, 2011) for not taking the industry seriously enough. He stressed the generational knowledge of farmers based on unrecorded information gathered by observation, which would be in conflict with *"model science and pure science"* (Interview 7, 2011).

Norma: *"Did I understand you correctly, that you don't think that a changing environment is an*

issue for agriculture in NSW?” Representative: “I don’t believe it is. We’ve always been able to manage variability of climate, the climate has always varied. Agriculture manages and has always managed it. You only have to look at the grains industry. Grains used to be set around the Central West of NSW and then slowly moved westward as the scientists have been able to produce a plant that is drought tolerant. So we actually been able to live with dry times and with wet times. The old adage is ‘You make money out of mud, you can’t make much out of dust’. I think what we have seen out of the climate hysteria, and it tends to emanate out of Europe and I don’t deny that Europe got a problem with smog. But we are one of the driest continents on earth; apart from Antarctic we are the driest continent. So we learnt to live in agriculture with variability of seasonal dry periods, seasonal climate change. If the world temperature continues or otherwise to go up or down, is fairly immaterial to us in agriculture. We will live with that and we will manipulate and manage with it” (Interview 7, 2011).

Even if the climate is changing, the representative puts great faith in modernisation strategies and that agricultural agents will manage. Obviously humanity needs an agricultural production. However, this approach does not ask who is maintaining the industry, which agents engage in the international trade and whether those agents are family farmers or multinational corporations. Additionally, the question of steady economic growth on a finite planet is not discussed either and issues of Climate Change are reduced to smog in Europe.

The representative acknowledged that farming families are under pressure, not only concerning succession issues and generational change, but also due to broader socio-economic changes in rural communities. Since the collapse of both, the cattle industry in the 1970s and the Wool Reserve Price Scheme in 1991, farmers learnt that the *“only way a lot of farms are gonna survive was if the wife or one of the partners of the farms got a job locally”* (Interview 7, 2011). He related this to the high suicide levels in rural communities. *“The loss of that social interaction due to periods of economic recession in agriculture is quite challenging in family relations”* (Interview 7, 2011).

When I asked the representative about the impact of the Native Title Act his words echoed those of farmers: it is *“not a major significance”*, although the *“Mabo case was a landmark case in terms of ownership”* (Interview 7, 2011). The tenure system *“created around the time of settlement in Australia”* differentiates between *“privately held land”* which does not pose *“a significant problem”* whereas *“lease country has the potential”* of creating problems for pastoralists (Interview 7, 2011). Nevertheless, *“I think we are probably managing that reasonably well”* (Interview 7, 2011). Indigenous people are represented as a group that *does not belong to us*, that have to be managed and who have the potential to

threat *our* land ownership. Further, the so constructed Other is attributed with a negative work ethic:

Representative: *“But at the end of the day there is no free feds. People got to **earn** their right to manage land and we can’t continue to subsidise unprofitable agricultural enterprises. I think the Aboriginal community has learned that, a bit of pain over time, not necessarily in NSW but in other areas. I think there are a few of them that are doing a lot better than what they ever did. We have some very good agricultural enterprises run by the Indigenous population. But the expectation is that, I’m not quite sure of the right words, but the expectation of somebody is going to give you a free hand out is, well... Why do we have boat people coming in from Indonesia? It’s the policies of government that got it wrong”* (Interview 7, 2011).

Native Title is not perceived as a legal Act that recognises Indigenous belonging to and ownership of the land prior to and beyond British settlement. Instead it is viewed as a special treatment that indicates unequal and therewith wrong policies. To state that Indigenous people have *to earn the right to manage* their land is a crude failure to acknowledge colonisation and dispossession. It builds on the assumption that *opposed to them* the settler nation has earned the right to manage the land, providing food security to Australians and export the surplus to feed the world. The “argument” gets even more bizarre when the situation of Indigenous people and their apparent attitude of *“expecting a free hand”* is compared and equalised with the position of recently arrived illegalised migrants. The representative’s attitude emphasises Anglo-Celtic ownership of Australia’s landmass, an ideology according to which Indigenous peoples and migrants do not belong. The elected representative continued *“we are a very generous country”* and that it is right that *“we look at oppressed people”* (Interview 7, 2011). However, he argued for a *“system of vetting”* to prevent people exploiting free social welfare. *“When you look back at some of the things that have been done internationally over the last 40 or 50 years, it’s appalling”* (Interview 7, 2011). The complete lack of self-reflecting the own positionality first as a descendent of settler-migrants (*“fifth generation”*; Interview 7, 2011) and second the appalling inequalities between Indigenous peoples and the Anglo-Celtic majority population exposes an uncanny self-imagining indeed. This biased perspective of ‘forgetting’ the Indigenous population as well as the colonial past is further inherent in an argument the representative made for the future acknowledgment and importance of fire as part of Australian agriculture. The elected representative advocates a broader inclusion of fire-management strategies in the future of Australia’s land cultivation. He criticised members of the NFF for turning a blind eye to fire practices in agricultural management. Strategic burning is contained in environmental

management frameworks Australia has sold to other governments, i.e. in Europe and to the US. He refers to the international success of selling these forms of management and differentiates modern approaches to “traditional practices”:

“We are actually re-invigorating the bush by applying various treatments. We live with fire, it’s part and parcel of Australian life. Fire is part of our landscape and it’s a wonderful frame. Where traditionally in Europe you may have done some burning, in early agriculture it was slash and burn as we are seeing in equatorial regions. That’s traditional agriculture, that’s an unacceptable process these days, because of the damage to the environment. But in Australia where we live with fire, we can use it to our benefits” (Interview 7, 2011).

The ordering of practices in different stages of temporality, associating Europe with modern and equatorial regions with traditional and environmentally damaging practices opens another frame to discuss modernist assumptions, related to an understanding of the *superiority of the self*. Also interesting is the sudden concern for environmental damages, which are not considered in modernisation strategies such as manipulated wheat. However, what I find more curious in this context is that again the international comparison is favoured, whereas Indigenous Australians are ignored and not part of the future perspective. Whereas fire belongs to the Australian landscape, Indigenous peoples do not. This is especially concerning due to the fact that fire practices for land cultivation are one of the key features of the subsistence economy of Indigenous Australians, which family farmers do remember⁵⁶.

