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Mapping The Language Of Landownership: Discourses Of Property, Management And Rurality

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Abstract

Hegemonic categorisations have been used to examine rural landownership, including non-farmer/farmer, production/consumption and productive/post-productive. Evocative in the abstract, a shared dichotomy is unsuitable for examining the complexity of how meaning is given to rural land. To arrive at a more fine-grained understanding, transcripts of interviews undertaken with landowners, centred around the Cotswolds in Gloucestershire, were analysed using a methodology of discourse analysis. The data was conceptualised in terms of discourses of property, management and rurality. 'Discourse' is here understood to mean vivid images often evoked in metaphor. This discourse analytic approach was useful in examining the way meanings of rural land vary across the course of an interview. Discourses were found adapted according to circumstance, rather than deployed in their entirely 'traditional' form. Discourse analysis allowed exploration and explanation of the processes involved in constructing meaning. For example the use of the part-whole metonymy allowed landowners to talk about part of their property, including management as stewardship, while referring to landownership as a whole. This type of discourse use was strategic. Landowners variously used discourses of stewardship of the environment, farming as a business and accommodation between the two, in different situations within talk to achieve specific, localised effects. It was found that discourses of townies, country people, 'no difference between townies and country people' and townie farmers, constitute a cultural repertoire from which landowners draw. When deployed in talk they create different effects because they relate in various ways to social representations of the rural idyll and urban dystopia.

Understanding how meanings of land are constructed in talk is a critical step towards a more informed debate over the future shape of rural landownership.

Author's Declaration

I declare that the work in this thesis was carried out in accordance with regulations of the University of Gloucestershire and is original except where indicated by specific reference in the text. No part of the thesis has been presented to any other education institution in the United Kingdom or overseas.

Any views expressed in the thesis are those of the author and in no way represent those of the University.

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In loving memory of Ken & Mollie Wright

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Abbreviations

BASC	The British Association for Shooting and Conservation
CAQDAS	Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis
CLA	Country Land and Business Association
DEFRA	Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (formerly MAFF)
<i>DSP</i>	Potter, J., & Wetherell, M. (1987). <i>Discourse and Social Psychology: Beyond Attitudes and Behaviour</i> . London: Sage.
ESA	Environmentally Sensitive Area
<i>FCCA</i>	McEachern, C. (1992). Farmers and Conservation - Conflict and Accommodation in Farming Politics. <i>Journal of Rural Studies</i> , 8, pp. 159-171.
FWAG	Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group
HMSO	Her Majesty's Stationery Office
MAFF	Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food
MOD	Ministry of Defence
NFU	National Farmers Union
NVivo	QSR NVivo Version 1.2
<i>PPP</i>	Newby, H., Bell, C., Rose, D. & Saunders, R. (1978) <i>Property, Paternalism and Power: Class and Control in Rural England</i> , London: Hutchinson & Co. Ltd.

Chapter 1: Introduction

The language used to describe rural landownership reflects contemporary and ongoing concerns about the countryside. A contemporary non-farming/farming dichotomous categorisation has strong cultural resonance with an older rural/urban distinction. The rural community, its activities and landscape, ostensibly farming, are seen as threatened by the modernising influence of the city, suburban sprawl and the perceived blurring of the urban-rural divide (Best 1981; Murdoch and Pratt 1993). Non-farmers are part of this process when construed as those who have moved from the city, compared to farmers who are 'of the countryside'. In this conceptualisation, country life is envisaged as simple and pure, rooted in the best of the past, while the city is ugly and dirty, associated with the industry of capitalism. These binary conflicting images are apparent in descriptions of rural suburbanisation said to occur "when certain elements of property design or ornamentation, which are particularly identified with towns and the urban environment, are imported into the countryside" (Countryside Commission 1994 p.22). Non-farmers are implicated in this process.

A recent paradoxical twist, running counter and parallel to this image as town as threat, has been the casting of non-farmers as saviours of the countryside. Wealthy counter-urbanisers buying up farmland are cast as having rejected the commercial principles of the city (which gave them their wealth). They are scripted as managing their land less intensively than farmers using fewer fertilizers and pesticides, and therefore as being less likely to degrade the environment. They are deemed to have the resources to restore landscape features and implement measures to improve biodiversity. Such assertions are bolstered by narratives which propose a clear distinction between work and leisure currently manifest in discussion of the

production/consumption and productive/post-productive countryside (see for example Lowe *et al.* 1993; Marsden *et al.* 1993).

In a report to The Countryside Agency, English Nature, Scottish Natural Heritage and the Countryside Council for Wales, new entrants to the land market characterised as non-farmers are defined as: "...individuals who are buying rural land for the first time for a lifestyle reason such as enjoyment of field sports, horse riding or hobby farming, or simply the privacy and amenity value of owning land around a desirable farmhouse. In contrast to farming buyers, their primary management objective is not generation of income via agricultural output" (Ward and Manley 2001 p.10). Within this conceptualisation of landownership, non-farming individuals are cast as too pre-occupied with leisure to be concerned with 'working the land'. They are regarded as the apotheosis of the contemporary leisure society. A handful of specialist estate agents (one of whom joint authored the report cited) serve this clientele. The agents provide clear instruction to aspiring owners and those looking to sell rural land:

As a non-farming buyer, what should my priorities be?

A **period house**, preferably untouched over the past 20-30 years, in a prime location on the farm, up a long drive with traditional farm building close by, is the ideal. If the house is modest, some buyers may consider demolition and rebuilding. Level, ploughable fields are important to an arable farm but should, preferably, be mixed with undulating land and woodland to provide good landscape, wildlife habitat and shooting potential. Conservation areas – water meadows, downland and scrub – provide amenity and may attract additional 'green' support in the future. Location is a pre-requisite. City buyers want to be

within three hours of their offices, although this will become less of a restraint as IT develops further.

(Strutt & Parker 2000, **emphasis as original**)

Consumption of the countryside dominates this lifestyle image and sits comfortably within a conceptualisation of the consumption countryside as post-productive (for a review see Wilson 2001). Rural landownership is reduced to an aesthetically pleasing backdrop, an amenity resource, and an appreciating capital asset. Conservation is cast as another commodity. Such an understanding concurs with a narrative that environmental degradation in the countryside is caused by farmers. A headline from the Observer captures this thinking: "*The farmers ruined our countryside. Now we have a chance to take it back*" (Cox 2001). As numbers of non-farmers are increasing, there is a temptation to conclude that the scope for amenity and conservation must be increasing too.

Empirical data show that a change in the social structure of rural landownership is occurring. Numerically the scale of the change is significant. Ward and Manley (2001) undertook an analysis of the transaction database of a rural land estate agent to assess the activity of non-farmers in the market. They reported that nationally "new [non-farming] entrants to the rural land market" accounted for 22% of farms of 50 acres or more purchased in the first 11 months of 2000 (p. 15). When land was included that had been bought by existing non-farming landowners, this figure increased to 39% of farm sales. They estimate that "new [non-farming] entrant activity has been growing at 1% of farms per year" (p.15). While some caution must be exercised with regard to these figures, as they are not statistically representative,

they do corroborate other studies which suggest non-farmers own significant proportions of rural land in some regions. Munton *et al.* (1989), in a survey of farms in Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Dorset, Essex and Surrey, found that 11.8% (n=221) were non-farmers (what they termed hobby farmers). Gasson (1966) found that 69% (n=155) of all part-time farmers surveyed in Surrey, Sussex and Kent were non-farmers (those which she characterises as from professional, administrative or managerial socio-economic groups). MAFF (1999) predicted lower land prices and an acceleration in the growth of non-farming rural landownership, if agricultural production subsidies were to be scrapped as part of Common Agricultural Policy reform.

Assessing the impact of different types of land manager on the environment or the countryside has proved to be a complex problem (see for example Potter 1986; Potter *et al.* 1996). Few studies have sought to distinguish the impact of non-farmers from other landowners, with the exception of Munton *et al.* (1989) who have carried out an assessment and a comparison of the impact of part-time, full-time and non-farmers. They found that "...all kinds of business are associated with some degree of [landscape] change", and that over-all "there is as much variation in the rates of landscape change between types of part-time business [including non-farmers] as between full-time and part-time farming" (p.523). "In many respects", conclude Ward and Manley (2001) "new [non-farming] new entrants are no different from individuals who have owned land themselves or within their family for lengthy periods (p.8). Other evidence suggests that non-farmers bring their own impacts including "shoddy and unsightly buildings, poorly maintained fences" and "weedy pasture" (The High Weald Forum 1995 p.61). In sum then, attempts to verify clear

distinctions between farmers and non-farmers in terms of the effect they have on the environment, have been unsuccessful. There is however, a real danger that perceived differences between non-farmers and farmers become adopted as fact without supporting evidence. This risks, to paraphrase Merton (1959), inducing pseudo-problems which cannot be solved because matters are not as they purport to be.

As a contribution to what is known about the creation and use of categories referring to rural land, this thesis investigates how rural landownership is constructed in the language of landowners. Formulated in accordance with the discourse approach taken, a primary and two constitutive research questions ask:

1. What is the meaning of rural land for landowners?
 - 1a. What discourses are drawn upon in the social construction of property rights?
 - 1b. How are these discourses deployed as owners talk about their rural land?

Chapter 2 undertakes a sociology of the study of rural landownership. The non-farming/farming dichotomy has taken on different labels as it has been used to look at different periods in the history of rural English landownership. It is argued in this thesis that application of this model tells us as much about the priorities and prejudices of the researcher, as it does about those involved in the events being researched. Therefore this model is unsuitable for use in researching how *landowners* construct landownership. Discourse analysis on the other hand is a good method for exploring the meaning attached to certain concepts or categories by analysing what people actually say. Key to understanding discourse is its development in response to and as a critique of attitude studies which presuppose that “people filling in an attitude scale are performing a neutral act of describing or expressing an internal

mental state” (*DSP* p.45). By contrast, Potter and Wetherell argue that “given different purposes or a different context a very different ‘attitude’ may be exposed” (p.45). Meanings and attitudes are regarded as context-dependent, they therefore conceive of what people say in terms of discourses and study the effects of discourse when they are deployed. This thesis adapts Potter and Wetherell’s approach to study the meaning of rural land ownership for owners. ‘Discourse’ is defined as a repertoire of interpretative resources, often vivid images evoked in metaphor.

The classifications of landownership deployed by Newby *et al.* during their study of East Anglian rural landowners during the 1970s (see *PPP*) are re-conceptualised in terms of Weberian ideal types. This also applies to the categories identified by McEachern in *FCCA*, an anthropological study of farmers in Yorkshire. Finally in Chapter 2, the characteristics of property and rurality as referred to in this thesis are redefined based on a critical review of the academic literature. Property is conceptualised as relating owners to others in society in reference to land. What landowners say about this relationship is therefore amenable to discourse analysis. The concept of rurality has destabilised notions that the countryside is only a geographic category, and allows interviews to be analysed for different meanings of *rural* landownership.

Chapter 3 describes the methodological basis on which landowners were sampled. The methodology was developed by drawing on the social psychology literature (in particular *DSP*) and writings on sociological method influenced by Weber (see for example Giddens 1984; Lee and Newby 1983). A description of the landowners interviewed, all of whom came from an area centred on the Cotswold in Gloucestershire, is given before the interview format and transcription procedures are

detailed. Criteria which can be used to assess the credibility of analytic claims are discussed along with the use of the CAQDAS programme NVivo employed to aid analysis.

Analytic claims made in Chapter 4 are not based on spotting discourses of property, as they are listed in *PPP* for instance, but on determining how discourses are deployed by landowners to what effect. This is found to change according to discursive context. Different discourses are shown to be used for the same effect. The same discourses are deployed to different effect. This reveals a level of complexity that is critical to understanding how landownership is constructed.

Chapter 5 details how discourses of management construct landownership as farming through the use of metonymy. A discourse of accommodation is deployed by landowners to describe their management of rural land. When confronted with environmental criticisms of their management, discourses of knowledge are deployed to different effect: others are blamed and/or expert knowledge is discredited. Discourses of business and moral land use interact as landowners construct arguments for and against change in the way the countryside is managed.

The 'rural idyll' is a familiar concept to those living in the countryside (see Halfacree 1993; 1995). Chapter 6 analyses discourses of rurality, by focusing on the contrast constructed between country people and townies. The concept of townies is shown to be used in landowners' discourses in conjunction with a notion of urban dystopia. Such discourses are used by landowners to describe and justify ownership and management of rural land, support or dismiss claims to aspects of property such as access. Discourses which construct no difference between townies and country

people and which fuse townie and country people discourses together, also form part of a repertoire from which landowners can draw.

The concluding chapter draws together the findings of the three areas found to be critical in the construction of rural landownership: namely discourses of property, management and rurality. In light of the results the usefulness of the ideal-types approach is assessed in terms of what ideal types have been able to show about how discourses are used to construct landownership. Before outlining the case for further research on discourse use, the non-farming/farming dichotomy is reconsidered and evaluated.

Chapter 2: The Sociological Context

This chapter demonstrates that despite differences in terminology, a non-farming/farming dichotomy structures many explanatory accounts of rural landownership provided so far in the literature. It argues that application of such a binary model does not offer a sensitive or methodologically robust way to examine the intricate and varying networks of meaning attached to the concept of rural landownership as displayed in talk. Reduction to binary concepts involves a great loss of detail. As the primary aim of this thesis is to determine the meaning of rural land for landowners, selecting and developing a methodology that can cope with this complexity was a critical issue.

The study of rural landownership

Fortmann (1998) suggests that six particularly important lenses have emerged from the diversity of ways in which international scholarship looks at landownership/property: property as social process, customary tenures, common property and community management of resources, gender, the complexity of tenancy relationships, and land concentration.

Property as social process

Within work which treats property as social process, research on social networks surrounding landownership is starting to uncover the different ways in which identities are created and sustained in order to strengthen claims to land and other natural resources. In Africa, Berry (1988) points out the importance of ceremonies, the careers of children, and cattle as a part of a dowry, in order to establish and

strengthen claims to land. Within the UK Halfacree (2001) details the identity creation and dynamic connections, often via the internet, between groups of what he terms 'marginal settlers'. Groups such as Tinkers' Bubble in Somerset, claim rights of residency in the countryside, where normally planning laws would not allow. Stress is placed on 'difference' to the majority of applications, emphasis is given to pretensions of an 'alternative, modest, sustainable livelihood'. This strategy has had some success, with the Secretary of State for the Environment granting temporary planning permission.

Key to understanding property as social process is recognition of the important role that definitions play. "The power to define, to attribute meaning, and to assign labels", Peters (1987 p.193) comments, are at the heart of what landownership is. The law has a critical role in enforcing a particular definition. "Property is a secure expectation on the part of the holder of property...what makes it secure is this recognition on the part of others that it belongs to me, as well as my expectation that the state will step in to protect my claim should it be threatened" (Bromley 1982 p.225). This relationship lies at the heart of the capitalist economic system. However it is critical not to forget that the law (and its definitions) are contested and sustained not only within, but *outside* of legal institutions and the legislature. Without general 'acceptance' of definitions which ascribe ownership, a system of property and a society which rests upon it will collapse. Contemporary Zimbabwe is arguably in such a state (Meldrum 2004). Less catastrophically property is challenged and changed on an ongoing basis in any society. For example in the UK, The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (HMSO) constructed a new right to wander over mountain, moor land and heath. Of course not all challenges to the status quo

result in change. Fiddes (1997) argues that a number of road protestors in Britain dispute “the possibility of rights to land ownership not just in degree, but in principle, [this] strikes at the very heart of capitalist ideology, policy, and practice” (p.50). While it may be possible to argue that the protestors have had some effect on transport policy (Brown 2001), at least in the short term, as of yet the capitalist system remains very much intact.

The final element of social property to which Fortmann draws attention is “Property and narrative”. Stories play a critical role in persuading others that property rights exist, or in other words that claims to landownership are legitimate. Over historical time ‘everybody’, the state, elites and the common man, have selectively used appeals to history, custom and (religious) morality to construct and reconstruct landownership in struggles over property.

Authors of varying traditions have, as might be expected, made appeals for mankind to change its relationship with land, and more recently the environment. To draw up a definitive list of these works would be a Herculean task, but would include the Romantic writings of Wordsworth in the 19th century (for a discussion of the politics of landownership in the Romantic tradition see Fulford 1996); Leopold’s (1966) enduring and influential (on both sides of the Atlantic) mix of essay, polemic and memoir on the landscape of the Wisconsin River, USA; through to Marion Shoard’s (1997) *This Land is Our Land: The Struggle for Britain’s Countryside*, written in a more recent ecological tradition. The importance of narrative, especially in the writings of philosophers who have sought to justify property, are returned to and discussed in detail later in this chapter (under the heading ‘Property’).

In contrast to focus on the written word, this thesis analyses discourses within verbal narratives of a particular group, namely that of landowners in Gloucestershire. Research incorporating interview data into the meaning of rural land for landowners, has been carried out using a number of different approaches before. Burton (2004) for example carries out a study in the tradition of symbolic interactionism to remind us that the connection between the farmer and the “production orientated approach to agriculture” cannot be merely reduced to or understood solely in terms of economic advantage or aesthetic preference (p.210). Gray (1998) on the other hand stresses “...the spatial relation between family and farm...” and argues somewhat mysteriously that “...both partake of or become united in common substance” (p.345). Newby *et al.* (1978) as critiqued in detail within Chapter 3 of this thesis equate farmers’ justifications of landownership to single affinitive ideologies of property. Relatively recent developments in the methodology of discourse analysis by amongst others Potter and Wetherell (1987), afforded the opportunity to develop discourse as a fine-grained tool of social analysis.

Customary tenure

Exploration of customary tenure is acknowledgement that the state is not the sole author of law and practice pertaining to land. In recent years scholars have applied methodological tools to the developed world, which until recently have only been used extensively to research the developing world. Fortmann (1990) has understood public protests in California (USA) over changes to forestry management as an example of a community asserting rights to customary claims of access. A state of affairs which is usually only associated with communities of the continents of Africa and Asia.

Common property

Common land, where the community and individuals within it have prescribed rights of access forms another major area of scholarly activity. Bromley (1989) for example has written about the misappropriation of common land by those who would claim that there are no 'traditional' community controls on exploitation, and that therefore privatisation is the only option. In *Privatizing Nature* edited by Michael Goldman (1998) different authors discuss struggles against such moves to bring commons into private ownership for exploitation as a commodity by the market. For where this has happened, it has all too frequently been to the detriment of local people.

Gender

Rural space and landownership are gendered, and, as with other social systems which convey power, women have often proven to lose out. For instance, well into the 19th century the law of primogeniture prevented inheritance of land by female children (Thompson 1963). Inequalities persist and those interested with issues of landownership, have along with other rural researchers, been criticised for doing "... very little to further... our general understanding of the subordination of women" (Little 1987 p.335). Work which has been conducted has revealed the importance of stereotypical ideals of masculinity to male farmers: roughness and strength are stressed in the construction of farming in terms of dominance of nature (Bryant 1999; Liepins 2000).