Reid: *“My old grandfather, old James, the story was, that he used to come out on his horse and they had to ban him from smoking. I knew the old bloke who used to look after James and he used to be charged. James’ son Sidney was running the place and said ‘You gotta make sure the old man doesn’t get up to any mischiefs’, so they wouldn’t let him smoke. Because he used to ride out here on his horse and flicked a match into the grass, cause that was the old technique. They just burned...burned all the Red Grass (laughs). Which apparently wasn’t a thing to do by the time Sid was running the show. Cause this is what the Aborigines used to do, too, they burned Red Grass. And the green shoots where they burned and that would attract the kangaroos.”* Norma: *“And then they shot the kangaroos, ah, makes sense. But that’s something to do for the native grasses, I guess.”* Reid: *“Yeah, it suited the native grasses. I don’t know, I think the reason Sid didn’t like it happening, probably because the fire has gotten away and burned his fences. Because he would have started to build fences by this generation”* (Interview 1, 2011).

⁵⁶ Farmers were also able to *read the landscape* and pointed out to me patterns in the growth of plants and trees that referred to Indigenous burning practices. For an extended discussion of land cultivation with fire see Gammage (2011) and various publications by Altman (2001; 2010).

Calling for fire practices in agricultural endeavours implicitly argues for the cultivation of native pastures, as burning is not appropriate for English or “exotic” plants. Leaving Indigenous peoples out of this framework continues the failure to acknowledge their presence.

In summary, the short-term future of Australian agriculture is perceived to be rich in opportunities to gain an income and warrant a profit due to high prices of prime commodities, estimated to remain on a high level. Long-term, farmers wonder about the structural conditions on the land and are likely to engage in a discourse of decline, mixed with “fears of extinction”. The worries are related to Climate Change as the weather in the agricultural belt is predicted to get more viable, with more severe natural disasters on a more regular basis. The elected representative of NSW Farmers remains in an un-visionary framework. Worries about the selling out of agricultural land are encountered with the argument that family farmers can make money here, if they decide to sell their farm. He does not address social policies for the rural sector relevant for people who want to *remain in place*. Climate Change caused by human agency is denied and the possibility of a changing environment is encountered with strategies of the past: manipulation through modernisation of the agricultural economy, which is based on the colonial legacy. This ignores environmentally sustainable approaches to agriculture and prevents a reorganisation of practices that might overcome the historical legacy to be post-colonial. Indigenous people are excluded from this idea about Australian land management even though one of their main practices of land cultivation is advertised. Instead the practice is incorporated in a settler-narrative that differentiates Australians from Europe over the motive of the bush environment.

3.3.3. Dealing with Change: Family History as Ambiguous Anchor

Throughout the chapters I described the manifold reasons that lead farmers to sell their family farm, but what does it actually mean to give up one’s place? Dave, who had recently sold his property shared his memories of the difficult decision making process with me. There were various family business meetings and he had psychological support. The process itself took several years. Why is it so hard? One could imagine that instead of tough physical work on a daily basis as well as constant worries due to climate uncertainty and debts, a life of leisure granted by living off the interests would be a comforting alternative. I provide a description of

the farm as a place of meaning, how family farmers view their relationship with the land, the meaning they attribute to their family history, fears of failure and loss of respect and the tension-loaded field of change, relating it to the opposing categories of adaption and tradition. One morning I talked to Reid before the days' work started. It was 7 o'clock and we had the obligatory English Breakfast tea and raisin toast in the farmhouse kitchen. I enjoyed the marvellous view out of the huge window front, beyond which the vast paddocks and scattered gumtrees expanded. Having this beauty in front of us, we talked about his relationship to the land and what it would mean to sell the property. During an earlier conversation he had stated that he could sell up tomorrow, no problems here. His wife had interrupted him; saying that this wasn't true, that there would be grief. He shortly pondered over her comment, then agreed, but nevertheless stuck to his opinion: *"There would be grief, yes. There would also be guilt. But I could sell tomorrow"* (Fieldnotes I., 2011). This morning Reid elaborated on what he had meant by this, describing his relationship with the land:

Reid: *"I think it's mainly a business relationship. Certainly, there is an emotional tie, because it's my home and it has been my home since I'm a little kid. And there is certainly a great familiarity, because I lived here all my life. But I could sell it tomorrow, if I thought that my life would be happier or somebody would offer me a really good job. Or I certainly lease it out or do something like that. Yeah. There is that. The tie is more with my home than the land. I think I'd be kidding myself, if I thought I had some great tie to the land. I personally think that's a bit of an illusion. But everybody is probably different"* (Interview 10, 2011).

Reid distinguishes his business relation to the land from the bound he feels to the house and the immediate place he grew up. He further stresses, that he could sell the farm, if he though *"he would be happier"* doing something else, or if something equivalently worthy, like a really well-paid job, would be offered to him. The context Reid debates the selling of "Karra" is framed as *his choice*. He does not consider to be forced to make that decision and although "Karra" is in debt, he runs an efficient business that allows him to make choices. This is a different situation all together, as if a farmer finds him/herself in the position of having no choices and being forced to sell. Nevertheless, why would there be feelings of guilt, in case Reid would decide to sell the property? He further explained:

Reid: *"There'd be guilt, yeah. Well, I'm sure that my father felt a responsibility to pass the farm on to the next generation, because he put a lot of pressure on me to come home and be a farmer. And my brother has left his land, he still owns 600 acres of the farm here. And he sort of said 'Oh I don't want the money. I want to leave the land here'. He did say, sort of, 'On the expectation that one of your children is going to continue on with the farming.' Because he could have asked for his money out, when my father died, nearly 10 years ago. And that would have been very difficult for me. So,*

there'd be guilt there. My sister wanted her money out, but she gave me a pretty good deal and made it possible for me. And again, on the grounds that it was a family farm and that Dad wanted it to continue on. So, yeah, but I've given it a really good shot. I don't think I'd feel too guilty, if I got out of it in the next five years time. I would have been here, farming it for 25 years. So yeah, I don't think I was a fly by night. And if my kids don't want to farm it, there is nothing I can do about that. There are certain feelings of guilt. I don't know whether or not you've got that from Dave. I think he felt that it was his birth right to farm there. So it cuts both ways. Particularly, I think Dave was told as a young boy, 'This will be all yours one day, son, you know you will be farming this.' So he felt it was his right and that's all that he had ever aspired to. But it's also an albatross around your neck. Because you can't do anything else, you can't escape. If you are not making a go of it, you feel... I do feel it can be a burden, yeah. And I think James feels that sometimes. Not continuously, but you know. He sloughs away pretty hard there. I think he loves it, but I do sometimes feel it's a burden, at times it's been a burden, a responsibility." Norma: "But this responsibility really comes then through the family history." Reid: "I think so. It's not any affinity with the land, it's history. It's family relationships" (Interview 10, 2011).

Reid's father wanted the farm to continue and his siblings made it possible for him to keep the place on the grounds that the farm remains in family possession. The feeling of guilt is related to the generosity of his family that allowed Reid to run a successful business in the first place. The unpleasant feeling is further related to the rupture of the family tradition, which is in place since settlement. This bound to one's ancestors over the course of time is one of the key aspects of the farm as a symbol.