The complexity of landlord/tenant relations

F.M.L. Thompson (1963) observes in *English Landed Society in the Nineteenth Century* a number of landowners who were so engrossed in leading a life of leisure that they took no interest in the activities of their estate managers. Absence of effective bookkeeping enabled some managers to become wealthy at their masters expense. In a final twist these managers were able to purchase land as the effect of the agricultural depression took its toll on the great estates. This is but one example in a long history of continual change in landlord/tenant relations (for discussion see Winter 1992; 1996). Arrangements found today prove no less complex and there is an urgent need for more research, for example, on the effects of the introduction of Farm Business Tenancies under the Agricultural Tenancies Act (HMSO 1995), and to report on the implications of continued growth of farm management companies.

Land concentration

Who owns what and the question of whether they own too much has proved of enduring concern over time. For instance in the last three decades, Norton-Taylor's (1982) *Whose Land is it Anyway?*, was followed by Shoard's (1997) *This Land is Our Land*, and most recently Cahill's (2001) *Who Owns Britain?* They all share a concern for: the lack of transparency in ascertaining who Britain's landowners are; increasing disparities between small and large farmers as agricultural incomes fall; and the power landowners have over a landscape which is not just a private but a social resource.

Landownership has in the past been higher on the UK political agenda. As recently as the 1970s the Labour party manifesto promised to nationalise farmland (Denman

1980). During that same decade Lord Northfield led an inquiry (Cmnd 7599 1979) into institutional investment and acquisition of farmland, following concern that the small farmer was being squeezed out.

Ownership of land in the countryside in Britain has always been entangled with the symbolism of power and status. In any discussion of such issues, social class is usually never far away. Representations of the landed aristocracy, the small farmer and the landless majority frame debate of the effect of the non-farmer on the countryside (introduced in Chapter 1), as they have and continue to frame rhetoric and narrative around access, hunting and tax, to name but a few issues (see for example Cloke and Thrift 1990; Denman 1980; Lester 1999).

Dichotomies structuring the study of landownership

Central to the way this thesis was conducted was the wish to avoid loose and uncritical use of dichotomies plaguing forms of rhetoric around rural landownership and management. The first chapter drew attention to the empirical inadequacies, the lack of verifiable evidence to support assertions of difference between farmer and non-farmer. The rest of this chapter similarly critiques those mutual associations and equivalences (detailed over), which are frequently evoked in support of the non-farmer/farmer dichotomy.

production - consumption

work - leisure

full-time - part-time

productive - post-productive

At this point it is worth pointing out that dichotomy is used in much the same way as Sayer (1989; 1991) uses the term dualism. The term dichotomy is simply deployed to emphasise the familiar, frequent and mundane nature of decisions to structure research and arguments along binary lines in rural studies. The purpose of providing a brief sketch of studies deploying dichotomies (listed above) is to “...illustrate the inability of this kind of dualistic thinking to cope with complexity and ambiguity” (Sayer 1989 p.304), and to avoid in analysis having to ignore or distort data which does not have a place within such a crude framework. In such a way, application of the concept of discourse to analyse landowners’ talk, is an attempt to meet Sayer’s call for “...more flexible conceptual systems and rhetorics with somewhat less simplistic and inflexible organisational principles” (p.305).

Consumption/production

For much of history, landownership was directly equated directly to power and status, most significantly under the Medieval Feudal system. In the 19th century large landowners still dominated the English countryside and the government. At that time, of the nation’s land 43% was accounted for by just 1500 landed estates of the aristocracy, 7000 freehold rights accounted for 80% of all land (Bateman 1883).

Thompson (1963; 1965; 1990; 1992) has written extensively on landowners of this period. In the opening chapter of *English Landed Society in the Nineteenth Century* he writes of the history of this group.

In the main they did not produce anything. They managed their property and they spent their incomes, and a history of management and consumption forms the most important part of their economic history.

(Thompson 1963 p.3)

This description overlaps clearly with the contemporary conception of 'non-farmers' is clear. Just as the landed aristocracy "did not produce anything", so today's new entrants to the land market 'do not farm', but buy land for a "lifestyle reason" (Ward and Manley 2001 p.10). Thompson nicely summarises his view of this period when he says "A life of leisure with freedom to pursue occupations that were not dictated by the compulsions of economic necessity was a great object of estate management" (p.151).

From the late 19th century onwards, the economic and political powers of the rural landowner began to wane. Agriculture went into recession; British grain prices fell as cheap grain was imported from overseas settlements. This squeezed profits and wages in the sector. To make things worse for English agriculture, North America was benefiting from a series of good harvests as Europe suffered poor yields. Many landowners fell into debt, a situation exacerbated by the fact that they had traditionally paid a high price for land (Cmnd 7599 1979). As a result many were forced to try and sell at least a fraction of their estates. The Settled Land Act of 1882 allowed them to do so, lifting restrictions on the sale, lease and transfer of land. However, the agricultural depression was so deep that there are recorded cases where

a number of estates offered for sale failed to attract purchasers. The land market, to quote Thompson (1963), "entered into thirty years of almost unbroken dullness and restricted activity" (p.317).

While facing financial difficulties, landowners also sought to fight the slow erosion of their political powers. The setting up of School and Sanitary Boards in the 1870s eroded the power of the landowner dominated governing institutions of Lords Lieutenant and Quarter Sessions. The establishment of County Councils in 1888, dissipated power further through a democratisation of local parliament and through the establishment of a class of professional administrators. After 1885 landowners no longer accounted for the majority of the House of Commons, as new industrialists replaced them. However, testament to the landowners' resilience was that they hung on to make up the majority of the Cabinet until 1906.

Concurrent with the weakening economic and political position of the landed aristocracy was the strengthening position of tenants. Feudal land tenure eventually gave way to a system of virtual leasehold tenancies (Kerridge 1969). In the 19th century, conditions of tenancy were increasingly the subject of legislation. The rights of tenants to claim compensation for any un-exhausted improvements made by a tenant, and to remain on his holding at the end of his tenancy was the main focus of campaign for reform. The 1851 Landlord and Tenant Act gave rights to tenants to remove buildings they had constructed on termination of a tenancy. An Act of 1883, provided protection to the tenant, in the form of compensation and an extension to one year for the notice to quit. A further nine Acts of Parliament between 1890 and 1922 increased tenants' rights to compensation and guaranteed freedom of cropping. The Agricultural Holdings Act 1923 tidied up and brought together the disparate

pieces of legislation setting out a full code for tenants' rights to compensation. In 1908, the National Farmers Union was set up to co-ordinate campaigning for increased security of tenure which did not arrive until the Agricultural Act 1947 and the Agricultural Holdings Act of 1948. This finally provided for full lifetime security of tenure and applied to existing farm tenancies of two years or more.

The agricultural depression was lifted briefly during the period of the First World War. Either side of these events, land sales continued the break up of the great estates. Relatively little weight is given by Winter (1992) to the land reform movement and the rise in trades unionism amongst agricultural workers for this process. Financial prudence in transferring capital outside of a depressed agricultural sector is cited as the main driving force. Nevertheless there was an unprecedented political attack on landownership by the Liberals. This culminated in Lloyd George's "People's Budget" of 1909. Radical reforms fell in the face of concerted opposition and of those measures that were introduced, land tax was repealed by Lloyd George himself in 1922.

As the war was drawing to a close land sales rocketed. The Estates Gazette (1921) of the time concluded that transactions on one-quarter of England must have taken place. Combined with the ever improving legislative protection of tenants, their ability and commitment to specialisation, innovation and accumulation, land was increasingly sold to the tenant farmer. Owner-occupation increased throughout the 20th century and is now the dominant form of landownership (see Table 2.1 next page).

Table 2.1 Land Tenure 1908 – 2000, Great Britain

	Rented & mainly rented		Owned & mainly owned	
	% area	% holdings	% area	% holdings
1908	88	88	12	12
1922	82	86	18	14
1950	62	60	38	40
1960	51	46	49	54
1970	45	42	55	58
1980	42	34	58	66
1990	35	38	65	62
2000	31	31	69	69

(Source: DEFRA 2003c; MAFF 1968; 1970; 1980; Scottish Executive 2003; Welsh Assembly Government 2003)

In 1885 for the first time, the number of industrialists in the House of Commons was greater than the number of landowners, and landownership was no longer an obligatory step towards a peerage. This could be said to mark the end of the ‘golden age’ of the landed aristocracy.

During this period of decline for landowners, a group of *nouveau riche* emerged as a result of the Industrial Revolution. As Winter (1996 p.178) explains “...while Britain was one of the earliest industrialised and urbanised countries, it was also one of the first in which rural living became a significant attraction for those whose wealth came not from the land but from manufacture and commerce”. This explanation suggests a group whose wealth was “not from land”. Marsden *et al.* (1993 p.75) extrapolate from a similar categorisation to explain that the “... brief revitalisation of

the landed estate...[was]... dependent on industrial and banking capital and overtly based on *consumption* rather than *production* objectives, [this] provided tangible expression of a changed rural world to which the urban bourgeoisie looked for retreat and cultured enjoyment (Wiener 1981)” (*emphasis added*).

The distinction between landowners of consumption or production breaks down on close examination. The ‘reality’ of the history of economic development eludes such simplification, but is instead increasingly recognised as complex, varied and gradual (Cannadine 2000). Changes cannot be described in terms of straightforward effects on two distinct social groups. From this perspective Cannadine writes of rural landownership during the Industrial Revolution.

Landowners not only enjoyed agricultural rents: they also drew profits from their mines, docks, urban estates and industrial investments. In the same way, successful middle-class businessmen often set themselves up as broad-acred gentlemen, thereby straddling the supposedly deep and unbridgeable divide between the country house and counting house.

(Cannadine 2000 p.9)

Those who had acquired great wealth such as bankers, brewers, merchants and manufacturers bought rural land to pursue the same country pursuits of hunting, fishing, shooting and cattle breeding as the landed aristocracy (see Wiener 1981). The landed-aristocracy, on the other hand, involved themselves in industrial enterprises (see Cannadine 1980; Ward and Wilson 1971). As with non-

farming/farming, the conceptual divide between landowners in terms of consumption or production collapses under empirical scrutiny.

Work/leisure

Work/leisure can for the most part be unproblematically substituted for, indeed in many ways are directly analogous with use to, the terms production/consumption i.e. with the familiar idea that work involves production, in contrast to leisure which involves consumption. Rather than critique this dichotomy by focusing again on the rich and their large country estates, ownership of rural land by those of more limited means is examined. For, as Hardy and Ward (1984) point out, landownership was never merely an aspiration of the wealthy, it was simply that for most of history the rich were the only ones with means to fulfil their ambition.

It was not until the 20th century that the burgeoning middle classes were able to choose to leave the cities. During the 1920s and 1930s, there was an increase in demand for recreation, housing and farming in the countryside. At this time marginal areas of land found by the coast or at the edges of agricultural land could be occupied in the absence of effective planning control. Larger plots were subdivided and sold under low land prices and hence for a while smallholdings proliferated. These are termed “plotlands” by Hardy & Ward and as they explain “were ‘down-market’ manifestations of more extravagant dreams to own and enjoy land for housing, farming and recreation, but they were still very much a part of the same ‘genre’ “ (p.16). The buildings on these plots were usually huts constructed by the occupier on their weekends and days off from the factory. Most were never a permanent home but used on the recently instated annual holiday and made increasingly accessible by

the motorcar. Conclusive division however, between plotlands in relation to those used for work *or* leisure is elusive.

The problematic relationship between production and consumption is paralleled by the relationship between work and leisure (Holloway 2000). As Hardy and Ward said, plotlands were used for both "farming and recreation" (p.16) and in some instances they were seen as such from their conception. For example, land occupancy was proposed as a solution to the pressing social problems of the decades preceding the First World War. 30,000 families had already been settled on holdings provided for by County Councils under the 1908 Small Holdings Act. The Allotments and Smallholdings association campaigned with the slogan "three acres and a cow". In 1918, 24,000 ex-servicemen were settled on 16,000 smallholdings. This was seen by the government as a means of providing 'recreation as recuperation' *and* a source of income (Hardy and Ward 1984 p.18).

The introduction and gradual strengthening of planning powers throughout the 1930s and 1940s meant that local authorities controlled and restricted the development of smallholdings and associated 'shacks'. Thus ended widespread informal developments. This however was not the end of the fascination within British society for rural areas, but as the figures in Table 2.2 show (see over), the start of a process termed counterurbanisation. The population of rural areas since 1961 has grown faster than the population of Great Britain as a whole.

Table 2.2 Rural population change 1951-91 (percentages)

	Rural areas	Great Britain
1951-61	-0.5	5.0
1961-71	5.7	5.3
1971-81	9.4	0.6
1981-91	7.9	2.5

(Source: Champion 1994)

The enforcement of planning controls has meant that a desire for occupancy of land in the countryside is only quenched for most through the rural housing market. It is known that the majority of contemporary migrants to rural areas are drawn from higher income brackets (Cloke *et al.* 1998; Halfacree 1994), and that most of these are landowners, for they own the plot of land their house is built on, and in most cases a garden (DETR 2001). Division of these new landowners from farmers is problematic. Although size might appear to be a good basis to distinguish a farm from a garden, many richer individuals have bought hundreds of hectares. In such cases Ward and Manley (2001) have distinguished non-farmers from farmers, in terms of those whose main objective is amenity as opposed to those who are commercial. This categorisation must not be made to do too much work, for as was shown in Chapter 1 there is no empirically verified basis for distinguishing between environmental impacts of non-farmers as opposed to farmers. Neither must it be assumed that non-farmers do not run farming operations commercially (see Gasson 1967; Gasson 1988), or that running an agricultural business is in itself distinct from leisure. The problematic relationship between work and leisure is well recognised in

some areas of study, less so in rural studies. As Goodale and Godbey (1988) explain: “... equating leisure with free time and limiting our notion to ‘freedom from’ is not satisfactory...” (p. 9). Freedom, in relation to farming, is thus “freedom to” as well as “freedom from” and is almost always “relative freedom”.

Full-time/part-time

The Second World War and its aftermath demanded increased output from British agriculture. Critical to this effort was the role statistics played in state management of farmers and farming. Murdoch and Ward (1997) assert that the creation of “... normative (statistical) definitions” by and for the government was “... crucially linked to ideas of full-time, agriculturally specialised farms, and determined which types of groups of farmers were allowed access to grants” (p.32). Those rural landowners who did not conform were cast as ‘non-farmers’. MAFF decided that “...a holding is also a farm when it provides the main employment of and chief source of livelihood to the occupier... and conversely, holdings which are not capable of doing so are *not farms*” (MAFF 1946, *emphasis added*). As a powerful government ministry, MAFF reinforced the full-time/part-time (‘farming/non-farming’) farming dichotomy through “a mutually reinforcing process of representation and intervention” (p.321). Academia was intimately involved in this process, as knowledge produced by agricultural economics in one sense authorised and legitimated the exercising of power in these terms by the state.

A popular way of framing applied agricultural research throughout the 1970s and 1980s was to use full-time/part-farming as a classification (see for example Fuller and Mage 1976; Gasson 1986; Jansen *et al.* 1983; Mage 1982). A problem that was

noted at the time, was the difficulty of correlating the dichotomous classification to features of agriculture categorised in terms of socio-economic data. Fuller (1983; 1990) argued that this was down to a failure to precisely specify what criteria part-time farming was to be measured. Lund agreed, he wrote in to the Journal of Agricultural Economics to propose his own categorisation, complete with distinct labels to 'prevent' possible confusion. Part-time farmers where he said "...individuals working for less than some stipulated length of time on the farm"(Lund 1991 p.197). Those 'non-farmers' who had "...some other gainful occupation(s) and with farming not being the principal one in terms of criteria such as time spent or income earned"(p.197) should be called dual jobholders or pluriactive farmers. Gasson (1991) replied to Lund, arguing as Murdoch and Ward (1997) did six years later, "... policy requirements determine the choice of definitions..." and that "... definitions and statistics are means to an end, not ends in themselves" (p.200). Bryden, Fuller and MacKinnon (1992) concurred pointing to the importance of considering categorisations as constructed in language, by saying "One only has to think back to Orwell's Newspeak to be aware that the world is defined by terminology" (p.109).

Productive/post-productive

At the end of the 20th century 'new' problems of over-production and falling farm incomes beset rural landowners (largely conceptualised as farmers). Having doubled between 1990 and 1995, total income for farming fell to around 35% of the levels recorded in the 1970s and approximately 60% of the levels seen towards the end of the 1990s (MAFF 2000b). Three main factors were behind this situation: high exchange rates of sterling, low world market commodity prices, and the Bovine

Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE) epidemic and its market consequences (Gaskell and Mills 2000). A Foot and Mouth outbreak in 2001 contributed to an image of an enduring sense of crisis in British agriculture. The media around that time carried stories 'about the flight from farming' and the 'fatal' impact on the family farm (for example see Cox 2001). Much was made of the involvement in the rural land market of counter-urbanisers portrayed as part of a 'non-farming' takeover of the countryside (see FPDSavills 2000; Mason 2001). A terminology of 'non-farming' resonated with political representations of the Labour government as 'urban' with little understanding of the countryside, and framed opposition to a government proposed ban on hunting with hounds (Countryside Alliance 2002a; 2002b).

A fall in agriculture incomes was not followed by an increase in rural land available on the open market. To date, land coming up for sale still represents less than 1% of the total land area of Britain (MAFF 2000a). In part, this is down to land, which has taken on a value not directly related to its productive capacity. Increases in amenity or consumption value, have more than outweighed losses in productive value in areas of high scenic beauty and/or with good communication links (FPDSavills 2000; Strutt & Parker 2002). The 'new consumption' values which have been given to rural land, artefacts and people, have privileged those with existing property rights in land through processes of commoditisation (Munton 1995). In other areas the flexibility and divisibility of property rights which describe ownership under UK law has allowed speedy response to new economic circumstance (Marsden *et al.* 1993). For instance secure forms of tenancy have been supplemented with insecure Farm Business Tenancy Agreements under the Agricultural Tenancies Act (HMSO 1995). This was done with the intention of allowing farmers to increase the area they farm,

and so benefit from economies of scale without having to find significant extra capital to finance purchase of more land.

In recent times it has become popular to conceptualise changes in and around agriculture as signifying a shift from productivism to post-productivism. The empirical basis for accepting assertions that agricultural is actually, or even usefully thought of, in such 'revolutionary' terms is weak (see for example Evans *et al.* 2002).

At best productivist/post-productivist categories can be thought of as ideal-types¹, grossly over-simplified abstractions, which cannot account for the complex, varied and gradual developments that effect agricultural development. It is not surprising that Marxist conceptualisations of class have been critiqued in the same way (see for a good introduction Cannadine 2000), given that productivism/post-productivism has arisen out of research based within a tradition of Marxian political economy (see Marsden 1990; Marsden *et al.* 1996).

An example of use of the term 'productivist' relating to landownership, can be found in *Constructing the Countryside* by Marsden *et al.* (1993). In a discussion of landownership and property rights within Chapter 3 'Agricultural regulation and the development of rural Britain' they refer to the period from the beginning of the Second World War to the 1980s as "productivist" (p.83). The "priority" they explain "...was to food and, to a lesser extent, fibre production, in the postwar period, it is no surprise that up until the late 1970s most of those with extensive rural property rights (owner-occupiers as well as landlords and tenants) associated economic well-being with these enterprises, and often did so with singular disregard to other interests." (p.92). Evidence offered of this disregard, is based on assertions that landowners

¹ For further detail of the conceptualisation of ideal-types see Chapter 3.