While sitting in the kitchen having afternoon tea, James and I chatted about experiences with spirits and the occurrence of strong feelings in the landscape. I asked him to tell me a nice ghost story, instead he told me a dream he had years ago:

James: "I haven't had any sort of feelings about, you know, feeling a ghostly presence or anything. The only thing I did have was a really powerful dream when my father died. It was just, probably, a consciousness thing. I had this powerful dream, that we were having a party in "Bellmont" and there were lots of people there. And then there was a knock on the door. And I opened the door and there was my father. I said: 'You don't have to ask to come in here, this is your house.' And he said: 'No, but it's yours now. It's time for you to do it' But that's not a ghost story, that's more of a dream." Norma: "It's a beautiful dream." James: "It was. And we shook hands, yeah. It was so powerful. The next morning, you know, it was so real. Unbelievable. So apart from that, I don't have any other ghost stories" (Interview 15, 2011).

James's dream describes the importance of family relations in their historical dimension and the feeling of now being the one in charge to continue the family tradition. He further does not limit his sense of home to the house, but stresses the belonging to and affinity with the

land. By contrast to Reid, he downplays the economic relevance of the asset and emphasises the continuity of the land that extends and transcends his own life span.

Norma: *"So what would you say is your relation with the land?"* James: *"Well, there is a sense of where I grew up. So one gets an affinity of where you grown up on the land. That's one thing. The other thing is the sense that the land doesn't really belong to me anyway. It's here while I'm alive. And then it'll be handed on to someone else. Even though there is economically... cause we own the land, it's an asset. You think of it as an asset, you can sell it like everything else. But at the end of the day, I'm just passing through it. I'm just moving along. Someone else will work it down the track. But of course I have favourite spots and places that I really enjoy. Places that I belong to, no doubt. The Aborigines did, too, a similar thing. And I think it happens, I think it's just a natural thing that people have an affinity with the land, when they've grown up there and lived there. Like they have an affinity with a house or anything like that, it's where their home is, their place."*

Norma: *"Would you make the distinction between your home, having a sense of belonging to this house? Or would you expand this feeling to the land?"* James: *"I expand it to the land as well, yeah. Yeah. It's not just the house, it's the land as well"* (Interview 15, 2011).

The farm carries the family history for those who can read it. Family relations are bound to the farm, as places can be seen as materialisation of these inter-generational relations over time. Not only did ancestors establish the farm as the place contemporary farmers own and walk upon, also their historic practices of land cultivation are mirrored in the farming system landholders engage in. Contemporary farming practices are shaped by the family history, by conditions past and present. This is indicated not only by the continual engagement with British farming systems, but further by the generating of knowledge through experiences. Farmers learnt from their fathers and their old stockmen about "best practice" on the land. Just as Reid and James, Dave got to know the place just by growing up here.

Dave: *"It's something that's past on. And it comes from... Back in the olden days, with no fences, they spent a lot more time outside, and they did no fiddling around in the offices inside. And all on horseback, so you get to see so much more. If you're riding around on the horse, or driving around in the car... that just comes as a natural thing. And if you're here as the seasons go by, the trees are bigger here, the grass or the crops grow better there, that's a different soil. And that's just something that's passed down to you. I remember driving around with the old man, and he said 'Oh there is a beautiful string of black soil, it runs down till here.' And when you look you see it. It's only being observant. Most farmers...well, I don't know how many farmers are, but I know, I was terribly observant, always looking. **And if you look, you see. And if you don't, you don't know.** The best fertilizer on a farmer's land is his own footprints. That's my theory. A lot of it is just past down, and that's where it all comes from. And all the people working on the place...they spend hours out there, hours and hours. And they take you and they tell you, that's where I learnt my stuff."* Norma: *"So you spent a lot of time with the workers as a kid?"* Dave: *"Yeah! I loved it! Loved it. And at*

these guys age [gestures at his children] I was up and out the door and gone all day long. I couldn't get enough of it. It was always great fun" (Interview 3, 2011).

Dave talks about an education of attention through awareness rising processes in the engagement with place. He learnt to spot cattle in a vast paddock and to distinguish different plants and soil types and what they mean for the farm. This skilled vision stretches over a vast area that farmers are aware of and which characteristics they know by heart. After admitting that I am lost in this vast space, having no sense of where I am and feeling as if I had been thrown in the middle of it, I laughingly said to Reid: *"You must have an enormous 3-D map in your head"* (Fieldnotes I., 2011), which he confirmed, recommending me to climb on a hill with a map and to start looking. When we spoke about the organisation of space and my orientation within it at the end of my field research, I told him that by now I had developed a bit of a sense of where I am and that I had learnt to distinguish places, by recognising property borders and to orientate myself with the help of compass directions. He nodded curtly and summarised my perception: *"Familiarity, yes."* (Fieldnotes II., 2011).

Reid described the strong relation between the farm and the Self when he referred to what the splitting up of the family business had meant for his Dad: *"I think by the time...he was fully leaned back. But when I was agitating to split up from his brother, which was something, you know, that was a system that he had developed over the 30 years. That was something: it was his life we were splitting up"* (Interview 1, 2011). The farm is not only a manifestation of family relations including their historical dimension; it is also a symbol of the Self. Farmers sometimes speak about their places and practices in a manner that does not differentiate between animals, soils and oneself: *"I invested a lot... a lot of myself in the place"* Helen stated (Interview 11, 2011). Georg's mother mentioned: *"Georg is the third generation"* and he replied: *"Yeah, lived and run it"* (Interview 9, 2011) and another farmer stated that *"we lamb in April or Mai"* (Interview 5, 2011).

"Family history can be an anchor" (Interview 4, 2011). May, who made this statement, viewed an anchor as a burden, which disables one from going forward, thereby preventing adaption to new economic contexts. *"So the farmers that survived are the farmers that have been able to get changed fast. And I would say that the farmers that have had a history and around that history a tradition, they have been the slowest to change"* (Interview 4, 2010). Changing ownership relations of farms or the production system is a challenging process. It is not only expansive and work-intensive, but needs to be negotiated against the background of inheritance issues, debts, the demands of the "free market", availability of labour and unviable

climate conditions. Apart from the economic constraints, May pointed out another dimension why change, required for economic adaptation, is difficult for farmers: it is perceived as direct criticism of the older generation and their way of doing things “*they would be turning in their graves*” (Fieldnotes I., 2011). She further explained to me:

May: “*The younger generation, they say ‘But I wanna do this’ and the older generation takes it as a direct criticism of them, if you change. And change is always uncomfortable. And there is always gonna be a loser and a winner. And the older generation always seem as the losers, because if you change it, it inherently means that they have done it wrong. So there is all that value judgement. And there is this ‘It has always been like this, why would you wanna change it? This is what we are famous for.’ It is an anchor, it can be an anchor, I reckon. And also in small communities, you are always worrying about what people think. The range of people you see...your friends, your neighbours. You are in constant contact with the same pool of people. ‘What do they think, if I wanna change things? If I sell this land, what will they be thinking?’ And that’s huge, I reckon, in Australian agriculture. I am sure that’s true for agricultural communities around the world, it’s this rural pressure on these isolated communities. And it is pretty isolated*” (Interview 4, 2011).

The fear of value judgements by others, of losing respect and being perceived as a failure develops an even scarier dimension, when not only one’s fellow contemporaries are taken into account, but also the pressure of the family history: five generations maintained a successful living off the farm and being the one who breaks the chain can be perceived as a massive blow to self-esteem and self-worth. James explained me the threat as the following:

Norma: “*So there is the worry to lose the respect in the community if you have to sell your property?*” James: “*Yeah. Cause you feel you have failed. My answer is you haven’t failed at all. When our relations came here this was... well, they had to scramble from where they were and that was perhaps the richest game in the country. Now it’s changed. If you wanna be rich now, you become a merchant banker or something. You can’t ... nothing stays static, with time things change. You’ve got to recognise that things change and not get stuck. I think it’s a danger of taking the baggage of just because you’ve been here a long time and using that baggage and trying to live up to it. Just for the sake of a name or something. I think that could be damaging. Often you find a self-made man, who came from nothing, make millions, buys a property, quite happy to sell the property whenever he wants. Because he has no baggage and he’s the one who bought it and he sells it. Only once you get generations down there...*” (Interview 15, 2011).

The family history is an anchor, a burden and a heavy responsibility stretched over time, manifested in the farm as place. Narratives about the family history describe a tradition of innovating practices, progressive thinkers and early adapters. There is a distinction in the narration of this family tradition whether the innovation is attributed to certain practices, such as the fine wool enterprise or maintaining the Shorthorn cattle herd or to an entrepreneurial attitude and the spirit of maintaining the business. The latter indicates not holding on to

practices that have been rendered unviable by changing market conditions, but to engage in new practices, a willingness to adapt to new contexts and to move on. The Lees maintained a business since 194 years, so one can describe them as successful and innovating. However, May remarks:

May: *"The wealth they had was because they had access to cheap resources. They were given free land. It wasn't because of great genius or anything like that. They were just at the right place at the right time. Australian agriculture, it always has been access to cheap resources. Water, land - and it had scale. It's always been easy to make money up until, I suppose the 1970s, 1980s. And during the 1970s and 80s there would only been some places, where you were lucky"* (Interview 4, 2011).

May understood farmers' longing for keeping family traditions alive, especially those, the family had been famous for, i.e. a sheep or cattle stud breed. Nevertheless, she viewed family history not only as emotional baggage, but also as romantic and nostalgic in terms of historic status and prestige conversation. *"All nice things to have, if you can afford them. But at the end of the day"* she sighed, *"this is not economic viable anymore"* (Fieldnotes I., 2011).

This is exactly the shifting ground of contradicting interpretations. On the one hand, farming is stated to be a lifestyle and a vocation. The decision to return to the land and take over the family farm, is indicated by all farmers I spoke to as a choice *for the rural lifestyle*. By contrast, economic decisions and the social change occurring in this generation, is explained and justified by the fact that *farms need to be run as businesses*. What is the difference? To better understand this contradictory set of meanings attributed to the farm as a place for the "rural lifestyle" and maintaining a "business", I asked farmers what this rural lifestyle means to them.

Reid: *"Being your own boss is important, being outdoors, working outdoors, working physically, not just always sitting down. Being in a community, I think, where everyone makes their own attainment. People engage, all walks of life, you can talk to them and you have something in common, which is the local community. So there is a bit of a bond there. Bringing up kids, it's easy, because they don't have access to a lot of the vices of the city, that parents are all worried about. I think there is something about grounding, you know, kids growing up in the country, knowing where you fit in the world, it's pretty clear where you fit in the world. Food is produced out there in the ground and life depends on rain and sunshine and all that sort of stuff. You prepare your food. Like May is growing our own food in the garden. I think all of that is pretty important stuff for your head. The lifestyle, bringing up children here, all those things outweighs the loss of income. So it was a choice"* (Interview 1, 2011).

Helen's description echoes Reid's perception when I asked what she values about farming and what it means to her to be a farmer:

Helen: *"I guess part of it is that you are actually producing something concrete, not just playing with paper money. So you get a result for what you do. I also like that there is a bit of challenge to it. You do have to think and weight up different aspects. The management of it promotes a lot of interest. And I guess, I get pride in producing the best type of or the best animal that I can. I enjoy doing that. And it's also hard work, but it's a good place to be. And it's a great place for kids to grow up. They get lots of opportunities, plenty of time to be outside. The chance to have pets for kids and the chance to be a bit self-reliant and independent. And they also learn about things like responsibility, they feed the dogs every evening and learn where we fit in the bigger scheme of things as far as the environment goes. Kids learn to look after themselves. I think kids on farms have the chance to learn to be a lot more aware of what's in the environment around them and where they fit in the scheme of things. There are things that they can make a difference to, there are things that they just have to accept, but that's what happens. You can't change the weather. But you can do other things, like you can plant trees, see something for what you have done 20 years down the track. So it's a chance to be a bit independent and make our own choices. I think that's a lot of it, with the fresh air and you grow your own vegetables. I guess for a lot of the fathers, being on the farm actually gives them more chance to see the kids. That's an important thing. As farmers we look long term. The properties and things be better in 20 years time to what they are now, and hopefully, even better in 50 years. I doubt I be here to see it. I don't know, nobody in my family survived till 97."* Norma: *"I wrote down another question, it says 'what does freedom mean to you'?"* Helen: *"Freedom?"* Norma: *"Yeah. I think I wrote it down because some farmers said that it's important for them to be their own boss."* Helen: *"Yeah, I was going to say, freedom is the freedom to make your own choices, really. I wouldn't like to work for somebody else. And I don't think I would be very good (laughs) as an employee. Cause I like to be able to make my own decisions and use my own brain. I mean, James and I do discuss things, so it is a partnership. You can go outside if you want to...and you can work hard if you want to. Freedom is a chance to do things yourself, without necessarily being overseen by other people. A chance to be alone is a part of freedom to me. Interesting question, Norma. Freedom of choice"* (Interview 11, 2011).