“had yet to be fully alerted to the emerging agricultural crisis, or the growing market for traditional country pursuits...and rejected the claims of environmentalists that they were harming...the countryside” (1993 p.92). The time following the productivist period is thence termed elsewhere “post-productivist”, although Marsden *et al.* prefigured this in a discussion of ‘how’ the “productivist regime has declined” (p.98).

Although different authors have used productivist/post-productivist terminology to refer to different aspects and nuances of agricultural and countryside change, a striking feature of the conceptualisations is equivalences with features of the non-farming/farming dichotomy outlined in Chapter 1. The following attributes are selected from a list compiled by Wilson (2001) Productivism as ‘farming’ is associated with agribusiness, intensification and the production of food. The main threats to the countryside are perceived to be from urban and industrial development. Post-productivism as ‘non-farming’ is seen as conservation, consumption, counterurbanisation and extensification. The main threat to the environment is perceived to be farming.

To conclude this chapter its critical points will be briefly recapped. It has been argued that the non-farming/farming dichotomy can be seen structuring studies of rural landownership. This categorisation offers a gross simplification, usefulness of which collapses under close empirical scrutiny. The aim of this thesis, it will be recalled, is to examine the meaning of rural landownership for landowners. The non-farming/farming dichotomy was not used as part of the methodology for two reasons. Firstly, there was no wish to project onto the data *a priori* a dichotomous

categorisation, which so far has only seen to structure academic thinking. Instead a methodology was required that would allow the examination of landowners' terminology. Secondly, as the division between non-farming/farming has been called into question at all but the most gross and abstract levels, this dichotomy was not considered suitable for use in selecting a sample that could be justified on robust theoretical grounds. The next chapter explains the development of the methodology that was used and explains the theoretical assumptions that were drawn in terms of property and rurality.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Discourse analysis is a methodology developed by Potter and Wetherell in *DSP* which focuses specifically on language use. Talk and text is broken down into constituent discourses to allow the description of *how* concepts, categories, images or representations are used, and to explore *what* they are used for. These analytic foci influenced the formulation of the two secondary research questions which together constituted the primary research aim of this thesis i.e. to understand what the meaning of rural land was for landowners. Following on from this primary objective of this thesis questions were asked about what discourses are deployed as owners talk about their rural land. To aid identification of discourses of landownership, Potter and Wetherell's methodology was combined with a reconceptualisation of the categories of property postulated by Newby *et al.* in *PPP*. That process is described in the first half of this chapter, along with theoretical positions adopted vis-à-vis property and rurality.

Discourse analysis and social construction

Discourse analysis as described by Potter and Wetherell in *Discourse and Social Psychology: Beyond Attitudes and Behaviour (DSP)* was key to the methodological development of this thesis. The empirical analysis they envisage, is not interested in attitudes or opinions, but the way these are framed and constructed in language. As an examination of language use their method is a suitable, if somewhat little used method in rural studies, to research how landowners give meaning to ownership. Talk, such as that which can be gathered from an interview, is analysed through the deployment of a concept called 'discourse'. Before describing what discourse

analysis involves in terms of method (see Chapter 3), it is important to consider the methodological basis of Potter and Wetherell's claims and the adaptations that have been made for this thesis.

At the methodological level, Potter and Wetherell (1987) problematise attitudinal surveys. They "ask...whether people filling in an attitude scale are performing a neutral act of describing or expressing an internal mental state, their attitude or whether they are engaged in producing a specific linguistic formulation tuned to the context in hand" (p.31). They make the point that systematic variations in accounts indicative of the latter are managed 'out' of attitude studies by restricting interviewee responses to pre-determined categories, gross categorisation of data by the researcher and selective reading of transcripts according to prior expectations (p.39-43). In contrast, their concern as discourse analysts is with "*language use: the way accounts are constructed and different functions*" (p.147, *emphasis in original*). Cognitive reductionism, that is an explanation which treats linguistic behaviour as only a product of mental entities is resisted, while the insights which 'traditional' cognitive science has to offer are not denied (see p. 157). They do not expand on the notion of, or the relation between attitude and discourse, which such an accommodation suggests. Perhaps because of this Potter and Wetherell are mischievously equated by Burr (1995) with a socially reductive approach. She says of their work: "Let us be clear about the status of the things people say and write ...*They are* manifestations of discourses, outcrops of representations of events upon the terrain of social life" (1995 p.50, *emphasis added*). In this way, Burr is able to cast Potter and Wetherell as "extreme social constructionists", where "...'there is nothing outside of text and talk' i.e. that when we talk about 'reality' we can only be referring to the things that we

construct through language” (p.9). This is to over-state Potter and Wetherell’s claims for discourse. They make no explicit claims on the status of ‘text and talk’ versus materiality, only stating that they are interested in language use.

Rural sociologists have looked to factors outside of text, to critique attitude studies. McHenry (1996b) succinctly notes that “Attitudinal studies of farmers are common, but attitudes do not always correspond to behaviour”. Some of this difference is explainable to structural influences; farmers and landowners do not live in a vacuum, but are enmeshed in a complex web of social relations. As global and local factors interact in various and complex ways, so changes in agricultural policy and economics influence what farmers do in an uneven manner (Marsden 1989). Marxian political economy, as a means of understanding these ‘forces’ responsible for change wrought on agriculture and the countryside, has informed much of the empirical work carried out on rural areas from the late 1970s (Crow *et al.* 1990). Marsden *et al.* (1996) argue that “analytic” space for social agency and local diversity has been created by those working in this tradition, focusing attention on “the interconnectivity among social, cultural, and political institutions and the relations of production and consumption” (p.367).

Amongst approaches that have started to examine social agency Harré (1998) studied labelled discourse analysis. However, the majority have been concerned with issues *surrounding* rural land, rather than concerned with landownership *per se*. For example, Morris and Young (2000) investigated discourses of food quality and quality assurance schemes in the UK. McHenry (1996a) studied the depiction of environmental discourses associated with farming. Both of pieces of work analysed the journalism of newspapers and weekly periodicals. In a similar vein, but drawing

on a wider range of written material Harré *et al.* (1998) study environmental discourse, for what they term “Green speak”. Interesting though these studies are, they function largely as a contrast to language used *by* landowners.

Other research has studied the discourse of land *use*. Woodward (1999) records arguments used by the Ministry of Defence (MOD) justifying their use of the Otterburn Training Area in the Northumberland National Park. She is able to point out topics avoided and emphasised across the course of a public inquiry into proposed developments. For instance the MOD is “silent ...about war and the need for soldiers to be trained in the use of very formidable artillery systems in order to wage war” (p.30). Adopting an approach based in constructionism, Woodward is not concerned to “establish the validity or truth” of claims made about conservation. Instead she makes reference only to the social. This approach excludes insights from other methodologies. For example, argument advanced that shell craters make diverse habitats, is effectively rendered un-researchable by ecological science, by her assertions that “crater-as-habitat” is solely a “discursive construction” (1999 p.25). From the outset this thesis sought to use a notion of discourse, without adopting such an extreme social constructionist position. In focusing on the text generated from transcribed interviews with landowners, the purpose was not to preclude insights from other approaches or disciplines (particularly the natural sciences) being incorporated at a future date.

Newby et al. and East Anglian farmers

The work of Newby *et al.* (1978) published in *Property, Paternalism and Power (PPP)* might be fairly described as a classic text in the study of rural areas. Along with other work carried out in the late 1970s and early 1980s by the first author (see for example Newby 1977; 1978; 1982), this has had enormous influence in problematising, and focusing attention on, the relationship “between economic and social factors” in rural areas (Crow *et al.* 1990 p.251). A less remarked on legacy has been the enduring association of Newby *et al.*’s methodology with understanding what farmers say in terms of attitudes.

Newby *et al.* randomly sampled and interviewed farmers in Cambridgeshire, Essex, Norfolk and Suffolk. They argue (after Weber), that property rather than occupation was the defining principle of rural social organisation. Ideologies of landownership as “logical purifications of phenomenal forms” (Saunders 1981 p.25), are read off from an envisaged class structure. This occurred in several stages. First Newby *et al.* identified nine categories of “farmers’ justifications of their *wealth*” as Table 2.3 (over page) indicates.

Table 2.3 Farmers' justifications of their wealth

<i>Justification given</i>	<i>44 parishes sample</i>	
	<i>% of replies* (N=78)</i>	<i>% of respondents* (N=47)</i>
Money not everything/ denial of wealth	29	49
Hard work	21	34
Responsibility/socially useful	15	26
Risks/incentives	10	17
Natural inequality	13	21
Stewardship	1	2
Already highly taxed	5	9
Difficult to justify	-	-
Other	6	10
<i>Total</i>	100	168

(Source: Newby *et al.* 1978 p.373)

* (sic). Totals tally if taken as a count rather than percentage of replies and respondents.

These categories subsequently undergo two major transformations. First they are supposed to be the same as 'justificatory ideologies of landownership' (p.325), and are relabelled as such. Subsequently they are distilled into a fourfold classification of landownership (see Table 2.3 next page).

Table 2.3 Property and property ideologies

<i>Example of contemporary justification</i>	<i>Affinitive ideology</i>	<i>Example from contemporary landownership</i>
'Hard work' 'Risk'	Capitalistic	Privately-owned farm, hiring full-time, non-family labour
'Property of personal appropriation' ⁵	Individualistic	Family farm
'Creates employment for workers'	Collectivistic	Publicly-owned productive land (e.g. Forestry Commission)
'Noblesse oblige' 'Stewardship'	Altruistic	Publicly owned recreation land (e.g. parks, etc.)

(Source: Newby *et al.* 1978 p.339)

This final act of purification is to establish links between farmers and philosophies of property. This is done by equating selected interview extracts, with the arguments of influential property rights philosophers (see p.325-335). This process neglects what Wetherell and Potter (1992) term the 'actuality of ideological practice'. By this they assert:

...no argument is inherently ideological by virtue of the characteristics of its speakers, their interests or their perceptions and experiences. Rather an argument becomes ideological (linked to oppressive forms of power) through its use, construction and form of mobilization...the meaning of any piece of

⁵ " 'Individualistic' ideologies...rest upon the fact that certain types of property which, following Lafarge (n.d.), we may term 'property of personal appropriation', are widely distributed in modern Britain. Such property of personal appropriation includes items such as clothing, furnishings, cars etc..." (Newby *et al.* 1978 p.343)

discourse is not guaranteed through the correspondence between its relational terms and the way the world is or appears to the author of the discourse. Rather, meaning emerges through the pattern of *difference* established between these relational terms, and through the differences, too, between discursive versions.

(Wetherell and Potter 1992 p.171)

Although Newby *et al.* recognise that the classification which they term ‘justifications of property’ can be used “very flexibly” and “are the servants of those who use them, not vice versa” (p.335), they none-the-less categorise respondents according to a *single* ‘affinitive ideology’. While it is possible to speculate in such a way, on which philosophers of property, landowners knowingly (or otherwise) refer to ‘explain’ situations in which they find themselves, this process is unable to explain the variation and flexibility to which ‘justifications of property’ are found to be put. On these Newby *et al.* are only able to make general comment:

...most landowners are undoubtedly familiar with most of the ideologies discussed...while in everyday situations they may need to refer only to those particular ideologies in particular contexts, it seems likely that the extraordinary context of a formal interview led them to delve into a wider range of ideologies in response to some broad direct and implicitly threatening questions.

(p.383)

In the preceding extract Newby *et al.* can in retrospect be seen to obliquely signpost further research: how are categorisations (which they equate to ‘justifications of property’ and ‘ideology’) used in the everyday and how does this change in response to different discursive situations? To follow that path in this thesis, ideology becomes

discourse and the research concern becomes ideological practice. The steps necessary to make this transition are discussed next.

As Lee and Newby (1983) explain: "...unlike Marx, Weber did not produce a coherent doctrine of theories or develop a systematic philosophy of political action. Thus there is no 'Weberism', but rather a loosely integrated set of ideas, clustered around a few major themes, but not organized into a theoretical system". While only elements of *PPP* can be called Weberian, notions of ideal-types proved critical in reconceptualising classifications of property for discourse analysis.

Giddens (1971) writes:

An ideal type is a pure type in a logical and not an exemplary sense: "In its conceptual purity, this mental construct cannot be found empirically anywhere in reality. It is a utopian" (Weber 1949 p.90).

(p.142)

Newby *et al.* consider justifications of property and affinitive ideologies as analytic constructs that are representative of both internal mental structures, and from extrapolation, to the population of East Anglian farmers as a whole. Discourses, a terminology which is used interchangeably with interpretive repertoires by Wetherell and Potter (see for example 1988), are:

... not intrinsically linked to social groups, these being constructed in the course of the accounts themselves. In addition, there is no search for consensus, as people frequently switch between repertoires in any accounts and use different aspects of the repertoire in different circumstances. Finally, there is no cognitive

reductionism in repertoires, concern being almost solely with language use and function

(Halfacree 1993 p.30)

Given that the discourse approach taken in this thesis was based on the assumptions summarised by Halfacree, it was pertinent to consider whether the categories used by Newby *et al.*, conceptualised as ideal-types would be useful. For, as Lee and Newby (1983) say: “If after subjection to a rigorous attempt at verification they do not work, they must be abandoned, for their value is determined solely by their usefulness and effectiveness in research. If they are not useful the sociologist must construct other, more serviceable ideal-types” (p.175).

Before empirical research was carried out, a review of the available literature had already determined that other categories as ideal-types would prove useful. Namely, “...meanings and values about farming...” which McEachern (1992) deployed in explaining how farmers “...represented what they do, to themselves and others” (p.162). These are detailed in a paper entitled ‘Farmers and Conservation - Conflict and Accommodation in Farming Politics’ (*FCCA*). They resulted from analysis of data collected after a period of participant observation of farm life in a single upland parish in the Yorkshire Dales. Her study was primarily interested at looking at how farmers discussed farming, and not, as with this thesis concerned with landownership. Nevertheless, McEachern notes that land was a key component of farmers understanding of farming. Therefore in seeking to examine the meaning of rural landownership for owners, it was felt likely that discourses of farming might intersect with discourses of property. Ultimately this is a question for empirical analysis, however stewardship had already been noted by both McEachern and

Newby *et al.* as a stewardship ethic and a justification of property respectively. With this in mind, categories from both studies were tried out for analytic usefulness, in undertaking discourse analysis of interviews with landowners about landownership.

Property

The main purpose of studying rural landowners, was not, however, to investigate the methodology of ideal-types. The problem to which this study is addressed is the meaning of rural landownership for landowners. The background therefore involved a concern with rurality and certain facets of the debate on property rights in land. Property, in this case rural land, has a material *and* socially constructed dimension. The latter is the product of a series of social associations in which narrative and language play a key role. As Cohen (1978) explains these relationships are conceived in terms of rights:

Whatever technical definition of property we may prefer, we must recognize that a property right is a relation not between an owner and a thing, but between the owner and other individuals in reference to things.

(cited in Carter 1989 p. 130)

Property rights are used to model the institutional arrangements which mediate group and individual behaviour. Bromley (1982) summarises ten rights or incidents of ownership (see Table 2.4).

The property rights and correlated duties detailed in Table 2.4, have been used to describe and understand the specific contours of different property regimes. They have proved especially useful in analysing property proscribed in Anglo-Saxon law

and policy (see for example Bromley 1982; Bromley and Hodge 1990; Freyfogle 1996; Pendall *et al.* 2002). However outside of these institutions, these conceptualisations have proved less apt. Claims to property in societies with oral traditions, have been particularly ill-served. Those made by the indigenous inhabitants of Australia for example, were simply ignored. In such a way was the land declared *terra nullis* (empty) and expropriated from the Aboriginals for settlement by the British. Misconceptions of verbal claims can also have grave consequences. For instance, Bromley (1989) details a misunderstanding of common property, which forms a false basis for declaring private property regimes the most sustainable form of landownership. He argues that in developing countries “well-defined groups of authorised users, and well-defined resources that the group will manage and use” are all too often simply overlooked and an “absence of property rights declared” (p.872). The “inevitability of the tragedy of the commons is invoked” and an immediate programme of privatisation suggested.

Table 2.4 Standard incidents of ownership

The Right to Possess	Possession or exclusive physical control is said to lie at the center of the notion of ownership. Any legal system must acknowledge the right to be put in control of something valuable and must also assure that such control cannot be taken away arbitrarily. In the absence of this, there is no ownership.
The Right to Use	The term "use" can have a broad or a narrow interpretation. The more strict notion pertains to the owner's personal use and enjoyment of something. The fact that certain uses are restricted does not diminish the content of ownership.
The Right to Manage	This aspect of ownership includes several ancillary rights, such as the right to admit others to one's land, the power to permit others to use one's things, and the authority to set the limits of such permission. That is, contracting with others over the benefit stream that arises from the valuable asset is the essence of management.
The Right to Income	The right to income has always loomed rather significant in any discussion of rights of ownership. This is especially so as the importance of income versus capital becomes more pronounced.
The Right to Capital	This right comprehends the power to alienate the valuable item, or to consume it, or destroy (waste) it. As such, this introduces important inter-temporal issues into ownership.
The Right to Security	The issue here is the owner's expectation that ownership runs into perpetuity, assuming solvency and behaviour consistent with accepted social norms. This is immunity from arbitrary appropriation, and the concern with eminent domain versus the police power is pertinent here. There is a fine line here, however, for a general policy of expropriation, even with full compensation, would be devastating to our concept of ownership.
The Incident of Transmissibility	No one can enjoy something after death, but an interest in an asset that is transmissible to a successor is more valuable than one that stops at death. To the extent that transmissibility is restricted, one's property is diminished.
The Prohibition of Harmful Use	With harmful use, one comes to an aspect or a component of ownership that is directly pertinent to the issues encountered in externality problems. There is hardly a social system in existence that does not require that uses made of owned objects be consonant with social objectives. Of course, the interesting issues arise over the meaning of "consonant with social objectives".
Liability to Execution	The final aspect of full ownership involves the liability of the owner's interest to be used to settle debts. Without such provisions, property would become a vehicle for defrauding creditors, and the social dividend would suffer accordingly as those with liquid capital would be wary of loaning it those with assets lacking this proviso.

(Source: Bromley 1982 p.225-227)

Verbal claims to property are constructed in stories outside of formal property rights institutions. Before, claims to land turned violent, Fortmann (1995) identified the way stories were used to contest land-rights claims in Zimbabwe. She identified a “...Parable of good stewardship” constructed by the mainly white commercial farmers in defence and justification of their farm ownership. In opposition, the black villagers deployed resource-claiming stories of recent historical access to resources *with* the consent and help of landowners. A “Mythical” story in Fortmann’s judgement, for such co-operation is unlikely to have occurred. Both Fortmann’s research and Newby *et al.*’s (1978) study of East Anglian farmers and farm workers, demonstrate that stories about landownership are told for a purpose: “A story and the discourse it bears reminds people of what they deserve and of their ability to act” (Fortmann 1995 p.1054). Although from a Weberian perspective, action is by no means inevitable (Crompton 1993).