When I asked Helen at a later stage of the interview what this rural lifestyle means everybody is talking about, she came back to her last point:

Helen: *"It's the freedom of choice that we were talking about earlier. Setting your on schedule and making your own decisions, but it's also clean air, space...having space. That's having a place, where you feel that you do belong to. Rather than being in town in a house that you might only own for three years or five years and moving on if you change jobs and things"* (Interview 11, 2011).

The distinctions between lifestyle and business are fluent and contradictory and applied differently in relation to the speaker's context. In distinction to the landholders' community in the old days, maintaining a farm today is regarded as business. The rural lifestyle of the past is no longer considered as economically viable. However, engaging in agricultural enterprises was always a business, as not only the old accountancy books in the family archive indicate.

The contradicting differentiations between lifestyle and business are one way of explaining the deep rooting socio-economic changes that continue to happen within this generation. They indicate constraints that curtail the freedom to make choices, associated with being on the country.

All farmers I spoke to highly value the freedom to make choices: to be one's own boss is just as highly appreciated as the outdoor lifestyle, the interaction with animals and the "battle with the elements". Life on country is perceived as engagement with the "real" world. It provides certain knowledge based on experience and inheritance as well as scientific data, it creates a holistic understanding of one's place in the world, in the bigger scheme of things. This way of being is often perceived by farmers as conflicting with the knowledge and contrasting to perspectives of decision-making politicians, academics or environmental activists based in the city.

There is a strong sense to maintain the farm for the next generation, leaving it in an even better estate than oneself had inherited it. Holistic thinking is reflected not only in the way farmers speak about their land and production system, but also how thinking beyond one's own life span enters casual conversations on a regular basis, i.e. by mentioning one's own death.

To bring up and raise kids in the countryside is perceived as the most valuable freedom parents might provide to their offspring that is, next to education. Growing up on the country is seen as orientation, it is "world placing". Country kids are regarded to develop an understanding of where they belong in the bigger scheme of things, that is the ecological relationship between organisms. However, this holistic understanding comes under pressure, when there is no one to inherit the farm to take over the family business or if future climate conditions are imagined as hostile, turning the farm into a place the kids might not want to be. The family history is narrated as a tradition of early adaption and innovative ancestors that are characterised by their far-sightedness in regard of market developments and the ability to adjust to the demands of markets in time. However, there is a distinction as some family members stress the spirit of innovation, down-playing the relevance of historic farming practices as they are seen to be bonded in their timely context. Only because they have been successful in the past does not necessarily mean that a certain practice is prosperous in the conditions of the now. Other family members, however, also described a longing to maintain historic practices, viewing them as family heritage, not only a resource for wealth and prestige, but also a valuation of one's ancestors. Farmers' practices are shaped by their

experiences as well as historic conditions. They do not engage in processes of repetition, but actively and strategically adapt to new contexts according to (scientific) knowledge and experience. The modernisation of farming systems' British legacy is a case in point. Family history is described as responsibility, a burden and an anchor, which may not only block economic adaption, but also prevent one from moving forward and develop a life away from agriculture. However, the metaphor of an anchor allows contradictory interpretations. It does not only inhibit one from going forward, an anchor also signifies security; it allows the ship to stay in place, preventing it from getting lost at sea. Here the metaphor of an anchor can be read as grounding, it is a fixation that literally connects one to earth. Family history as an anchor may be read to hold home, business and place together often in contradiction to what is seen as the latest demands of the "free market". The "exit of the agricultural industry" is either marked by grieving loss over one's vocation or by the deliberate decision to sell the property. The main difference lies in the process by which the decision was generated and if there was a freedom of choice. The family farm is the place where inter-generational relations through time materialise and connect the farmer beyond the own lifespan to generations past and enfolding, through time in place. The farm is a burden, which nevertheless provides security and at times wealth and freedom.

4. Summary: Neoliberal Postcolonialisation - The Imaginary & the Material

"Between the physical geography and the 'cultural' settings that get created in imaginative tale-telling and picture-making, there always lies a landscape – a place where nature and culture contend and combine in history. As soon as you experience thoughts, emotions or actions in a tract of land, you find you're in a landscape"
(Gibson 2002:2).

The restructuring of being in Australia through processes of re/deterritorialisation manifests on a material and on an imaginary level, apparent in the concepts of ownership and belonging. Re/deterritorialisation processes are taking place simultaneously, but perception varies according to subjects' positionality in the nation space. These processes further alter the

imagining of that very position and its corresponding material expression. *The signifying redistributive processes of the imaginary and material realm for family farmers in the rural Central West are identified as neoliberal and postcolonialising. The symbol and place of these processes is the family farm.*

I engaged with the imaginary of the Australian nation's past through the lens of the colonial family history. Predominant in the family history I encountered is the narrative of 'early adapters', which is on the one hand linked to the national imaginary of farmers as 'tough resilient battlers of the environment' and on the other a historical and material reality for the family as they have successfully run a business for 194 years. For family farmers, their farm carries the meaning of generational knowledge and experiences that date back to the arrival of the settler-migrant diaspora in Australia. Farms are materialised symbols – places – of past, present and future family relations. The farm is the place that provides the material base of survival for generations, traceable through multiple time contexts, mediated by patrilineal and patrilocal inheritance patterns.

To remain economically viable the family heritage undergoes a redefinition. Instead of holding on to family practices of farming that might have dominated until recently, the family spirit of adaption and innovation is emphasised. Dealing with change is labelled as ability, the progressive adaption to economic contexts, whereas traditional family practices are associated with romanticism and judged as economically problematic. This set of arguments mirrors the rhetoric of modernisation strategies i.e. in international development agendas that have been dominant from the 1950s onwards. These agendas also engage in a dichotomy of tradition vs. modernisation, where tradition is associated with underdevelopment, backwardness and regarded as a barrier to betterment. Modernisation is understood as the provision of suitable conditions for the "free market", which in turn promises to generate societal wealth. Family farmers play out the dynamics of economic change and continuity in their everyday practices, such as farming systems.

The push for productivity growth on farms is linked to more capital-intensive farming systems that engage in modernisation strategies to remain viable. To maintain a successful farming business might contradict environmentally sustainable approaches. Although it is in the long-term interest of farmers to maintain healthy estates, economic pressures might force them into short-term practices that are not environmentally sustainable. Furthermore, 224 years of dominantly British farming systems are related to serious soil degradation such as salination, loss of soil cover and biodiversity as well as the deterioration of inland waterways. Economic

worries further sharpened by issues of Climate Change may lead farmers to abandon a holistic long-term approach that traditionally is marked by the hope to leave the farm in a better condition for the next generation than oneself has inherited it. Instead, a short-term approach is favoured to get as much out of the land as possible under current market conditions and to sell the property before “*the shit hits the fan*”. This is an economically viable approach as the structural setting currently provides high prices for prime commodities and international buyers pay more money for land than ever before.

The shifting meaning of place is also reflected in the contradictory classification of being on the land as rural lifestyle or as business. Family farmers defined the rural lifestyle that comes with living on a farm as the freedom to make one’s own choices. However, the rural lifestyle was also projected into the past and regarded to be unavailable in the present. New economic constraints prevent this freedom to make one’s own choices. Thus farmers’ explain decisions they make i.e. regarding their farming systems, as necessary for economic survival. The love for the rural lifestyle was no longer perceived to be sufficient if one wants to live in the countryside. The farmer has to be a manager and being on the country because of the rural lifestyle increasingly indicates and describes another positionality: to have a job in one of the rural centres and a five-acre block of land outside town.

The symbol of the farm is subjected to a redefinition from lifestyle to business. However, the engagement in agricultural production has always been a business and squatters generated a lot of wealth, prestige and influence in the period of settlement due to their access to cheap resources. Small landholders by contrast who gained their land by government settler schemes lost their land very quickly as they lacked scale and capital to maintain the farm. However, middle-ranged properties were regarded as viable at least till the 1990s. Today, almost all middle-sized farming businesses operated by families are in debt, accumulated within a short period of time. They increasingly develop to be unviable as well. Debts can be seen as an instrument to restructure the means of production (Graeber 2011) and ownership patterns shift from family structured businesses towards internationally operating enterprises.

The new agents in the agricultural sector that extract high profits from the land are progressively organised in cooperate or state structures, which employ farm managers who do not own the land. Whereas corporations have engaged in agricultural investments since a long time, foreign governments are new agents in the field. They buy up productive agricultural land, apparently to maintain their own country’s future food security. However, this might also be an indicator for the development of another playground for speculation and investment

in primary commodity production. Mining companies also show an interest for prime agricultural land, but for the resources that lay under the surface. This play of interests creates a field of tensions that leads to an increasing value of land. A supportive factor of this development is the city sprawl around rural centres in newly structured country towns that are increasingly home to professionals and no longer to the rural workforce, which is in decline. Family farmers become deterritorialised subjects on the imaginary level of the nation but also very literally on a material basis due to their loss of land. Economic struggles among family farmers are sometimes expressed as “fears of extinction”.

Furthermore, I showed that ideas of nationhood cannot be described as postcolonial. The Australian nation-state emerged out of its colonial legacy and maintained the claim to its territory based on the myth of *terra nullius*. Since the Mabo-decision, which overpowered *terra nullius*, the legitimacy of settlement is no longer given. Hence, Anglo-Celtic Australians are forced to debate their relation to the emergence of the nation. I was interested in how family farmers maintain or re-establish a sense of belonging to place despite postcolonialising debates active in the idea of nationhood, that question their legitimacy to the land.

These debates are linked to a redistribution of the representational spaces one inherits in the nation’s imaginary of itself. However, I showed that the Native Title Act does not determine material threats to family farmers in regard of land loss. Although settler Australia dwells in hysteria over losing land to Indigenous peoples, the land is not redistributed in their favour. The ‘identity crisis’ state policies of culturalism engage in since the aftermath of the Mabo-ruling overshadow struggles of material redistribution. This contradiction is also an argument on an analytical level to not only engage in discourse analysis, but to include a focus on material distributions. The contradiction between “Aborigines get it all” and the material reality can be described as uncanny. It is an indicator of the rupture between the Australian state’s claim to territory and the national legitimacy of this hegemonic ambition, as *postcolonialising* processes question settler-descendants legitimacy to the land and their being in place. The reworking of the colonial past describes not a peaceful settlement process, but the brutal violence of frontier conflicts, that is, the dispossession and murder of Indigenous Australians. Differences between Indigenous peoples and settler descendants are present due to their differing positionality towards the history in the development of the Australian nation. The cultural dimensions of history, however, are presented as primordial criteria. Indigenous “culture” is described by a list of characteristics, which are seen as root cause for their unprivileged positioning within the Australian nation. Human diversity is put in a hierarchical

order not necessarily by engaging in biological racism, although these mechanisms are available and employed in the discourse about the Other, but predominantly through a hierarchising of culture-characteristics. Thereby the Other is marked and negated whereas the cultural practices of the Self remain implicit – the Self is the silent norm.

Farmers describe Indigenous peoples as hunter-gatherers and their nomadism during the time of settlement is seen as a practice born out of suffering and need. This is contrasted by the easier, hence more developed, way of generating a living of the land: farming practices that include settlement. Therewith agricultural farming practices are the implicit marker of the Anglo-Celtic Self. The farm is the result and symbol of settlement, linked to the origin of the settler-nation and part of the iconography of the Australian state. As this icon comes under pressure, settler descendants' legitimacy to the land is re-established via strategies that can be summarised as *negative recognition*, which aim to incorporate the Other into the Self. Strategies I described in my thesis engage with attempts to silence investigation of how settlement had taken place in regard of frontier violence and settler-Indigenous relations. Furthermore, Indigenous heritage was claimed, which functions to reposition the settler subject in relation to the history of the nation. Although the advantages of whiteness are maintained – the claim of Indigenous blood is not followed by any of the negative experiences Indigenous persons might endure due to racism, discrimination and exclusion – it is the Indigenous belonging to the land that is aimed for and which cannot be questioned. Additionally, Indigenous practices of land cultivation, such as controlled fire burnings, are presented and advocated as an accomplishment of settler-descendants, while simultaneously ignoring the Indigenous relation to and knowledge of those practices. Thus possible futures of conjointly organised land-cultivation, based on native pastures maintained by fire practices are excluded as a strategy of post-colonial recognition. This is especially concerning in times of Climate Change, which is very likely to increase the occurrence of droughts in the wheat/sheep belt of NSW. A development that might be better managed not by modernisation strategies that apply genetically modified plants, but by practices and pastures that suit the Australian landscape, which includes droughts and floods.

Processes of postcolonialising are classified by their 'Ungleichzeitigkeit', they do not occur as a synchronic and homogenous flow, but are diachronic and fanned out and interact within the reference frame of subject's positionality. Postcolonialisation is situative and – to engage with Appadurai – just like a landscape looks different from various angles, perspectives vary

according to standpoint. Postcolonialisation is not a linear evolutionary path “the society” marshes along.