Determination of property rights

What ... provides the basis for deciding between conflicting claims? ... Put somewhat differently, are there no natural rights to which one might appeal for guidance? Is there nothing that is logically prior to the state?

(Bromley 1982 p.228)

A review of scholarship which has put forward answers to the questions outlined above, is not done so as to offer an exhaustive account, but rather to illustrate the social construction of property claims in narrative and discourse. This background frames the approach taken to discourse analysis in this thesis.

Many theories of property have sought to justify a system of private property ownership. John Locke (1924 [1690] #598) in the *Second Treatise on Government* sought to justify property rights by arguing that whatever a person mixed their labour with it was rightfully theirs:

Though the earth and all inferior creatures be common to all men, yet every man has had 'property' in his own 'person'. This nobody has any right to but himself. The 'labour' of his body and 'work' of his hands, we may say, are properly his. Whatsoever, then, he removes out of the state that Nature have provided and left it in, he hath mixed his labour with it, and joined to it something that is his own, and thereby makes it is property... As much as anyone can make use of to any advantage of life before it spoils, so much he may by his labour fix a property in... As much land as a man tills, plants, improves, cultivates, and can use the product of, so much is his property.

(Cited in Newby *et al.* 1978 p.22)

In *PPP* Newby *et al.* (1978) note that this argument conflicts with a capitalist system which relies on the privileged few expropriating the surplus created by the labour of the many. Carol Rose (1990) argues that such inconsistencies are features of property rights theories in general, for ultimately they rely on stories to hold "tricky" parts of their argument together. She asserts for instance, that John Locke is "...indifferent to the factual accuracy of the story as genuine history" (p.37). Such observations lead her to conclude that "the claim of ownership" from property theorist or layman are all "...a kind of assertion or story, told within a culture that shapes the story's content and meaning. That is the would-be "possessor" has to send a message that

the others in the culture understand and they find persuasive as grounds for the claim asserted" (p.25).

A number of the more prominent property rights theories have been subject to philosophical scrutiny by Carter (1989). His findings corroborate Rose's (1990) assertions that they are unsystematic narratives. He asked "Can one rightfully own property?"(p.1) and from this basis sought to analyse those philosophical arguments which:

...have attempted to prove the notion of property rights can justifiably be applied to certain things, and that rights in property can be shown to follow logically from first principles which we all accept. Such arguments purport to demonstrate that we are morally obliged to respect certain claims to property.

(Carter 1989 p.3)

Of those theories analysed deriving property from labour, desert, liberty, utility, efficiency, first occupancy, personality, moral development and human nature, he argues there is no valid philosophical argument that can be made which justifies the exclusive ownership of property. He goes further, asserting that "there... never will be, a persuasive and valid argument which derives from first principles individual rights to property" (p.126). This does not preclude the exclusive use of land, "but that exclusive use when it is morally justifiable, would rely ultimately on a respect which would ordinarily be granted voluntarily" (p.138).

Rurality

Issues of culture and geography intersect in the thesis research question: ‘What meaning does *rural* land have for owners?’ Outlining the basis on which the rural is conceptualised as constructed in narrative and discourse, and hence is amenable to discourse analysis, requires that culture and geography are differentiated, but that the nature of links between them are explained.

The geographic basis of distinguishing between rural and urban is analogous in many ways to ‘common-sense’ notions of the countryside, characterised for example by density of housing, area of agricultural land etc. Multiple-factors such as these and other more complex ones have been incorporated into indexes of rurality by amongst others Paul Cloke (1986).

Early community studies assumed that such a geographic rural-urban distinction was matched by differences in characteristics and relationships of corresponding communities. The notions of ‘Gemeinschaft’ and ‘Gesellschaft’ (after Tönnies 1957) for example were mapped on to this dichotomy. The former was used in emphasising kinship and close co-operation linked to place (the rural), while the latter referring to the impersonal and individuality of actions i.e. the urban. This approach to community studies was critiqued by Pahl (1965) in a study of villages in a county near London. He found that lifestyles were influenced by the nearby city made accessible by modern communications. In the view of Pahl, these inhabitants occupied the landscape of Hertfordshire, but lived the culture of London. This undermined the notion that there was a distinctive rural identity to define. Despite other work supporting this contention (for example Tönnies 1957, rural-urban continuum), the rural/urban divide remains influential in the design of empirical

work. Agricultural as rural, is conceptualised as a distinct sphere of production. A major concern is to see how it related to other parts of the capitalist economy (see Marsden *et al.* 1996). Hoggart (1990) warns in a memorably entitled piece: *Lets Do Away with Rural*, that such a rural landscape focus obscures causal forces of economic change operating at other scales. He urges instead, rural scholars to focus on how particular social conditions unfold in particular settings. This is part of a broader debate, over whether there is a role for rural studies as distinct from other fields of social science.

The mobility of capital and people, and 'new' multiple uses of the countryside "demands" according to Marsden *et al.* (1990) "a reorientation for the sociology of the rural founded on a *rurality* that is increasingly reliant upon the *social production of meanings* rather than on territorial space" (p.13). In such a way has rural studies research undergone what has been called a "cultural turn" (largely corresponding to the "linguistic turn" referred to in other humanities subjects). In broad terms this has been characterised by research asking "...how each occupant of rural space feels – or becomes – rural" (Mormont 1990 p.34). Descriptive, qualitative research methods have been deployed to 'give voice' to multiple narratives of the rural (see for example Milbourne 1997). There are potentially limitless individual constitutions of the rural, and subjective social descriptions. In such terms:

There is now, surely, a general awareness that what constitutes 'rural' is wholly a matter of convenience and that arid definitional exercises are of little utility.

(Newby 1986 p.209)

Many studies simply do not concern themselves with what constitutes the rural in research design, using designations defined by others to ascribe and describe the

rural area researched. This avoids a potential problem of researching how people become rural, without presupposing a rural space in which to carry out the study. McEachern (1992), for instance, carried out observations of farmers in Upper Wensleydale, within the Yorkshire Dales National Park; Wilson (1992) researched landownership in the North Pennines Area of Outstanding National Beauty; and Woodward (1999) analysed an inquiry relating to the Otterburn Military Training Area, within the Northumberland National Park. In effect what they all do is describe how social meanings contest a geographic area. Despite the possibility of referencing extreme relativist formulations of social construction, there has been no wholesale abandonment of the concept of territory to the possibility that there is *only* the social production of meaning. No move “away from the idea of the rural as a bounded, located space where rurality suggests a real object...to conceptualisation of the rural as a discursive construction” (Woodward 1999 p.20). For, ultimately few would assert that there is nothing but representations.

For Newby *et al.* writing in *PPP*, the “...’rural’ was of no explanatory significance; it was essentially an empirical category” (Murdoch and Pratt 1993 p.418). However, Newby at least was aware that agriculture workers and others may “perceive vast and unbridgeable social difference between the countryside and the towns” (1977 p.100), but this was not a focus of study in *PPP*. Halfacree (1993; 1995) has explored such cultural constructions, using a methodology based on a theory of social representations. This proves effective in uncovering elements of ‘lay discourses’ of the rural. The rural idyll is found to be “strongly rooted within the ‘stocks of knowledge’ of rural residents” (p.19), and rural residents are shown “not [to have been] ‘cultural dupes’ of a hegemonic national ideology” in orientating towards

idyllic notions (Halfacree 1995 p.19). The suggestion is made that both social representations and discourses merit study.

However, the development of discourse analysis of the rural, has been largely confined to theoretical discussion (see for example Pratt 1996). As a result while it is known that landowners use ideas such as the rural, and that these are deeply embedded in social stocks of knowledge (see for example Bunce 1998; Frouws 1998; Hidding *et al.* 2000; Jones 1995; Mabey 2000), little is known of the specifics of how and why these are used. In setting out to investigate how landowners constructed meanings of rural landownership, this thesis sought to analyse how discourses are selectively drawn upon by people to justify and account for particular actions, and to identify the relationship between different discourses used.

The first half of this chapter will be summarised before moving on to consider the practicalities of the methods deployed. Discourse analysis as developed by Potter and Wetherell in *DSP* underpins the approach taken in this thesis to examining the meaning of rural landownership for owners. Categories deployed by Newby *et al.* and McEachern were reconceptualised in accordance with a notion of ideal-types written about by Weber. Usefulness was to determine whether they featured in explaining the language of landowners as they talked about landownership. In the event four of Newby *et al.*'s⁶ categories are investigated in Chapter 4. In Chapter 5, two of McEachern's categories and a 'new' discourse of knowledge are deployed to explain land management and how it relates to landownership. Within Chapter 6, four 'new' discourses of rurality suggested by the author of the thesis explain the construction of rural landownership. However, it must be stressed at this point, that

⁶ All the categories are in themselves an amalgam of work which has gone before.

explaining how discourses are used to construct landownership is the endpoint of discourse analysis on which claims largely rest, *not* category spotting (Antaki *et al.* 2001).

Methods

The geographic location of this inquiry into the meaning of rural land was centred around the Cotswolds in the county of Gloucestershire. As the research questions focus on language use rather than the landowners, no claims as to the representativeness of the sample are made in terms of socio-economic or demographic attributes. However analytic assertions are made in reference to theoretical propositions and therefore ‘theoretical sampling’ can be said to be employed⁷. This thesis was not concerned to construct categories of rurality nor landownership prior to the fieldwork and analysis, for these as constructed by landowners were the subject of research. The second half of this chapter explains the sampling procedures deployed and their basis in theory, gives a description of those landowners interviewed, before proceeding to detail research techniques employed.

Sampling procedures

If an approach to empirical research were to be taken based entirely within extreme social constructionism, identifying who, in terms of definable attributes, to include in a sample for a series of interviews would prove problematic. For if there is nothing outside of the text, there are no sampling criteria to draw upon which in themselves would not be of interest for analysis. The first thing to say as Burningham and

Cooper (1999) have observed, is that very few if any studies have taken an extreme social constructionist approach. This though, of itself does not alleviate the problem of whom to sample.

Many of the studies deploying a form of discourse analysis negotiate the sampling 'problem' by locating within an institutional setting, where boundaries more easily suggest themselves (public inquiries have proved popular, see for example Harrison and Burgess 1994; Woodward 2000). However, there are few 'natural' boundaries to be drawn within or around human institutions (Potter and Wetherell 1987), any process of delimitation is likely to be contestable. This makes boundaries a subject for empirical research. In practice this means sampling and "worry[ing] about the boundary problem later" (Collins and Evans 2002 p.251). This process was critical to this thesis in an important respect; it allowed whether and when landowners categorise themselves and others as rural, to form part of the analysis (as presented in Chapter 6).

Another issue to consider in sample selection is the basis for the extrapolation of analytic claims. This thesis, as has already been signified, sought to identify discourses drawn upon in the social construction of property and to explore how these were deployed as owners talked about their rural land. In analysis the approach detailed by Potter and Wetherell in *DSP* was influential. Interviews are conceived of "as a piece of social interaction in their own right" (p.9) and this is the basis to which claims are made. 'Explanatory propositions' of discourse use are, to paraphrase Giddens (1984), of a generalising type. Therefore in selecting a sample Potter and Wetherell explain that:

⁷ Henceforth 'theoretical sampling' is shortened to 'sampling'.

Because one is interested in language use rather than the people generating the language and because a large number of linguistic patterns are likely to emerge from a few people, small samples or a few interviews are generally quite adequate for investigating an interesting and practically important range of phenomena. For discourse analysts the success of a study is *not* in the least dependent on sample size. It is *not* the case that a larger sample necessarily indicates a more painstaking or worthwhile piece of research. Indeed, more interviews can often simply add to the labour involved without adding anything to the analysis...the value or generalizability of results depends on the reader assessing the importance and interest of the effect described and deciding whether it has vital consequences for the area of social life in which it emerges and possibly for other diverse areas.

(p.161)

Wetherell and Potter (1992) deployed this approach in an empirical study carried out in New Zealand. They were concerned to identify and analyse the use of discourses of racism. In total 81 interviews were carried out with white members of New Zealand society, from which they make claims about dominant white middle-class culture, and suggestions for alternate ways to study racism.

The research focus of this thesis is on language use of landowners. A methodology of discourse analysis allied with ideal-types of property, management and rurality is used to analyse interview data. The primary aim was to explore the construction of the meaning of rural landownership through discourse use. Boundaries of ownership and rurality were of empirical interest as they featured in this process, and therefore did not require identification prior to the analysis. For the researcher it is "...simply a case of giving a clear and detailed description of the nature of the material one is

analysing and its origins” (Potter and Wetherell 1987 p.162). Following these recommendations the landowners and the format of interviews undertaken with them are discussed next.

The landowners

Landowners were recruited through colleagues within the University of Gloucestershire and through the Yellow Pages. Initial contact was made to potential interviewees by letter (see Appendix 1). This stated the aims of the thesis and requested an interview. This was followed up with a telephone call to fix a time and date. Once a landowner had been interviewed they were asked if they could name another who would be likely agree to an interview. Permission was sought to mention their name on making an approach. Sometimes a landowner made an inquiry to ask whether the contact they identified would be willing to participate.

In total twenty-six interviews with twenty-eight people were carried out, lasting between forty-five to ninety minutes each. Descriptive information about these landowners is summarised in Tables 3.1 and 3.2. Names given are pseudonyms, other measures taken to increase anonymity are described accordingly. In most cases a single person, who responded to a request to speak to the owner was interviewed. In two instances a couple were interviewed together. The final sample was predominantly male and over the age of forty. The size of holding is recorded in terms of acres, as without exception this was the unit measurement used by those landowners interviewed. The figures given for the size of holding are rounded up to the nearest 10 acres for holdings under 100 acres, and to the nearest 100 acres over

that. Of the 1000s of acres managed by Adam, only a small (unrecorded) proportion of that is owned, the rest is managed under agreement for other owners. The year the holding was first occupied by the individual landowner interviewed, or the date from which the land came into the family, is given in terms of the relevant decade.

The information about occupancy type given in Table 3.1 and household income in Table 3.2 are the self-descriptions of landowners. Ownership was described in terms of “sole ownership”, in “partnership”, through “family trusts”, and whose holdings consisted of “rented” land as well as “owned land”. To increase anonymity, the terms ‘agriculture’, ‘on’ and ‘off-farm’, were substituted for self-descriptions of household income.

Table 3.1 First descriptive summary of landowners interviewed

<i>Name (pseudonym)</i>	Sex	Age	Size of holdings (acres)	Agricultural Activities	Occupancy type	Year held from / in family
Adam	M	60s	1000s	Arable & dairy	Owned & Rented	1960s
Andy	M	60s	200	Dairy & forage	Owned	1950s
Barney	M	40s	50	Cattle	Owned	1920s
Bert	M	50s	300	Woodland & forage	Owned	1770s
Bill	M	50s	200	Arable & beef	Owned & Rented	1940s
Bob	M	60s	200	Beef	Owned & Rented	1980s
Caroline	F	50s	10	Chickens, goats & vegetables	Owned	1980s
Clive	M	60s	200	Let for arable & sheep	Owned	1960s
David & Mary	M & F	50s	80	Let for sheep	Owned	1990s
Derek	M	70s	400	Arable & sheep	Owned	1930s
Fred	M	30s	400	Let for arable	Owned	1700s
George	M	40s	500	Sheep & beef, arable let	Owned & rented	1900s

Table 3.1 (continued) First descriptive summary of landowners interviewed

Name (pseudonym)	Sex	Age	Size of holdings (acres)	Agricultural activities	Occupancy type	Year held from / in family
Jamie	M	40s	900	Sheep, cattle & woodland	Owned	1990s
Jim	M	60s	1500	Arable & poultry	Owned	Present holding since 1990s, others since 1960s
John	M	40s	200	Arable, oil seed rape, sheep	Owned & rented	Present farm since 1980s
Matthew	M	30s	100	Arable, beef & sheep	Owned & rented	1940s
Michael	M	60s	30	Arable, beef, woodland	Owned	1980s
Owen	M	30s	800	Beef & sheep	Owned & rented	1960s
Paul	M	30s	200	Arable	Owned	1900s
Peter	M	50s	400	Beef	Owned	1970s
Hannah & Bruce	F & M	50s	100	Arable & sheep	Owned	1970s
Simon	M	50s	400	Beef & sheep	Owned & rented	1890s
Stephen	M	50s	100	Let for beef & Sheep	Owned	1990s
Stuart	M	70s	1600	Arable & woodland	Owned	1890s
Terry	M	60s	300	Arable, cattle & sheep	Owned	1960s
Tony	M	50s	300	Arable & sheep	Owned & rented	1980s

A number of holdings were within Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESA), but this is not given to decrease the likelihood of a third-party identifying those interviewed. Landowners were interviewed who were members of the Country Land and Business Association (CLA), the National Farmers Union (NFU), as well the Countryside Alliance and the Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG), amongst others (see Table 3.2). Within the sample there are landowners who expressed the intention to vote: Conservative, Labour and Liberal respectively, and others who said they would not vote. Landowners were asked if they could identify any 'hobby farmers' (this proving the most common spoken idiom of non-farming) that might be interviewed. Table 3.2 indicates those landowners who were described in this way by other landowners, although this label was not necessarily used by the individual concerned.

Table 3.2 Second descriptive summary of landowners interviewed

Name (pseudonym)	Household income	Organisational membership & affiliation	Voting intentions	Described as a hobby farmer
Adam	Agriculture	CLA, NFU & other	-	
Andy	Agriculture	CLA, FWAG, NFU & other	-	
Barney	Off-farm	-	-	✓
Bert	Agriculture, off-farm	CLA, NFU,	-	
Bill	Agriculture	CLA, FWAG, NFU	Liberal Democrat	
Bob	Agriculture	CLA	Will not	
Caroline	Off-farm	Countryside Alliance	Conservative	✓
Clive	Agriculture & on-farm	FWAG, NFU, & other	Will not	✓
David & Mary	Off-farm	FWAG, NFU	Will not & Conservative	✓
Derek	Agriculture & on-farm	NFU & other	Labour	
Fred	Agriculture & on-farm	-	-	
George	Agriculture & on-farm	No	Liberal Democrat	
Jamie	Agriculture, on-farm & off-farm	-	Not eligible	✓

Table 3.2 (continued) Second descriptive summary of landowners interviewed

Name (pseudonym)	Household income	Organisational membership & affiliation	Voting intentions	Described as a hobby farmer
Jim	Agriculture & off-farm	CLA, NFU & other	Conservative	
John	Off-farm, tourist business	No	Conservative	
Matthew	Off-farm, tourist & leisure businesses	FWAG, NFU	-	
Michael	Agriculture, off-farm	CLA, & other	Voted for every political party in past	
Simon	Agriculture, tourist & leisure businesses, off-farm	NFU & other	Conservative	
Stephen	Off-farm	FWAG, NFU	-	✓
Stuart	Off-farm	CLA & other	Labour	
Terry	Agriculture, on-farm & off- farm	CLA	Conservative	
Tony & Anne	Agriculture & off-farm	Other	Conservative	

Interview format

In accordance with The British Sociological Society (2002) guidelines on the ethics of research practice, an explanation was given to the respondents before the interview began as to how the data collected would be handled and utilised (see interview schedule Appendix 2). Assurances were given that any information provided would be treated in confidence and used anonymously in written work. After explaining that the researcher wished to record the interview so that an accurate record could be kept, recording equipment was unpacked if there were no objections. Tape recordings made were kept in a locked filing cabinet and aliases used kept separate from identifiers relating to the raw data. Transcribers did not know the identity of those on the tapes that they transcribed and each was aware of the importance of maintaining confidentiality.

Interviews using a discourse method differ from 'standard' practice where the interview is considered as a tool to unearth or measure consistency in responses, which are valued if they can be correlated to a corresponding set of actions or beliefs. Consistency is important for the discourse analyst as well but "...only to the extent that the researcher wishes to identify the regular patterns in language use" (Potter and Wetherell 1987 p.164). The discourse analytic concern is to focus on how talk is constructed and what it achieves rather than whether a useful model of stable attitudes can be identified. The latter can "... sometimes [be] uninformative because they tell as little about the full range of accounting resources people use when constructing the meaning of their social world and do not so clearly reveal the function of participants' constructions"(Potter and Wetherell 1987 p.164).

In preparing the interview schedule (see Appendix 2) an attempt was made to get a balance between having questions ready prepared, and ensuring the interview was unconstrained by rigid structure. Interviewees could prove reserved at the beginning of an interview before both participants had relaxed. In this case having ready prepared questions to draw upon was a welcome resource until the conversation got going. However having a detailed schedule meant that there was a temptation to rigidly adhere to it. Given that some of the most analytically interesting exchanges occurred in the least 'scripted' sections of the interviews, too much pre-preparation was a draw-back.

The interview started with questions aimed at getting the interviewee to talk about their land (see Section 1 of the interview schedule entitled 'Ownership questions with prompts'). The intention was to allow discourses of ownership as constructed by the interviewees to emerge in their own words. It was anticipated that this process in itself would not provide enough material for analysis. Talking about land can be of itself an abstract and hence difficult proposition. In *PPP* Newby *et al.* (1978) did not ask the farmers they interviewed to talk about landownership *per se*, but couched their question in terms of the redistribution of income, which was a topic of political debate at the time.

Question 32.

In the recent election campaign a great deal was talked on all sides about the unfair distribution of income in our country. It's not only trade unionists who say this, but also many leading industrialists and others not connected with the Labour Party. Now you are better off than many people, have you have felt the need to justify this yourself in any way?

1. Yes 0. No

Could you explain a little bit about this please?

How would you account your achievements in farming?

(Newby *et al.* p.414)

As already discussed earlier, the answers were recorded in *PPP*. as “Farmers’ justifications of their wealth” (see table 73p.323) before being equated to “Justifications of landownership” and subsequently refracted to a single affinitive ideology of property (see Chapter 8 of *PPP*).

Questions asked of landowners for this thesis, were structured similarly to that of question 32 posed by Newby *et al.* A disadvantage of only asking one question as Newby *et al.* did, is that it risks constraining the terms in which the interviewees reply. Therefore a series of topics was asked of the landowners relating to deliberately chosen topical issues. The topics chosen were food production, environment/conservation, access, planning and the future of the countryside. Answers were probed by the interviewer as the intention was to “generate interpretive contexts in the interview” in which “the connections between the interviewees’ accounting practices and variations in functional context” might become clear (Potter and Wetherell 1987 p.164). This relates back to the research question ‘how are discourses deployed as owners talk about their rural land?’ The

interview finished with demographic and descriptive questions used to provide contextual information about the landowners (see Table 3.1 and 3.2).

In many cases the interview style was sensed to have confounded the interviewees expectations. For it more resembled a conversation than more widely used closed question surveys and was less aggressive than journalistic broadcast interviews. Subsequently a process of adaptation and learning was undergone by both interviewer and interviewee in most, if not all encounters.

Transcription

Transformation of the empirical data from original encounter to tape recording to transcription inevitably involves a loss of information at each stage. For instance body language is not recorded on audio tape and many subtleties in inflection are lost in transcription. To stem these losses as much as possible several techniques were employed. Firstly, a decision was made to transcribe the whole interview rather than limit this to specific sections. Secondly, impressions and notes of an interview were recorded on paper at the end of each interview. This was then available for consultation during analysis.

The transcription conventions used are given in Appendix 3. These are simple, as say compared to some notations used by conversation analysts (although it has to be said frequently on much smaller bodies of data) but proved sufficient for the type of discourse analysis employed in this thesis which involved identifying sections of talk of a few lines.

Transcription of interviews is notoriously time consuming. An accepted estimated is that 1 hour of talk takes 9 hours to transcribe (Silverman 2001), obviously this is

dependent on typing speed. This excludes time taken up with analytic 'distractions' as the researchers spots interesting features and begins the process of analysis. It also excludes the time needed away from the data. Tedium becomes an issue from hearing over and over again the same recordings and many find there is a need to break from constant involvement with the data to find space to think about analysis. For these and the more practical reasons of speeding up the research process, transcribers were employed. The risk of losing an opportunity of engaging with the empirical data in transcription, was reduced by reading, re-reading and referral back to the tapes. The latter acted as a form of quality control on transcription, with corrections and additions made as necessary.

Extracts included in the final report, have not been cleaned up to exclude or 'correct' stumbling and use of local vernacular. According to Nelson (2003) this is "disrespectful...patronising and discriminatory" (p.16) to interviewees. However this is only the case in certain circumstances, for instance if the talk of an interviewer was 'cleaned up' but that of the interviewee was left alone. That would be an offensive use of power, especially if the intent were to make one party look good at the expense of the other. Nelson cannot "imagine" reporting interviews with "rural aristocrats" where the language was not 'cleaned up'. No doubt some of the people interviewed for this thesis might conform to her notion of this class group. However, in this thesis procedures used in transcription were applied to all in the same way, including both the interviewer and interviewee. Inevitably, however, fewer examples of the spoken linguistic 'failings' of the interviewer in the results chapters, as the focus of research is on others. However to make clear, the author frequently

mumbled, paused, and repeated himself throughout the interviews. In admission of such human failings, no disrespect is meant.

As discussed at the beginning of this chapter, there are no natural boundaries when interviewing landowners to which can be referred when making a decision to finish fieldwork. Therefore when it was felt no new material of relevance to the research questions was being revealed with subsequent interviews, and that more material could not satisfactorily be analysed given resource constraints, no more interviews were carried out.

Analysis of discourses

Discourse analysis as a concern for the way language is used in constructing accounts has already been discussed. In detail however discourses are defined as “broadly discernible clusters of terms, descriptions and figures of speech often assembled around metaphors or vivid images” (Wetherell and Potter 1992 p.90). Any particular discourse is constituted out of a limited range of terms used in specific stylistic manner. As such discourses form the building blocks which speakers use for constructing actions, justifications and other phenomena (Wetherell and Potter 1988). It is usual to uncover a repertoire of discourses drawn upon⁸. In practice discourses are identified by the analyst through identification of function and variation.

⁸ Wetherell and Potter (1992) used the term interpretive repertoires interchangeably with discourse. The term discourse is used solely in this thesis, to avoid any confusion that the plurality of repertoire might suggest.

Function

As an “action orientated” medium, it is possible to identify a number of functions of discourse (Potter *et al.* 1990). They can be used to blame, justify, excuse and so on. In this thesis function(s) of discourse are referred to simply as functions (as in the discourse identified was used to serve this function...), determination of which depends on context. Although Newby *et al.* allude to different functions of discourses ownership in discussing justifications of wealth and ownership, their method does not allow for detailed presentation of use in *PPP*. An emphasis on function points the researcher back to considering why discourses are being drawn upon, while being wary not to present it as an instance of some underlying ideology. Discourse analysis has different aims to that of conversation analysis which is concerned to isolate specific features of language use such as how ‘turn-taking’ is achieved in a conversation (Wetherell and Potter 1988). To reiterate “The elucidation of function is one of the endpoints of discourse analysis. That is, functions are the findings *rather* than the raw data.” (Wetherell and Potter 1988 p.170). Function is detected by analysis of variation in talk and this is discussed next.

Variation

Function is identified in analysis by looking for variation in the description and accounts of the same phenomena (Potter *et al.* 1990). As much difference is expected in the talk of a single person, as that which can be found between individuals. As Potter and Wetherell (1988) state, variability is the standard stuff of everyday speech. So while there is a range or repertoire of discourses, it is possible, indeed likely, that they are drawn upon singly or together and at different times by individuals, and between individuals. This conception of language use contrasts with methods based

on realist conceptions of the self, which posit stable, unitary notions which are capable of being discerned in talk (Pratt 1996).

Credibility in qualitative research

This thesis seeks to apply discourse analysis to landownership, rather than ‘test’ the underlying theory. In doing so, it was considered important to appraise appropriate criteria for evaluating the research. Baxter and Eyles (1997) note that the basis for judging the plausibility of results, is not always laid out in published papers. This does little to assist the reader in coming to an assessment of the sense of the analysis. Silverman (2000) notes that such a situation risks reducing the potential for research to be taken seriously by others, by undermining the credibility of a study.

Researchers are still debating acceptable criteria and characteristics for credible (or quality) research. Four perspectives characterise this debate according to Sparkes (2001): *replication*, *parallel*, *diversification* and *letting-go*. From the *replication* perspective, although quantitative and qualitative research is based on different approaches, it is argued that one set of criteria can be applied to all studies. The *parallel* perspective challenges the appropriateness of validity and reliability to assess qualitative research, arguing instead that it is an alternative paradigm which should be judged on a notion of ‘trustworthiness’. In the *diversification of meaning* perspective all notions of validity are assumed to be relative and “...socially constructed within specific discourse and communities, at specific historical moments, for specific sets of purposes and interests” (p.542). In framing knowledge in this way, there is only social agreement on trustworthiness. From the *letting go* of

validity perspective alternative criteria from which to judge work are sought. For example the emotional and intellectual impact of the 'evocative story-telling' of auto-ethnography are highly valued. In the end Sparkes concludes that different perspectives can co-exist, and suggests that research is "judged using criteria that are consistent with its own internal meaning structures" (p.549). Explicitly stated principles offer a place from which to start an evaluation of a piece of research, and it is with this intention that credibility is discussed in this thesis. However, this is not to suggest that judgements should be restricted thus, for such prescription runs counter to the spirit of academic debate and development. Discourse analysis might be assessed for credibility in terms of three components: reliability, validity and generalisability (see Table 3.3)

Reliability is concerned with ensuring consistency in the processes of preparation and manipulation of data. For instance tape-recording interviews and careful transcription using standardised transcriptions symbols is part of an attempt to convey as much information about the interaction as possible. Presenting long extracts in the thesis, provides the opportunity for the reader to assess the interpretations made by the researcher. Suggestions have been made that readers should be able to listen to audio-recordings while reading a research report (see Coffey *et al.* 1996). However, there are many unresolved questions around this, not least of which are issues of confidentiality, and whether this facility would actually distract from engagement with an argument being developed by a researcher.

Table 3.3 Criteria for evaluating credible discourse analytic research.

Criteria	Definition	Strategies/practices to satisfy criteria
Reliability	“...recording observations in terms that are as concrete as possible, including verbatim accounts of what a person said...” (Seale 1999 p.148)	Low-inference descriptors: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tape-recording interviews • Careful transcription including transcription symbols • Long extracts of data in report • Use of a computer program to assist with analysis
Validity	How researchers may claim and have a warrant for their inferences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analytic induction (the constant comparative method & deviant case analysis) or coherence • Participants’ orientation • Comprehensive data treatment • New problems • Fruitfulness
Generalisability ⁹	‘Explanatory propositions’ are of a generalising type (Giddens 1984)	Deployment of discourses as ideal-types

Source: Adapted from Baxter and Eyles (1997), Potter and Wetherell (1987), Silverman (2001)

⁹ Generalisability, in terms of extrapolation of analytic claims, is discussed under sub-heading ‘Sampling procedures’ within Chapter 3.

The second criteria for evaluating research is validity. Analytic induction is central to Silverman's (2001) construction of validity. It consists of two components. The constant comparative method involves checking an emerging hypothesis by inspecting and comparing all data fragments. In terms of discourse analysis this is analogous to striving for what Potter and Wetherell term in *DSP* coherence:

A set of analytic claims should give coherence to a body of discourse. Analysis should let us see how the discourse fits together and discursive structure produces effects and functions...If the explanation covers both the broad pattern, and accounts for many of the micro-sequences, then we will take it seriously.

(p.170).

The practicalities of the task are considerably simplified by the computer automation of the clerical tasks for storing these fragments. The second component of analytic induction is deviant-case analysis. This involves seeking out pieces of data which do not appear to 'fit', and explaining them in a way which relates to the concepts a particular piece of research is based upon.

Analytic claims must be based on empirical evidence of discourse use. This requires analysis which is sensitive to the "participants' orientation" in an interview, that is the discourse analyst is "...not interested in the dictionary definition of words, or abstract notions of meaning, but in distinctions participants actually make in their interactions..." (Potter and Wetherell 1987 p.170). Although there are many different ways to conceptualise landownership, for example in terms of property rights, this thesis is concerned to identify the terms with which owners themselves constructed rural landownership.

Comprehensive data treatment can help avoid the temptations of anecdotalism in analysis and reporting. The latter is defined by Antaki *et al.* (1988) as “...under-analysis through summary, taking sides, over quotation or the use of isolated quotes, false survey and spotting features” (p.1). Comprehensive treatment involves looking through all the information gathered, and ensuring that all the data supports the analytic claims being made (Silverman 2001 p.240). The outcome or goal in discourse analysis is the identification of new problems and the description of how they are dealt with by participants. This is what Potter and Wetherell in *DSP* term “fruitful” research, and has an important bearing on whether research is considered credible.

Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis

The popularity of the use of a computer to analyse qualitative data or ‘computer assisted qualitative data analysis’ (CAQDAS) has grown since the 1980s (Richards 1999). Since this time specialised software has been in continuous development for social researchers. The first programmes were restricted to the application of statistical tests or counting, still useful for content analysis of text, but other tools have only recently been developed. Their role in relation to research carried out needs discussing, for successful use of CAQDAS, like any research tool, requires an awareness of capabilities and limitations¹⁰.

¹⁰ Familiarity with CAQDAS now forms part of the recommendations produced in the Economic and Social Research Council’s (2001) *Post-Graduate Training Guidelines*, for subjects including area studies, human geography and psychology.

Capabilities and limitations

Computers offer speed by automating clerical and management tasks. Information (or links to it) are stored and easily retrieved, and data can be sorted into categories by coding. Assistance in managing coding is the core capability offered by many CAQDAS programs. However, decisions made about coding are always done so (explicitly or implicitly) in relation to an underlying methodological approach. While routine aspects of coding can be speedily organised by a CAQDAS program, leaving the researcher more time to devote to the required intellectual tasks (Seale 2000), the programme itself does not 'do' the research. NVivo, the CAQDAS program used for this thesis, has a facility to return a project to its original state at some point pre-determined by the user. This enables the researcher to explore and work creatively without worrying that they may irreparably 'corrupt' their data.

Coding of transcripts is valuable at both a textual and conceptual level (Richards and Richards 2000). Textual refers to coding for topics of discussion, such as footpath access to rural land, while conceptual levels codes are used to mark data which fits with a developing analytic framework. For example evidence and argument were brought together in this thesis to identify the function of a discourse in a particular instance. The results of this frequently repeated process were little groups of chunked-together coded text, ideas and hypotheses that provided the basis for analytic claims. NVivo allows ideas to be stored and systematically manipulated in documents, memos and models. The web of ideas and data created can be travelled and explored using hypertext links, as well as the index system created by coding. In such a way NVivo was a tool which was used to support (but was not in itself a

replacement for), deductive and inductive thinking which compromises 'doing' discourse analysis.

A common critique of CAQDAS is based on the fear that it narrows the approach of a researcher to such an extent that the software 'takes over the analysis' (Kelle 1995). Such worries are partially fuelled by the historical roots of CAQDAS's development for basic numeric content analysis, and also by the "...slight paranoia about technology felt by some qualitative researchers..."(Seale 2000 p.163). However a CAQDAS program is a research tool and like any other research implement, computerised or otherwise, can be misused. Research using any given tool should be driven by the needs of the chosen methodology, rather than the demands of the instrument (Richards and Richards 2000). In more recently developed CAQDAS programs like NVivo, far more sub-tools are available than will be likely used for any given research project. While this may increase the chance of ill-informed use, arguably, these choices, reinforce a researchers' powers of research (Bringer 2002). For example, retrieval and access to the context of quotations can be more rapid than is possible with a paper filing system (Seale 2000). This potentially allows more time to be given to the academic work of analysis.

Another critique made of CAQDAS is that it alienates the researcher from their data. Certainly if a researcher limits themselves to using CAQDAS for frequency counts this may be the case. However, NVivo used in the data analysis of this thesis, facilitated extensive interaction with the data. Rich text and dynamic documents, nodes and coding, linking (including hypertext), an attribute database, allowed exploration and manipulation of rich research data (for further discussion of these processes see Richards 1999; Richards and Richards 2000). These features go

beyond what a word processing package offers, in terms of ease of use, and range of features (Seale 2000). Indeed one of the resulting dangers identified by Richards and Richards is that many ways become available never to finish a study.