How can Australia be described as postcolonialising when the nation-state is formally independent since 111 years and no colony of the British Empire anymore? The independence of the state merely describes the relation between settler-migrants and their “home-land”. This relation can be termed as a *first order of Australian colonialism*, which indeed was more or less resolved with the formation of the Commonwealth of Australia in 1901. However, from an Indigenous perspective, the colonials never left the country. The settler-Indigenous relation can be described as a *second order of Australian colonialism*. This second relation remains deeply problematic, unresolved and marked by extreme asymmetrical distributions of power and indeed inequality. The settlement and establishment of the white nation provided Indigenous people with the subject positioning „non-existent“. Therefore, to describe Australia as post-colonial today means to continue to ignore Indigenous positionality and a lack of recognition.

5. Conclusion: Searching for Utopia – The “Culture Crisis” Debate in Australian Anthropology

When I arrived at the Australian National University, ANU in Canberra I was first exposed to Australian Anthropology through the Culture Crisis debate, which I read like a thriller. I was shocked by the fact that anthropologists’ academic definitions of culture have a direct effect on the life circumstances of Indigenous Australians, mediated by the policies of the nation-state. This generated my initial interest in Indigenous settler-relations, which lead to the topic of my thesis. The debate is not easy and I would not dare to claim my own positioning within it. However, what constantly annoyed me was the focus on “the Other” and why I could not find research focusing on settler-descendants. I began to wonder how “the Self” in form of ideas about nationhood is constructed that it could possibly generate such living conditions for Indigenous peoples that scream of inequality and oppression despite the affluent life-styles I observed during my travels on the East Coast and among the Australians I met in Canberra. Nevertheless, there is research done, which overlaps with my field of interest. However, it was mostly conducted in urban environments (Cerwonka 2004) or engaged with rural

Australia but either focused on agricultural policy analyses (Merlan/Raftery 2009) or on Indigenous Australians or indeed was not based in Australia at all (Dominy 2001).

The “Culture Crisis” debate takes place since the nation-state’s *Northern Territory National Emergency Response Act* or “Emergency Intervention” in 2007, triggered by the “Little Children are Sacred” report (Merlan 2010). The policy framework of the “Emergency Intervention” ended on 16 July 2012, when the successor policy *The Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory Act* came into effect⁵⁷. Both are strongly criticised⁵⁸ and concern Indigenous-settler relations, based on the question of how to improve contemporary Indigenous living conditions.

The “Culture Crisis” debate suggests the conflict of two paramount values, equality and plurality, and is enriched by contrasting definitions of culture, assumptions about economic development and ideals concerning the good life. It further questions anthropologists’ relations to nation-states policies and concerns the role of anthropological knowledge production. Those anthropologists, who emphasise differences between Indigenous and Non-Indigenous peoples, argue for cultural diversity, pluralism and self-determination. They are accused of being in denial of the devastating situation of Indigenous Australians, failing to recognise their situation (Beckett 2010) and to remain silent (Austin-Broos 2010; Peterson 2010), when confronted with statistical evidence of horrendous social dilemmas concerning (sexualised) violence, homicide, substance abuse and child neglect (Sutton 2009). Their lack of responsibility is described due to a false comfort in a “liberal consensus” (Sutton 2009), while romanticising Indigenous Australians as ‘noble savages’ or projecting their political utopia (Langton 2010) through the lens of personal desires and fears (Kowal 2010). Arguments put forward in regard of diversity are associated with left-wing policies, criticised for remaining abstract. In consequence, they would normalise poverty and marginalisation as idealised cultural differences (Langton 2010).

Anthropologists who emphasise similarity in terms of equal opportunities argue for the development approach to *close the gaps* also employed by the nation-state. They point out

⁵⁷ <http://www.indigenous.gov.au/no-category/stronger-futures-in-the-northern-territory/> [accessed 31 Aug 2012].

⁵⁸ If you are interested in the current state policies regarding Indigenous-settler relations please consider <http://www.mabonativetitle.com/home.shtml> [accessed 31 Aug 2012] as a good starting point. There are many Indigenous controlled Homepages online important to notice. Furthermore I want to stress that the United Nations have criticised these policies for conflicting with Anti Racial Discrimination Acts: “*Aspects of the NTER as currently configured are racially discriminatory and incompatible with Australia’s international human rights obligations*” (Anaya 2010; <http://www.un.org.au/files/files/United%20Nations%20Special%20Rapporteur%20-%20Feb%202010.pdf>) [accessed 01 Sep 2012].

devastating inequalities between the “majority population” and Indigenous peoples i.e. by comparing statistical data concerning life expectancy, well-being, health, education, income and housing, among other factors. They are accused for being modernist and to provide the ideological base for a neo-paternalistic state, for coercive assimilation and neoliberal attempts (Lattas/Morris 2010). They are regarded as intellectually corrupted by putting anthropology into the service of the nation-state’s interests (Cowlshaw 2010; Lattas/Morris 2010). They are associated with conservative and neoliberal agendas (Altman 2010; Hinkson 2010) of a right wing section in Australian politics (Lattas/Morris 2010), aiming to gnaw on Indigenous Australian’s political rights (Lattas/Morris 2010) that secure their special status as an Indigenous people in a “First World” country. This is the battlefield over meaning, but of course, the simplified dividing line I present here separates neither all anthropologists nor marks all arguments. The setting of a postcolonialising nation-state under pressure in times of neoliberal globalisation further complicates the ideological fight and anthropologists’ role in it.

The Cape York Agenda as elaborated by Noel Pearson, one of Australia’s leading Indigenous scholars, argues to *close the gaps* and for the inclusion of Indigenous peoples in the “real” economy, contrasted by Indigenous Australians “gammon” economy of passive welfare (see Pearson 2000; 2005; and Pearson/Kostakidis-Lianos 2004). Jon Altman puts forward the framework of the Hybrid Economy Model, arguing to combine Indigenous subsistence economies and the market economy (see 2001; a2007; b2007; 2010 and Altman et al. 2007).

The approaches of Pearson and Altman can be described as connected to the “*two ideals of ‘equality’ and ‘plurality’*” (Altman/Rowse 2005:177). Pearson believes in a split of the personality of the individual, which can participate in the market-based economy by simultaneously maintaining his or her cultural beliefs. Culture refers here to existing behavioural patterns not necessarily to the (economic) advantage of the individual. On the community level it refers to an understanding of culture as heritage.

With the Hybrid Economy Model, Altman connects the customary economy, the state and the market economy and argues to recognise Indigenous Australians as agents of their own life worlds by their manifold practices of land cultivation: coastal patrols, the hunting of feral animals, controlled land burning and weed control. Due to this practices, summed up as the management of biodiversity, the Indigenous estates are in a much better condition compared to the rest of Australia’s landmass (Altman 2007). Where Pearson argues for an enlargement of opportunities for Indigenous Australians in the market economy, Altman argues for an

enlargement of the understanding of the very concept of economy. The possible dichotomous labelling of idealist vs. realist bears its own inherent conventions about reality. Australian anthropology remains to be a complex field that challenges assumptions and ideas about the good life, forcing to reflect upon and reconceptualise the values we attribute to it.