NVivo computer programme

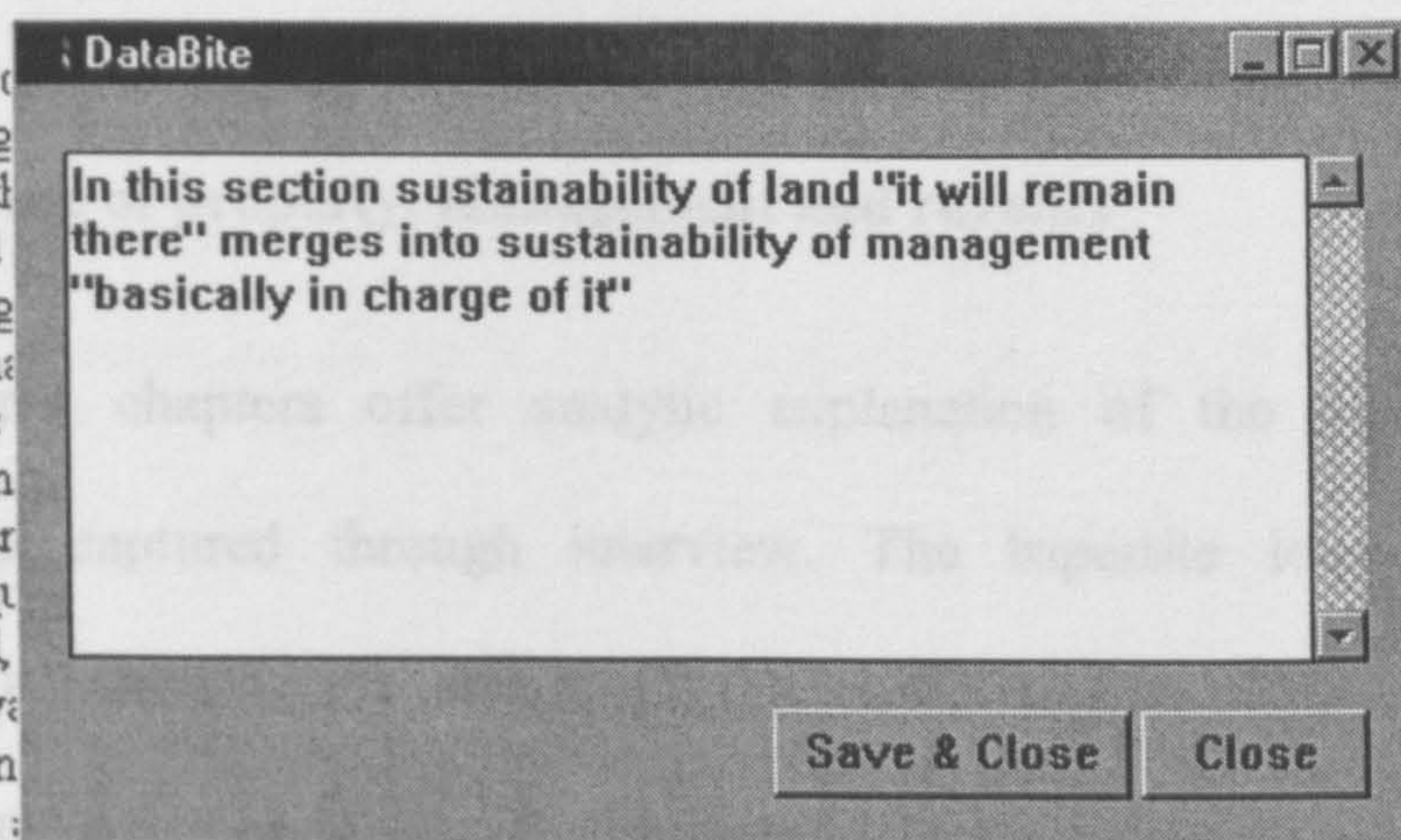
Use of hypertext to link sections of texts to others was found to be particularly useful in tracking discourse use. The ability to retain for future reference in NVivo, relations between sections of text, as these ideas became conscious in what was often a process of making connections in a non-linear way, was analytically valuable. As was the storage of codes in what are called nodes in NVivo, either singly (called free nodes) or in concept trees (called tree nodes). Although coding categories mushroomed to an unwieldy number, as the focus of the analysis became clearer these were easily collapsed into one another and organised hierarchy in tree nodes. This provided a critical aid in the development of the thesis.

In some cases, features of the transcribed data were commented on utilising electronic post-it notes called data-bites. An example is shown in Figure 3.1 below. The green underlined text indicates the presence of a databite which is accessed by a right click of the mouse. Such tools helped enable development of thinking regarding analysis. This was very much an incremental process, suitably tracked in 'bite-sized' chunks afforded by databites. Memos created as new documents in NVivo were used in a similar way.

Figure 3.1 Example of a databite within Nvivo

Adam

Yep...we started of us been farming Midshire and the th with the NFU and scence, the faming work you had to ha put the businesses Started farming on reduced the amour time we took on qu investment in land, and the fical adva farmer to come an including our won :



, we'd each as here in various things operative res to really o do was to ess together. ry, ahh we se at the same anted an cal benefits an expert s spots on land a tremendous

change in both landownership and everything which surrounds it. The one pertinent point, that always remains is that the land is there, somebody has to farm it, somebody has to look after it well, and if you do a good job of husbanding the land, err it will remain there, mmm basically in charge of it, so most of the agreements we have had, both with ourselves and a great host of other landowners, mmm have been on the basis that they provide the land, we provide ahh, the, the other inputs either in total or in part. But most importantly we provide the management, we have the whole of the management say, so

A project journal of progress was kept in a document created in NVivo. This had advantages over a word-processed or hand-written equivalent, for it allowed access to the full range of functions of NVivo such as coding and hypertext discussed so far. This allowed fluid movement between write up and analysis, which despite convention in written presentation i.e. results follow method, is widely recognised as not sequential in this manner. Of particular use in this regard was the ability to code by section break. Every time something was noted in the journal which would be associated with chapters in the final thesis e.g. methods or literature review, they were titled as such in the style of Heading 1. Similarly sections of text referring to over-arching concepts such as rurality, were titled in the style of Heading 2. The project journal document was then able to be auto coded by section title. This meant that everything written about say, methods, was coded and stored at a node entitled methods. This allow quick retrieval of relevant information from the journal as the

thesis was written up. The function of rich text in NVivo allowed important sections to be colour coded in the project journal and similarly aided recall of information.

The analytic use of property, management and rurality

The next three chapters offer analytic explanation of the meaning of rural landownership captured through interview. The tripartite lenses of property, management and rurality are presented as a useful way to better understand rural landownership in this instance. Usefulness and effectiveness in aiding explanation are considered the key criteria on which to evaluate the worth of discourses constructed by the analyst (Lee and Newby 1983). For as was discussed on page 48-49 of this chapter, discourses are conceptualised within this thesis as ideal types: empirical categories which are “pure in a logical and not an exemplary sense” (Giddens 1971 p.142). In ‘reality’, there are no discourses upon which landowners draw, these are only constructs with which this thesis has sought to better understand and explain the talk of landowners (this point is returned to within Chapter 4 under the heading ‘No discourses’). Construction of analytic categories of discourse were, as has been explained already, particularly influenced by the work of Newby *et al.* (1978) in *PPP* with regards property ownership, McEachern (1992) in *FCCA* on narratives of management, and the work of Halfacree (1994; 1995) on representations of rurality. However, the final forms of discourse recorded in this thesis were only finally settled upon after analysis of the interview transcripts, and so the final thesis results from a mixture of both deductive and inductive work by the author.

A full understanding of the complexity of language use is still far off. Other analytic constructs are and will be required to explain other aspects of the language of landownership and the broader significance of rural landownership within society. In using three lenses of property, management and rurality (and attendant subdivisions), no claims are made that these are the only way of understanding rural landownership.

Before moving on to consider the results, key points from the second half of this chapter will be summarised. Identification of function and variation are two critical stages of analysis which equate to the research questions ‘what discourses are drawn upon in the social construction of property rights?’ and ‘how are these discourses deployed as owners talk about their rural land?’ Analysis involved looking at *what* people are saying in terms of discourses drawn upon. Identified was *when* discourses are invoked before considering *how* the discourses stood in relation to each other. In effect analysis involved creating hypotheses over what *effect* or *function* a piece of talk is having and establishing whether it is part of an identifiable pattern (or *variation*) in discourse use. NVivo was found to be immensely useful as an analytic tool, but it is acknowledged that not everyone might find it so. As the existence of the word processor need not dictate the abandonment of pen and paper so with CAQDAS use.

Chapter 4: Discourses of Property

Discourse analysis as Potter and Wetherell (1987) say “should let us see how discourse fits together” and how “effects” are produced (p.170). In terms of the research questions set in this thesis, detailing orientation towards discourses is important. Orientation is used to denote that discourses are not conceptualised in terms of attitudes or beliefs, but as a repertoire upon which landowners can draw. The discourses used for analysis in this thesis might be familiar, but their identification is not the endpoint of analysis. This chapter shows how landowners draw upon a repertoire of different discourses to produce different effects.

Equivalent to the property of others

As a way of generating talk about landownership, Newby *et al.* asked the farmers they interviewed about the national distribution of income and their justification of personal wealth (question 32 is quoted in Chapter 3 of this thesis). Although the data recorded was equated to justifications of *landownership* (the book being entitled *Property, Paternalism and Power*, rather than *Wealth, Paternalism and Power*) the basis of this process is not discussed¹¹. While not claiming that the equivalence made is unreasonable, discourse analysis allows explanation of such a process and shows that it is a feature of the construction of rural landownership in the talk of landowners, not just of the academic text of *PPP*.

¹¹ The way language is used is noted in passing within *PPP* (see footnotes 2 and 4, p. 382-383), but is not explored in detail.

Discussion of wealth to talk about landownership is an example of metonymy, that is it involves “the substitution of a word referring to an attribute for the thing that is meant” (Oxford English Dictionary, 1999). In the sense that it is contestable whether all landowners are wealthy, this attribute of landownership is stereotypical. Discourse analysis reveals that in some instances landowners carried out a very similar process by asserting that owning land is equivalent to the ownership of other types of property. The ideal-type *equivalent to the property of others* as detailed by Newby *et al.* proved useful for drawing attention to instances where this occurred. That is extracts from interviews were marked where rural land was compared to widely owned domestic items in society, such as cars, gardens and houses.

Nick

Have you ever felt you had to justify your owning land to anyone?

Stephen

Well, why would, why would I justify any other, anything else I owned? Why would I justify a car or a house? There doesn't seem to me to be any different (right)¹² it's not a, it's not a commonly owned asset which I have sequestered.

¹² All interjections in brackets are Nick's. For explanation of transcription symbols see Appendix 3.

Nick

Have you ever felt the need to justify your ownership of land to yourself?

Terry

No because I just said to you before you bought that question up no, erm, you're only a tenant of this in my life you know mmm, rather like if a fellow has bought big fine house over there say, he's a tenant of that house for his life. I don't resent the fact that he's probably spent a million on his smart new house, with swimming pools and tennis courts, that fine, if he has got the money to buy it (sure) and that's what he wants to do (mmm), erm that's great (mmm). I don't feel the slightest bit guilty that I made the decision as a young man that I was going to try my hand at farming. I have absolutely now worries, no mental conscience about that at all.

Nick

Have you ever felt you had to justify owning land?

Tony

Justify owning it? (mm). I suppose it's nice to own your own isn't like, having a house you know? (mm).

Constru

cting equivalence to cars, gardens and houses is effective because each has an important position in the cultural life of the UK and is widely owned. Free-hold ownership of property for instance is by far the most popular form of household occupancy (DETR 2001). It makes a particularly effective equivalence because

house ownership by its nature entails ownership of a plot of land on which the house stands. In most cases there is extra space for a garden and therefore assertions that house and garden have common attributes to rural land is potentially powerful in the number of people co-opted as support for ownership. A discourse of *equivalent to the property of others* was used by landowners for purposes other than justifying ownership.

Nick

Hmm do you think farmers should be compensated for the loss, do you think they're losing something by having people access on their land?

Adam

I think in most cases they are not losing anything at all, I think if they are losing something then of course they should be compensated. If society wants something, if they want to come along and take your garden, erm for a new road or railway of course you should be compensated and exactly the same things applies if somebody comes along and takes half my factory floor away from me, or makes it actually impossible to work in my factory. Then, then quite justifiably I would have thought that I should expect some compensation.

Stephen

I certainly wouldn't be very pleased if people said well I want the right to roam all over your garden. Well (mm) well you wouldn't want them roaming over your garden? (laughs) Presumably? (yeah mm).

Tony

Mm, um, I think, well like, um, XXXX Common and that, there's hundreds of folks up there isn't there roaming? (mm) There should be a limit on what people, you know, if somebody buys a plot of land probably want a bit of privacy (mm) if somebody comes into your garden roaming around in the garden, you would be (sure) upset, wouldn't you if you'd bought the place?
(mm)

In the preceding extracts, the topic of compensation for aspects of property foregone is discussed by Adam, and the ability to control who has access to land talked about by Stephen and Tony. Both of these topics periodically dominate the national political agenda (Arlidge 1999; Bell 2000; Lester 1999). These are both politically charged topics. Noticeably in all these extracts then, is how the equivalence scripted with domestic gardens, presents the landowners' particular opinions as mundane, socially agreed givens. Loss is personalised for extra effect: 'what would happen if they "wanted to come along and take your garden?" (Adam), "roam all over your garden?" (Stephen)'. "Well you wouldn't want them" (Stephen), "you'd be upset" (Tony) and what is more "I" (Adam) "wouldn't be very pleased" and think you should be "compensated". In such a way do the landowners use *equivalent to the property of others* to construct their intent as altruistic rather than just self-serving. Denial of access is presented not about stopping people claiming access rights, but about protection of everyone's 'right' to privacy. Such an analysis challenges Newby *et al.*'s conceptualisation of "individualistic" and "altruistic" ideologies (1978 p.334) as exclusive. In the instances discussed of discourse use, the boundary between

personal exclusivity and the role of safeguarding property on behalf of others is blurred.

Natural order of things

Legitimate landownership in a number of instances within the interviews was referred to as that which was bestowed on an individual according to fate and to which an individual was largely powerless to resist. For example, when Bob was asked “what's been the good thing about having land?” he replied, “I don't know, you're born into it”. Bill talked of being ‘rejected’ from industry and being returned to the “family farm” (see extract below).

Nick

And what do you think are the good aspects of having your land?

Bill

Umm definitely a better way of quality of life, I think, you know being out in the fresh air and that sort of thing. I mean you've only got to look out the window on your walk this evening, you realise the sort of countryside, I mean half the time I was milking I didn't realise how nice it was because you've always got your head down or under a cow or something. You just don't appreciate it so that's another thing of selling the cows and sort of slowing down is to be able to lift your head up look around and realise the environment you're working in because we're absolutely privileged to live round here, you know. (.) Err (.) yeah I just like the idea of it. I mean I tried

going into industry and it didn't want me years ago, a bit before I got stuck back in the family farm.

Derek inferred that landowners were the product of good fortune when he referenced what he described as an "old farmer's saying..." commenting "you either wanna marry it [land] or inherit it". In the case of Jim where he acquired land neither by inheritance nor marriage, he still attends to the legitimising power of landownership presented as fate. He talks (see extract below) of being 'addicted' to the farm, of being a "workaholic". He constructs farming as having a hold on him, of it being a "vocation" which has got him "caught up". In this way landownership is presented as having a hold on the owner (rather than the reverse) and in this there are strong parallels with the 'traditional' notion of stewardship of land (returned to later in the chapter).

Jim

I've just been a workaholic all my life [...] A lot of my friends, they're all taking retirement. You get caught up in it, it's your home it's your work, you feel committed to it. (Hmm) Yeah, it's a vocation rather than a profession; farming. Isn't it? What would make anybody start farming?

Empirical analysis of the interviews with landowners confirms assertions made by Potter and Wetherell in *DSP* that discourse use is not necessarily consistent or exclusive to a given individual (see page 163-165).

Mary

(()) A lot of the land is handed down isn't it (mm) from generation to generation which is fine by me. (mm) If you work hard and you get land its great (yeah) if you're born into it well that's it really.

The extract above offers a clear example of where two different discourses are used by the same individual. Mary uses both a discourse of *hard work* and the *natural order of things*. In most cases different discourse use was more widely spread across an interview.

Hard work

The interviews began with a series of open-ended questions designed to encourage interviewees to talk about landownership in their own words. These were direct in the sense that they sought responses about what owning land was like. Subsequent questions referred to topics relating *to* rural landownership rather than *of* landownership itself (see also questioned 32 in *PPP* discussed earlier). The following extract from an interview with David and Mary illustrates an instance where in response to direct questioning, a discourse of *hard work* was used to forcefully justify ownership of land.

Nick

In Scotland they talk about land redistribution and stuff like that. Have you ever, I'm not saying that will happen in the UK or England or anything, but

have you ever felt the need to justify your own kind of owning large fields in the countryside?

David

I wish I could afford to own a lovely big country estate (laughs) you know.

Mary

No, the thing is if you work hard for something you deserve it, end of story as far as I'm concerned (yes).

Hard work was also deployed by interviewees in response to variously worded and less confrontational questions. Details such as this were discarded with the method deployed by Newby et al in *PPP*, but are features of all discourses deployed to construct landownership. In the following extracts different interviewees described and gave information about their land and in each case this was enmeshed within a discourse of hard work which served to justify landownership. Jim and Matthew responded in this way to enquiries about the involvement of their family in farming. The extract taken from the interview with Barney is part of a long monologue he gave largely uninterrupted by questions.

Nick

Right. Is your family's former background in farming?

Jim

No, No. My father was a gambler and he lost the family fortune. I worked on the farm and built it up, I don't say that for clever reasons, just stupid to do it.

Nick

Right. What do you mean?

Jim

I've just been a workaholic all my life, 'cos one generation loses it and another makes it, the third loses it, the next one makes it and the middle enjoys it and then the third one blows it.

Nick

Right! (laughs) So you're the one making it?

Barney

My brother who farms the farm in XXXX (yeah) mmm that my father bought in the 1974, mmm, his marriage has broken up; because he has been working so hard, he hasn't taken a holiday literally, because, you know he's harv..., he grow corn and August comes and its bloody harvesting time and there weren't any family holidays and he's had three sons (mm) and the marriage has broken up and he's so in debt now because he had to buy his wife a house and (right yeah) and he's quarter of a million pounds in debt, paying interest in that (mmm) and working. I mean he's 47, he's working, I never see him, because he is working too hard, we can't see each other. It's literally like that people, the public don't really understand (mmm), you'd be working Saturdays and Sundays that's it everyday to make it work...

Nick

...yeah, no, no it's good. So how long have your family been on this land?

Matthew

On this site, my grandfather moved here during the second world War, that's gotta be 43 or 44, just before something like that. he came from XXXX, which is just a mile down the hill. (right)

Nick

So was in the family, was he a farmer as well?

Matthew

I think so (laughs), I'm not to sure on that one. He was of the generation that if they worked hard they could speculate with a little bit of land and accumulate some more (right yeah) erm, especially after the War when food was needed. It was one of those generations which could accumulate, working, working hard (mm) off the back of the land (mmm) and at the time he'd moved, he'd had er some property and farm down at XXXX .

Instances were also recorded where *hard work* was put to uses other than to justify rural landownership. For example, in the extract below hard work acts as an element with which Fred asserts his position with regard to footpath access on his land.

Fred

Well these footpaths were put in by local people for local people in days gone by. They haven't been put in for sort of, you know, people trooping around the countryside, which is fair enough. People like to go around the countryside, but that wasn't their [footpaths] original purpose (right). I'm

not saying they shouldn't be allowed to do it but, you know, they try and make, you know, all these aggressive claims against um the farmers for this, that and the other but they never pick up any of their litter they drop. They never look after any of the footpaths, they never keep any of the footpaths open. (mm) If they want to use them, they should bloody do the work (mm), um, as far as I am concerned (right) and I think that um you know it's all very well for Janet Street Porter to sit there and complain about every single farmer and the ((dead)) litter when she should go with a plastic bag and pick up the litter that they drop and clear some paths. (right)

The discourse of *hard work* can be used independently of how land originally came into the possession of the owner. Those who had inherited their holdings (see for example Barney and Matthew) deployed this discourse as did individuals who had gradually built up their holdings themselves (e.g. Jim). This concurs with the findings laid out in *PPP*. As Newby *et al.* explain then as now there “was no significant correlation between the use of ‘work’ and ...those who had inherited their land ...and those who had become established through their own efforts” (Newby *et al.* 1978 p.328). For example although Peter is described by others as a hobby farmer (see Table 3.2), *hard work* serves as a justification for ownership. It also acts as a counter-balance to the process of “extensification” that Peter describes as having occurred on his land which has resulted in Peter and his partner now spending “less time” on the land than they used to. In sum, Peter orientates towards a construction of a legitimate owner as someone who spends time ‘working the land’ - appealing to the image of a farmer as opposed to that of non-farmer discussed in Chapter 1.

Peter

So we built the farm up ever since really um we used to buy weaned calves and um grow them on and sell them but for the last 20 odd years we have had suckler herd of cows (right). So we've run a very extensive suckler herd. Um, and in all that time the business has got worse and worse from the point of view of profitability (mm) and um so we have become more and more extensive and spent less and less of our time on the farm and more and more time on other businesses really (right) to keep the money rolling in (mm). But we do spend, eh, we have spent an enormous amount of time on weekends and evenings, me and a colleague, putting up our fences, renewing our fences, we got miles and miles of fences, so we spend a lot of time on fencing so that it actually ((gates)) that they work and its easy to keep the cattle where you want them which is one of the biggest problems with a sucker herd is that they get out, you know, if they get hungry or there is a gap in the fence, they get out and then it takes hours getting them back in, (right) getting them back in again. For example, yesterday our neighbour's cattle broke down one of our fences, she got in the wood with some of our cattle and jumped into the wood to join them and it took four hours to sort them all out. (Right) That wasn't our fence.

Nick

Right, so a lot of work.

Stewardship

McEachern found out that for farmers metonyms facilitate “part-whole reasoning”, they focused on “particular aspects of what they did in order to strategically represent the whole” (p.167). Her study was focused on the farming (or management) of land. This thesis finds that metonymy is critical to explaining how meaning is given to landownership per se. Use of *stewardship* discourse to discuss landownership is a case in point. Stewardship as a management ethic is used to justify ownership of land, even though management is strictly only one of the standard incidents of which together compromise ownership (see Table 3.1). Newby *et al.* concluded in *PPP* that “Stewardship ... is an ideology firmly embedded in the economic and social structure of precapitalist society” and is as such “archaic” (p.332). However what is striking about stewardship from analysis of discourse use, is its contemporary pervasiveness and the way it is adapted to meet different requirements according to circumstance.

Edmund Burke is perhaps more than any other associated with conceptions of landownership justified in terms of stewardship. He wrote fearing “...the transfer of political power from land to the new industrialist capitalists, since their utilitarian denial of moral obligation and duty as guides to action represented threat to the continuation of a stable social order” (Newby *et al.* 1978 p.23). Landowners were conceived of as stewards, serving rather than owning property, to fend off perceived revolutionary threats to the landed aristocracy. Burke emphasised the obligations of ownership as much of the rights to property. In the 19th century for aristocratic landowners this meant having an obligation to be honourable and generous to those under them on their estates, including tenant farmers (see Thompson 1963;

Thompson 1965, and the idea of noblesse oblige). As owner occupation became the norm in the 20th century so paternalism towards farm workers was incorporated into notions of stewardship (a major research finding of *PPP*). As the number of farm workers has declined and a concern with environmentalism in society has grown, so landowners now emphasise a duty to conservation (as illustrated in the proceeding extract from an interview with Clive).

Nick

There is a lot of criticism of landowners, farmers owning and managing the land, in Scotland they are talking about having the communities buying up the land, I know that's not going to happen here, but have you felt the need to justify your landownership

Clive

No, no

Nick

Can you explain why?

Clive

This is basically a very environmentally friendly farm (right), there is a lot of tree planting goes on, pond creation, stone walls repaired, barn now repaired. I mean I don't think that needs any apologies from anyone [laughs] (sure). I mean, you know this is a relatively small farm, its only about 200 acres in total including all that woodland there and I bought 10 acres of scrub down there, 10 acres of scrubland and erm mostly hawthorn and into that I'm adding hedge maple and oak and ash and things like that and er, I bought it quite honestly because, I walk my dog down through there one

day, but, just before it came up for sale (right) and the birdsong there was absolutely fantastic, what a shame that would be if someone came along and bought it and thought they were going to clear it for pony paddocks or something. So I bought that (right), in actual fact, it has a, financially it has proved out to- be a very good thing because I have one of these erm, [communications company] masts in there (oh right yeah) which is a very good [laughs] thing financially you know, they don't give you any hassle or any trouble (mmm). It's well out of site and gives nice, pretty good income (right). I don't have any guilt in whatsoever in my, my ownership, stewardship of this particular farm (he laughs).

Although environmental concerns were used as an expression of stewardship, more 'traditional' elements, for example noblesse oblige and paternalism, have not been entirely abandoned. In the extracts below stewardship is expressed in terms of passing the land on to the next generation. Bill arguably references both elements describing himself as a "custodian" seeking to avoid environmental degradation ("presumptuous to think that we can blow it up, dig it up or whatever").

Nick

So thinking of what we've talked about what do you think the countryside should be managed for?

Bill

What do you think it should be managed for? Well as I said we are just custodians. I mean this generation, we are just custodians of the land, we shouldn't seek to be too presumptuous to think that we can blow it up, dig it

up or whatever. We've got children and children need somewhere to live and we've inherited a fabulous bit of countryside and you pass it on like that.

Fred

Well I see it as a (()) owner (right) passing through [laughs] um, and try and make it better for the next one in (right) um, which is why I mean all the trees that I have planted here are certainly not going to be for my benefit [laughs] (right) and will start looking great in about 40 years time (um you'll still be here?) I might still be here hanging on by my fingernails.

Matthew

...so really all I want to do is stay on the farm, but this farm is a little bit more complicated than that 'cause we've got this big house here (mmm) which we have only been here a couple of generations (mmm) but we, I kinda need to preserve it for the next lot. (right) Now whether the next lot are going to be our family or whether we are going to sell it, I couldn't honestly tell you at the moment. I have two daughters, (MMM) they might want to go into farming, they might not, erm it will be available for them (mm) with any luck, but if they don't want it, I'll just look after until I can (right), 'cause that's all I do, I just look after it (right) it's not mine (mmm) (he laughs), do you see?

Nick

Yeah I see, yeah mmm.

Matthew

That's about it really.

Many landowners with livestock emphasised their attachment and commitment to looking after their animals when they spoke. In the following extract, livestock animals referred to as “cows” and “the herd” are used as metonymies for ‘the farm’ as Andy recounts the history of the holding. More generally in English culture, the farm is used as a metonym for landownership, Newby *et al.* discuss their interviewees in terms of farmers rather than landowners for instance.

Nick

I was going to say how long has your family been on the land? Which came on, which, your dad, when?

Andy

I came on with father, father was in fact a miner (oh right) and he bought a very small farm er when he got married that must have been back in 1930 something like that (right). We’ve actually he started selling milk to Gloucester Co-op even before the Milk Marketing Board were in existence (right), so the herd I’ve got now sell, er was in existence pre-milk marketing board and is still here when the milk marketing board has gone (ah I see so you’ve out seen them), so we’ve seen them off (both laugh). And I don’t think there are too many herds that can claim that, and no not all of them, until about 10 years ago they were all bred from ONE cow, he bought ONE cow (right) and he bred all the. She had eight females (right) in her life, she never had any males and of course they were breeding then so it was, so you know it doesn’t take long in fact (yeah) surprising how quick you can, you know yeah you wouldn’t say in 5 years, but you put it over 15 or 20 years you can build up quite a big herd and we’ve got, we milk about 80 now (right, right).

In the extract above Andy stresses that his herd is built up from one cow. Indeed the number 'one' is audibly louder than the surrounding text in the interview, as indicated by the capital letters. This serves to emphasise that "the herd" embodies more than just business, but a unique living link to the past which legitimates, indeed necessitates continued farming of the land owned. As a metonym for landownership, the expression of a relationship with livestock could be emotional. One of the interviewees visibly upset recalled his late wife and how she "loved those cows", similarly Chris (interviewed as part of a pilot group for this thesis) expressed a close bond with his herd when he said "I don't keep them, they keep me".

Jim expressed a justification of landownership in terms of his obligation as a farmer to get involved in the local community out of a sense of duty. Links can be drawn with 'traditional' ideas of *noblesse oblige* and paternalism, however use also reflects contemporary realities. That Jim says it is a useful "PR exercise" can be seen as reflective of the fact that farmers are no longer accorded the respect they once had, especially when they dominated local government (see Thompson 1965).

Jim

So you know you get a bit involved, I've got a PCC meeting tonight, I think its quite nice as a farmer, which is why I think private land ownership's good, I know a lot of farmer friends around me, I know one's on the bench, one's doing something, but they do, not all, but they, some can be awfully callous, and hard and tough, but a lot of farmers would really rather be. I call it, I use it as a PR exercise as well as wanting to do it, are you with me? I don't think it hurts. It doesn't hurt to get involved. I've got all those barns down there, and if I go down the village, and someone's son wants to leave

their boat there or car there and I find it difficult to say no, not for income, but just to help them for a while.

Newby *et. al* had very few replies (less than 5%, total number of replies = 332) drawing on stewardship in survey work carried out in the mid to late 1970s. For this thesis, stewardship was coded more than any other single discourse (53 passages out total number of coded passages of 162). A comparison between the findings of this thesis and *PPP* are not statistically robust, but it does lend support for the suggestion that stewardship as part of a rise in environmentalism is a much more important discourses than it was the early 1970s (see Woods 1997). This fits with the way the profile of conservation and environmental issues rose throughout the 1980s and 1990s. So much so, that stewardship is now fully embedded into mainstream culture and policy processes, for example see the agri-environmental policy labelled the 'Countryside Stewardship Scheme' (DEFRA 2003b).

The same discourse, different effect

The same discourses are used to different effect. In understanding how landownership is constructed, these different uses must be taken into account. For discourse *use* in any given instance, is a critical part of the process of constructing the meaning of, in this case, landownership. For instance in the following exchange, 'stewardship as an aspiration for continued ownership in the future, is stressed.

Nick

Mm, so how, thinking about you land, how would you describe yourself now to someone, if they asked you what you did, what would you say occupation-wise or?

Bert

WELL I SUPPOSE MY JOB DESCRIPTION ACTUALLY IS A COWMAN. But err we, I don't think that the owner of the farm I work for realises it. I don't think that the other people who work there probably realise I am very well off person. (laughs) But erm, the cowman side is obviously to bring an income in, but I'm also, I'm in partnership with my brother and we also want to get as much, as I say, get as much income off the farm. But without, unfortunately farming these days isn't very viable, I have discovered working for somebody else is, and although I don't want to sell the land, as long as it can be kept in heart, and it as long as it can be looked after without too much work I'm happy to go along like that. (right) Because the farm's been in the family that many generations I don't want to get rid of it (right) and that's what I'm aiming for.

In the text, stewardship use is aspirational, that is what Bert says he is "aiming for". The repetition of the clause (an example of isocolon) "as long as" serves to emphasise this intention, while introducing caveats. The land must be kept in "heart" and be "looked after without too much work".

Bert no longer has a dairy herd on his land. His animals were sold some months before the interview as the enterprise was proving no longer financially viable. He now works as a "cowman" for somebody else. However, even though he no longer works it himself, his land has not become detached from contemporary life in one

important respect. Bert's land is symbolic of his (and his family's) memory and accounts for the decision not to sell the land. Bert emphasises this later in interview saying:

...it's nice to look out of the backdoor and say, right, that's mine (chuckle).
As I said because we've been here a long time. It's interesting to think, what generations past, relations of mine were not only doing in this room, but were doing in the fields beyond. Erm you know. The way they carried on their farming, we changed to machinery and doing things quickly. What they did in a week, we did in a day. Erm but I suppose it's interesting that I'm looking at probably going back to doing it the way they were doing it, so, err, just letting things happen, but I cause I suppose the problem is these days you've got material things in life and you need more money, you need more things. Where as they, they didn't need anything did they?

Change is not presented by Bert as dividing the present from the past, but as a living historical link, a source of comfort as he navigates his own life and pressures for change upon it. Crouch (1997) found the same construction amongst the "smallholders" he interviewed in the Yorkshire Dales. "The land and the pasture, are symbolic of memory, and of being in the Dale; or a remembered and still tangible way of life...[as] Aline and her large family consciously negotiate...change" (p.207).

Different discourse, same effect

As the result of discourse analysis, the same effect was found to be achieved by the deployment of a number of different discourses. For example so far this chapter has discussed four different discourses, equivalent to the property of others, natural order of things, hard work and stewardship, all have which had been deployed to justify

landownership. Different effects achieved by the use of these same discourses was also found, and has already been discussed. Two more discourses and instances of their use to justify landownership are detailed, before consideration is given to explaining overlap between the content of these two discourses, and other discourses of property.

Ownership was found to be justified by recourse to a discourse of 'Of benefits to others'. This invariably involved relating examples of what was considered by the landowners to be of 'good' management practice and highlighting non-market returns to the public.

Derek

You could say why should [land] be privately [owned], these amenities on the broader sense, amenities should be as much spread out to everybody, because I've said at many farmers meetings, this Right to Roam is a superb thing (right) and I have got up at meetings and said so.

Nick

Is that an important part of why you own your land and try and keep it, kind of keep it and the environment pristine?

Stephen

Well to try and bring it, yes, yeah, I mean all the walls, stone walls were falling down all over the place well there's no way, it's just not efficient to rebuild, you can't, you can't afford to rebuild stone walls but you can put up sensible fences and maybe lay some hedges and you know (mm) all the time

put the thing into some more sensible shape (right). I think people don't actually recognize that from the point of view of farmers how much they contribute to the community in that sense (mm) and over the years people just take it for granted and assume that, you know, they build walls and put up fences just because you know for the fun of it (yeah).

Another discourse found deployed to justify rural landownership, was that 'no-one is in farming for the money' (see extract below for an illustration of this discourse in operation). A detailed discussion of nuances in use follows.

Andy

We're a bit old fashioned in a way because if I, if all I wanted to do was make money I would have forgot about the wheat and I would have gone completely to dairy (right), erm (why do you keep the wheat on?) Because I have, if I don't grow wheat I have to buy straw (yeah) and you know what, we had numerous students, I've lost count how many students and I've told all of 'em, I'm not really going out to make money (mmm) how much I'm gonna make out of it doesn't really come into it, if I can do the job properly and I can be here tomorrow that's an achievement, because if I can be here tomorrow I have the chance to do something else, you know (mm) I can keep going and I tend to try to do what I know best (mm)...They seem to have an idea that farming is a licence to print money, oh well if it is I've never got in on it (laughs).

The maxim 'no-one is in farming for the money' is inherently dilemmatic in UK capitalist society (as it presently exists). Farm profits ensure survival of those farmers

where agriculture is the only source of income. Although 44% of farms in a UK case study area had a source of income from off-farm work when surveyed just over a decade ago (Fuller 1990), few if any landowners do not look to make a return on managing land, even if this is only sufficient to cover a small proportion of ownership and management costs. Nevertheless that ‘no-one is in farming for the money’ has taken on the status of shared-knowledge. It is used as if it were rhetorically self-sufficient, drawing credibility from and resonating with reports of a crisis in agriculture (Aaronovitch 2000), an ‘understanding’ that agricultural is now post-productive (Wilson 2001) or part of the consumption countryside (Marsden 1999; Marsden *et al.* 1993), which is being ‘over-run’ by non-farmers (Mason 2001). This discourse was used by landowners as an argument clincher, presented as though it were beyond question (for examples pertaining to race, see Wetherell and Potter 1992 p.177).

The extracts included below each illustrate another ‘layer of’ complexity in the way the discourse ‘no-one is in it for the money’ was deployed. Each appeals to a slightly different aspect of wealth. Stephen draws attention to low or falling income, rather than appreciating value of fixed capital for example. Simon and Terry blur the distinction between drawing a salary, gross profit or loss, net income and net costs. David discounts his wealth by comparison to others with more wealth, while Jim discounts affluence by emphasising hard work.

Stephen

Owning 100 acres round my house doesn’t give me a sort of sleepless night
(mm) doesn’t earn me any money worth talking about - I could certainly

earn more money doing something else with it (mm) so what would the problem be?

Simon

If I was in any other business or employed I would be drawing a salary but in farming you tend not to draw a salary, you tend to leave in the farm, because farms are cash hungry (sure) there is always something that needs improving or maintaining on a farm (mmm) and though my personal financial, I don't have great cash needs, I don't need to go out and buy a new sports car it's not something I want.

Nick

What's been the aim for your farm since you've had it, has it changed?

Terry

I suppose initially, mmm, funnily enough I think it was to create of life that mmm (.) was sustainable mmm, without being overly extravagant, just create a countryman's way of life (right) where you're own boss, mmm the fact is I didn't loose any money, that would have suited me.

Nick

In Scotland they talk about land redistribution and stuff like that, have you ever, I'm not saying that will happen in the UK or England or anything, but have you ever felt the need to justify your own kind of owning large fields in the countryside?

David

I wish I could afford to own a lovely big country estate {laughs} you know.

Jim

You'll probably go away thinking, lucky man and lucky kids or whatever, not really because I've been mean with them all my life, mean with myself. When we started, we went camping in France and my wife had to cook the meals in the tent, you know we've done it the hard way.

No discourses

In 'reality' there are no discourses. There are no natural boundaries to refer to when deciding whether an extract should be categorised under for example, 'of benefit to others', 'no-one is in farming for the money' or stewardship. Rational arguments could be put forward for categorising the following extracts for example, under 'none of the above', one, two, or all three discourses.

Barney

If anything went wrong with the world (right, mmm) there's to start, I mean, there is a few animals over there, there use to be, well 1974 there use to be 180 milking cows and 350 cattle (right) on the whole estate and now there would be about 100 (right) on 450 acres, I mean it's nothing, there is no reserve any more and all the orchard trees have been cut down, you know what I mean (sure yeah). Erm, here the rivers aren't polluted there is still fish in the rivers but, they are only small fish, but its like we are making ourselves so vulnerable, that's what I feel (right).

Nick

What do you think of the future subsidies of the Food (())

Paul

I don't know. I suppose it will get more environmentally linked in that we will have to start "father likes to use the term," we will end up glorified park keepers" I suppose just, you know, pottering around, mowing the grass and making it all look pretty sort of think but (right) bit of me says that at the end of the day we are an island and we do need to eat, it does seem madness that we import stuff from everywhere and not be able to grow our own, (right) um, you imagine in this day and age it won't happen with sort of the U.N. etc but if God something, I don't know, we all fell out somewhere along the line, (yeah) went to war again, (yep), it would be a shame that if we couldn't go back to producing our own food. (Right) Um, I say, it will probably never happen, well almost certainly never happen, I don't know, but (mm) it would be nice to think that we could use our own stuff and it is some of the best crop, you know, the best food produced, certainly when you go to the animal welfare side of things with livestock and things and you go to France and Portugal and places like that and the things they do with their ducks, they force feed them to get their pates and (yeah) veal crates and things, at least people here care for their animals, they really do.