The field of my future research is marked by my interest in people's perceptions and imaginings of "the economy". I am intrigued by people's critique of dominant forms of economic interaction, i.e. at the current conditions of internationally operating chains of production. I am interested in people's opposition to neoliberal forms of globalisation and by their advocating and living of "alternative economies". The word "crisis" is probably the one most whispered and screamed since the collapse of the global financial markets in 2008. Dominant discourses tend to suggest there are no alternatives, which is why I feel challenged to engage with people that search for utopia and work towards it in their everyday-practices and organisation of economic exchange. After all, to quote Albert Einstein: "*We can't solve problems by using the same kind of thinking we used when we created them*" (Harris 1995).

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EDUCATION

Magisterial Thesis in Socio-Cultural Anthropology, 2012
Department of Social and Cultural Anthropology; University of Vienna, Austria.

Fieldwork in the Central West, NSW, Australia from 2011, September – 2011, November

Joint Study Scholarship Holder for study abroad from 2010, July – 2011, July
Australian National University, Canberra, Australia

Admission to Advanced Graduate Phase (roughly equivalent to BA exams) in Socio-Cultural Anthropology, March 18th, 2009, passed with High Distinction
Department of Social and Cultural Anthropology; University of Vienna, Austria.

Magisterial Studies in Socio-Cultural Anthropology since October 2005
Department of Social and Cultural Anthropology; University of Vienna, Austria

Spanish Language Course 2005, March – 2005, April
El Instituto de Idiomas, Pontificia Universidad Catolica Del Peru; Lima, Peru.

EDITORIAL AND RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

2012 (forthcoming): **Podcast Production** www.talkinganthropology.com;
Interviews with Henrietta Moore, Dan Rabinowitz,
Helena Wulff at the EASA Conference 2012, Nanterre,
France.

- 2006, November – 2009, March: **Founding editor and editor-in-chief** of the academic anthropological journal „*Die Maske – Zeitschrift für Kultur- und Sozialanthropologie*“. Fields of work: Project management, publishing of four volumes (between 88 – 102 pages, DIN A4, with a circulation of 1000 copies, biannually), team coordination (14 members), copy-editing of 170 articles, correspondence, agenda setting, design and visual representation of the authors' expertise in collaboration with the team, public relations, administration and distribution.
- 2007, June – 2009, December: **Chair** of the cultural association “PANGEA – Verein für multikulturelle Kommunikation und Verständigung”, Publisher of „*Die Maske*“.
- 2007, July – 2007, December: **Internship** at the Austrian Academy of Sciences, Institute for Social Anthropology (former: Social Anthropology Research Unit), Vienna (Austria); editors' assistant for: „*Handbuch Globalisierung. Anthropologische und sozialwissenschaftliche Zugänge für die Praxis*“ (Globalisation Handbook: Anthropological and Social Science Approaches for Practitioners).
- 2004, December – 2005, January: **Internship** at the Ibero-American Institute (Prussian Cultural Heritage Foundation), Berlin (Germany), Public Relations Team. Field of work: Organisation of the “*Long Night of Museums*” (annual event in which different museums and cultural institutions collaborate for promotional purposes).

PUBLICATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

- 2009, November: **Conference Proceedings** “*History of Labor Intermediation. Institutions and Individual Ways of Finding Employment (19th and Early 20th Centuries)*“, University of Vienna, November 27th – 28th, 2009. Organisation: Research Project “Production of Work” (Sigrid Wadauer), Department of Social and Economic History.
- 2009, February: **Conference Proceedings** of the European Association of Social Anthropologists Anniversary Conference: “*Future Challenges: Twenty Years of the European Association of Social Anthropologists*“, University of Vienna (Austria), February 6th – 7th, 2009 (in collaboration with J. Keppel and S. Wolf). Organised by: Department of Social and

Cultural Anthropology, University of Vienna and the
Institute for Social Anthropology (former: Social
Anthropology Research Unit), Austrian Academy of
Sciences

2008, December:

Panel Discussion: The Free Media Landscape in
Austria: „*Tag der Freien Medien 2008*“, organised by
„Österreichischer Medienverband“.

2008, August:

Radio Interview about „*Die Maske – Zeitschrift für
Kultur- und Sozialanthropologie*“ in: „*Dimensionen*“,
Austrian radio channel Ö1.

„NGOs“ (in collaboration with Dieter Goetze) In: *Handbuch Globalisierung
Anthropologische und sozialwissenschaftliche Zugänge für die Praxis*. Ed.: Andre Gingrich,
Eva-Maria Knoll, Fernand Kreff. Transcript Verlag, Bielefeld, 2011.

„*Warum sagt man nicht Ureinwohner?*“ In: *Die Maske - Zeitschrift für Kultur- und
Sozialanthropologie*. Ed.: Kulturverein Pangea. No.4, January 2008. p. 4.

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collaboration with U. Probst). In: *Die Maske - Zeitschrift für Kultur- und
Sozialanthropologie*. Ed.: Kulturverein Pangea. No.4, January 2009. p. 20-23.

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Zeitschrift für Kultur- und Sozialanthropologie*. Ed.: Kulturverein Pangea. No.3, June 2008.
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Kulturverein Pangea. No.3, June 2008. p. 75-77.

Interview with Ulf Hannerz: „*Questioning the Cosmopolitan - Ulf Hannerz about the internally
quite diverse*“ (in collaboration with B. Pestal). In: *Die Maske - Zeitschrift für Kultur- und
Sozialanthropologie*. Ed.: Kulturverein Pangea. No.2, January 2008. p. 3-6.

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Die Maske - Zeitschrift für Kultur- und Sozialanthropologie. Ed.: Kulturverein Pangea. No.1,
June 2007. p. 73-75.

(PRE-)FIELDWORK EXPERIENCES

- 2010, May – 2011, December: **Australia** (Travel East Coast; Two semesters study abroad at the ANU, Canberra; Field Research Central West, NSW).
- 2008, April – 2008, July: **Middle East** (Morocco, Egypt incl. Sinai Peninsula, Jordan, Israel/Palestinian Territories, Syria; interexchange with NGOs and peace activists).
- 2005, March – 2005, June: **Peru** (Lima/Amazon).
- 2004, July – 2004, September: **Eastern and South Eastern Europe** (Baltic states, Finland, Turkey, Greece, Macedonia, Albania, Kosovo, Serbia, Hungary, Austria) as well as **Russia**.

LANGUAGES

- Native: German
- Fluent: English
- Basic: Spanish
- French
- Latin