Peter

My ultimate personal hope would be that it would increase its natural history value and that we could increase our land , that we could increase the extent of the whole wildlife whatever you want to call it (mm) ((biodome or bio)) in other words(yeah) the variety and multiplicity of wildlife generally because it is already quite good, I'd love to see lots of flowers in the meadows and all the invertebrates that feed on them and live on them and um more trees about which we are planting and well cared for trees, its a huge subject, it touches on, as far as England is concerned, or the UK is concerned, it touches on the requirement or non-requirement for home grown food (mm)... Whether the country on the whole should be in any way self sufficient in food is a question which should be addressed and should be debated and isn't! Um, the politicians of the present day choose to completely ignore the history of the late 1940's after the Second World War and eh, they either don't know anything about it, its not a fashionable subject, or they don't want to know anything about it, so the present politics (mm) particularly in the Treasury, is to pay as little as possible on farming, less and less on farming and allow free import of food which stops arguments with the GATT people and stops argument with the World Trade Organisation people (mm) so it makes an easy life for the politicians. If and when another Chancellor as happened twice in the 20th Century gets lots of battleships and submarines and tries to blockade us, I think its the view of the politicians that it won't be their problem and all they need is a reshuffle and they'll all have nice directorships somewhere and it won't be their problem any way and the population can take their chances as they did twice in the 20th Century (mm).

Discourses are not 'naturally' occurring individual phenomena but are analytic constructs used to try and better understand talk and text. Conceptualised as ideal-types, attributes such as their very separateness are utopian, and not average or expected phenomena. Discourses are deployed in this thesis as a useful way of understanding talk which occurred in interviews. Strictly speaking analytic claims are not that people speak in discourse, although it is a useful aid in presenting results to write as if they do, but that discourse analysis is useful in explaining how meanings of landownership are constructed as landowners talk.

To conclude this chapter then, part-whole metonymy was an important process utilised by landowners in their construction of landownership. Ideal-types were useful in understanding the meaning of rural land ownership derived in their deployment in talk. Equivalent to the property of others, natural order of things, hard work, stewardship, not in it for the money and benefit to others were found helpful in offering explanation as to how meaning was given to landownership through use of discourse. These discourses were conceptualised as ideal-types not 'average explanations'. Different aspects of the ideal-type were constructed and referred to according to historical *and* local discursive factors.

Stewardship was argued not to be archaic as Newby *et al.* have suggested, but to have undergone changes over time. Adaptation not only reflects the popularity of a particular discourse at a particular point in time according to social circumstances, but empirical analysis shows that application also reflects local discursive context. As use of stewardship changes according to historical context i.e. from a 19th century emphasis of being honourable and generous to tenant farmers, to paternalism

expressed in the early 20th century towards farm workers, and finally in contemporary times stress on the environmental aspects of stewardship (all discussed under the heading 'Stewardship'), so *also* the meaning of stewardship and therefore landownership referred to, changes according to local discursive context (discussed under the heading 'The same discourse, different effect'). Understanding the relations of such changes demands research use of a more nuanced model than a simple non-farming/farming dichotomy or explanations which only acknowledge one aspect of change or the other.

Chapter 5: Discourses of Management

IN *FCCA* McEachern states that “For farmers in their everyday lives, there was no conflict...between...conservation and exploitation as the basis of their farming” (p.162). She then proceeds to detail an example of farmers engaged in a conflict expressed in exactly those terms (p.167-169). In the process of applying for planning permission for agricultural buildings, farmers disputed objections made on environmental grounds by the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority, on the basis that their ‘exploitative’ business requirements demanded the development. Admittedly planning processes could be described as relatively infrequent life events, so in that regard they are not ‘everyday’, however this does not explain how farmers can perceive of farming as an accommodation between environment and exploitation at one moment, but in another instance as an ‘exploitative’ business proposition.

In examining how farmers give meaning to land through talking about management, this chapter will show that an entirely rational explanation for such results can be constructed from discourse analysis. What-is-more as interviews are considered to be instances of social interaction in their own right, such events are found to be common within ‘everyday’ talk. Landowners use discourses of accommodation, stewardship of the environment and business in different situations within talk, to achieve specific but localised effects.

Accommodation: “keeping it beautiful ... and making a bit of money”

When the interviewer asked questions about land in an inquisitive rather than aggressive or critical way, landowners descriptive replies incorporated in a number of instances a discourse of accommodation. This discourse emphasised that farmers have a benign effect on the environment. i.e. that there is accommodation between conservation of the environment and exploitation for business. This sentiment was expressed, by amongst others, a large landowner, a management company, and a small hobby owner, although each in their own terms. Bert for instance talked of wanting to get as “much income off the farm as possible” while keeping it in “heart”; Bill of “getting something out of it” although also a “guardian”; Bob of “making a reasonable living” while keeping the “property tidy”; Stuart of keeping the land “productive” and “beautiful”; and Hannah of being “conservationally minded...without getting it too sort of twee”. Notice that the extract taken from an interview with Bert was referred to in the last chapter, in relation to the discourse of stewardship. To reiterate different discourses do not have to refer exclusively to different bits of talk. On the contrary, discourses are useful analytic tools to unpick layers of complexity.

Nick

So what do you feel about your land, being in general terms? You’ve talked about organic and the sort of lifestyle.

Bill

Well exactly as I said really, umm I’ve always had the idea a landowner is not a landowner. All you’ve done is that you’ve bought, or you’ve obtained

the right to look after that land for the time you've got it and you'll pass it on to the next person at some stage in your life or death, and you have got to try and improve it, or certainly not let it slip. Basically we're just guardians, and you try and do, well get something out of it or otherwise, if there is an otherwise! There are other farming ventures we could try. I just don't want to see this area or certainly the land we've got to change detrimentally, or appear to change detrimentally in any way.

Bob

I think as long as you make a reasonable living, you can keep a reasonable standard of living and you keep your property tidy. I think you know, you don't ask for much more than that.

Stuart

So that was my purpose...to keep it productive, beautiful and after my father died, he was totally against public access, I mean he was an old Victorian you know (right) set, so after he died I provided some rights of way...

Bert

I'm in partner[ship] with my brother and we also want to get as much, as I say, said, get as much income off the farm but without, unfortunately farming these days isn't very viable, I have discovered working for somebody else is, and although I don't want to sell the land, as long as it can be kept in heart and it as long as it can be look after without too much work I'm happy to go along like that (right) because the farms been in the family that many generations I don't want to get rid of it.

Nick

...and what's been the aim for your farm?

Hannah

Do you want to answer that?

Bruce

Well number one to keep it looking extremely nice, we've put a lot of effort into the grassland around, planting a lot of trees to keep it up to standard and we get a subsidy from the agency for doing that

Hannah

...Woodland

Bruce

The pond here, the stone walls, the trees, the grassland, it is all as nice as you'd find anywhere we would like to think

Hannah

Yes because we want it to be a conservation

Bruce

So that's

Hannah

I don't think you'd actually say showpiece, but as conservationally minded as we can possible get without getting it too sort of twee and

Bruce

So that's our first priority and it would be very nice to be able to do that and break all square (yeah sure), that is roughly what we try to do (right)

Nick

So what erm do you understand by the term sustainable land management

Matthew

Sustainable land management? (yeah) It is what we do, day in day out, we erm, we take things from the land, crops, grass, meat, milk, whatever (yeah) from a farmers point of view, but it can't go on indefinitely unless you replenish the land (mm) so that is how I would see sustainable land use, for everything you take out you replace as best you can with erm the means available.

In the preceding extracts, landowners made attempts to avoid a potentially difficult and confrontational debate over what is an acceptable level of environmental impact for their farming, by pre-emptive deployment of a discourse of accommodation i.e. sustainable land management is presented as “what we [farmers] do, day in, day out”. Use of the discourse of accommodation is strategic. The following extracts illustrate the point. Questions perceived to insinuate, or be leading to, criticisms of farmers' management of rural land, are quickly dismissed by, and as, the discourse of accommodation is evoked.

Nick

Is there any feature of your holding you dislike, particularly?

Andy

I, I don't think, I honestly don't think there is anything I dislike, not really.

(No?) No I don't think so, if I think of anything later on, I'll let you know.

Nick

If you had the money is there anything about the landscape you like to change?

Andy

No not really, I suppose that answers the question that there is nothing I don't like about, yeah if there was anything I wanted to change, then that is obviously what I would have disliked about it. (mmm) No I can't really think of anything that er, that I would want to change (fair enough).

Nick

Thinking of what we've been talking about, how would you like to see the countryside managed in the future?

Tony

Well it's not badly managed now really is it? (No).

In the exchange detailed above, Andy replies in a defensive manner to the interviewer's questions. The effect of presenting his relationship with the landscape, as one of accommodation is to prevent the exchange opening up into a discussion. Similarly deployment of a discourse of accommodation by Tony ends the exchange as the interviewer agrees that the countryside "is not badly managed now". Use of a discourse of accommodation in this case 'wins the argument' against alternative constructions of the countryside populated by other rural land managers undertaking different management practices.

Nick

Well what sort of characteristics do you associate with that kinda of, that way of life you've just been describing?

Matthew

Generous way of life. (laughs) Erm I dunno there is a kinda of obligation to keep the land better or equal to the way it is handed over to you (yeah) allowing for the fact that modern inventions allow the same things to be done differently (yeah), not necessarily better but, (yeah) but yeah I wouldn't want to leave this farm to somebody else even if it is tomorrow or 30, 40, 50 years time, (right) in a worse state than I found it. (right) I'd like to keep it in a good state of repair (mmm) erm but it is influenced politically by the way in which we are encouraged to farm. (yeah) When my grandfather took over it was a case of salvaging any square foot of land and turning it into production (mmm) where as nowadays it is not quite the same emphasis (mmm) erm but nevertheless, it's got to be looked after I suppose to a certain degree the general public expect to see certain things in the countryside and I'm not too upset if I try and provide that for them (right, laughs not too upset) No it's strange balance. Go on.

In the first four lines of the Matthew response he mulls over the impact of “modern inventions”, reflecting on intensive farming versus sustainable farming. He says “things” are “done differently” if “not necessarily better” now. While stressing the influence of modern inventions, he ponders his own agency to do things differently and the changing demands of the public. All this takes place within a discourse of accommodation: Matthew discusses exploitation of land for the purposes of business in terms of “production”, and in balance to this refers to “certain things in the

countryside” that the public expect. In this instance the discourse of accommodation serves to frame a reflexive exploration of farming.

The strategic deployment of accommodation is demonstrable, because it is not always used. When confronting criticism and alternate constructions of the countryside, accommodation was ‘discarded’ and other discourses to more suitable effect deployed. Instances of this are examined next.

Dealing with criticism and alternate constructions of the countryside

Within the interviews landowners were asked to describe the wildlife on their farm, what the condition of the wildlife was and whether they were in any designated conservation areas or schemes. Discussion that followed focused in most cases around different perceptions of the countryside and the veracity of these. Discourse analysis revealed that discourses of blame, stewardship and knowledge were used to confront and undermine criticism of landowners’ current and past record in managing the countryside.

Blame

Landowners could deal with various accusations by deploying a discourse of blame. In the following extracts landowners blame others for environmental degradation, and by so doing, seek to discount or reduce the significance of their own impact on the environment. This is an example of what Potter (1997 p.145) terms “stake” –i.e. landowners seek to reduce their stake in the situation. Noticeable in these extracts is the way others are defined in terms of a geographical dimension.

Nick

And farming's got a lot of criticism for environmental damage. Do you think that's fair?

Bill

...I think the criticism was correct but it isn't anymore I don't think. I mean I don't know about East Anglia I've never been there, and it could be totally different because they still have sort of bread basket type fields and they still have big fields and its still chemically managed but I presume their wildlife is fairly wiped out anyway so, nobody's going to stop them.

Nick

There's seems to be a lot of blame in the media that farmers ((or landowners are responsible for environment damage)), how do you feel about that?

Jamie

Yeah. Well I mean, I think the answer to that is that if you go to a commercial farm, a real commercial farm, I'm saying that we're really, we're not really commercial because we're not in essence producing very much, but if you go to the Norfolk Fens and all that stuff, um I would say that people are probably right.

Jim

It's a perception that we've ruined, there might be elements where we have in intensive areas like East Anglia, the nitrate levels, or the residual levels or some things might be up a bit. I'm not saying we're err, totally blameless, I think the media and everybody hypes it.

Nick

Obviously you're doing a lot of work, mmm, kinda conservation work, but there's a lot of criticism of farmers for damaging the countryside

Hannah

I think it's very much in areas. I mean you can't around here because, this isn't natural arable land...but honestly when you get to places like Norfolk and Suffolk, which are just acres of arable land, then yeah they have ripped up things and it's a shame.

Simon

Well, I think you could criticise the large-scale arable farmers, who took out miles and miles of hedges and erm have grown crops, which are totally reliant on fertilizers and chemicals. That can't be good for the soil or wildlife. Birds must be news (right) erm most people who farm land like this, this is grassland, hilly land (yeah).

Nick

(())

Do you think there has been a lot of environmental damage done (())?

Stuart

Over the last 50 years, oh certainly. Nobody could claim otherwise because round here in Gloucestershire we haven't had the losses of walls and hedges that you have in East Anglia because there was no point. These fields are grazing, full stop.

East Anglia is cast as the 'other' against which the blame is directed. Although beyond the scope of this study, it would be interesting to examine whether other counties, including East Anglia itself, have similar images of 'another other' and whether this other is blamed in similar ways. Another question worth considering is how farmers in the counties onto which blame is reflected react themselves to this charge. Within the cohort of landowners interviewed for this thesis, only Adam managed land in East Anglia. However he orientated towards blame directed towards East Anglia, suggesting that this discourse has taken on the status of shared social knowledge.

Adam

If you go to Swindon you can see the impact of thousands of new houses which have been built around Swindon, hmm you see that as a very big impact hmm, I personally think, the other end of that scale, you go to North Lincolnshire, you go to the Lincolnshire Wolds where there isn't the population pressure hhh you see a landscape which has been farming formed which is a very, very attractive landscape and erm, ahh people again have a very strange view of landscape and farming's view on the landscape, the fact remained that in East Anglia there never were any hedges (Hmm) and err the land was drained by the then Dukes of Bedford, back in the Bedford level days, two or three hundred years ago and all of these things over a long period of time have added to this changing scene and I have no doubt it will go on changing as long as there are people to eat food and live here.

The landowners cited above, also identify and script the deviant farmer, a small minority of landowners ('mavericks' deviating from the norm) who damage the countryside, but whose presence is an inevitable 'fact of life'. In such a way,

personal responsibility for environmental degradation is reduced and blame deflected to a rhetorically identifiable other. This has implications for the way policy is perceived, as it suggests you should not punish the many by ‘over-regulation’ just because of the misdeeds of a few. In this way environmental standards are presented as “matters of conscience rather than problems of policy” (Potter p.147). This has been used with success in parliamentary debates to oppose legislation by the conservation lobby (see Cox and Lowe 1983). Representations running counter to such a script are discounted by constructing negative images and ‘characteristics’ of the media, who “spin” (Jim, John, Tony), “hype” (Jim) and are “talking garbage” (Peter). Campaigning groups in this context are often represented as “single issue fanatics” (Peter), with their own allegiances and motives (however well intentioned; e.g. Terry uses the phrase “do-gooders have buggered it up”), and who inevitably criticise farmers (another example of stake).

Knowledge

Landowners in certain circumstances can readily discount expert knowledge. In the extracts below where landowners feel they are being blamed and criticised personally for environmental damage, a discourse of knowledge is deployed which values experience over expert knowledge generated by other means.

Nick

Farmers get blamed a lot for doing environmental damage, do you think is fair, for damaging the countryside?

Tony

Um, damaging the environment? (mm). In what way, what do you..?

Nick

Well they say um the wildlife is disappearing and the trees and...

Tony

I wouldn't say that 'course I've heard, some things have gone down but um, you know like there's more buzzards around now and that and if you'd have said 20 years ago, you wouldn't have seen a buzzard. (right) Mmm, now there are buzzards all around here, swarms of them. (right) It's more like an abundance of buzzards around. There wouldn't have been 20 years ago, you wouldn't have seen a buzzard (mm). There's also ravens, (mm) um, a lot of sparrow hawks and that, they're around here and I think there's some, I'm pretty sure there's a, um, what do you call them, peregrine falcons. I've seen one of one of them around here. (oh yeah) Mmm, but um, ravens are, they're a rarity wouldn't they be around here (mm), London, Tower of London, that's where they come from (yeah) but they've arrived around um through more rabbits I suppose um being around is it? (mm) Buzzards they take rabbits (mm) and then they carry them you know, like, you don't have to leave any lambs out for many minutes and they're gone. (no really) You know if there's a dead lamb out in the field ((he's there over night)) and by next morning you've got just bones (()) (right) sort of like um, mate of mine come up the other day from down back of XXXX and he said there were two ravens on a dead lamb he had out, he'd been lambing you know back a month or so back and he said there were two ravens out there pulling at each other, you know, this rabbit and that was at back of XXX and that sort of like on the edge of town (right). Of course folks wouldn't know they were ravens because they'd think oh there's a carrion crow, although a raven about as half as big again as a carrion crow isn't he? (right yeah mm).

After reducing the stake in what he is about to say: “course I’ve heard, some things have gone down”, Tony then discounts such accusations by recourse to experience. The collective nouns “swarms” and “abundance” serve to emphasise his observations. Buzzards are in effect constructed as a personal indicator of a healthy environment.

Knowledge gained through farming experience was prioritised over formal education; accusers are cast as ‘townies’ and landowners as knowledgeable ‘country people’ (see next chapter for more detail of manipulation of such discourses of rurality)¹³. All these features are seen in the following passages.

Nick

(nervous laughter) How do you describe the wildlife on your farm?

Terry

...And I think the magpie situation is completely out of control and the RSPB, fact I’m (proving) a scheme, they’re monitoring on wild birds but at one stage they were protecting magpies which was unbelievable you know and you got to have a balance, you gotta have so many badgers, so many foxes, so many rabbits, so many song, well not song, as many song birds as you can get. Somehow a countryman or farmer probably knows, the odd heron but not too many. You know if you shot a heron now hhh you’d go to prison very nearly. (mm) We, as there has always been brown trout in that stream, but if you get big colonies of herons down there, that is the end of the trout (right). So you’ve just gotta get it right and there’s no in my opinion, no definitive, you can’t say you gotta have one heron per you know

you just got have a feel of it. And I think that the downside of the wildlife is that the countryman, landowner, farmer, call it ((what you will)) is not allowed to keep the balance as he thinks fit (right) you know. I think that has been hugely detrimental to the wildlife in this area (mmm).

Peter

...they [the government] listen to the advice of idiots really with no common sense. That niggles farmers from a farming point of view because farmers tend to be practical people and whatever their failings, and many of them have failings there's no denying that, (mm) many of them are absolutely silly sods, mm, they still tend to be fairly practical people and the advice that government is tended to be from people who have never been further than Highgate or Hampstead. (mm) They're not practical at all. They just live the London life which is a completely artificial environment, ((my sort of environment in which we work every day)) and I shall go out now and saw up a log (()) (mm) (laughs). A practical thing...

The question asked of Terry was perceived as an accusation probably because of the nervous laughter that preceded the question. Terry proceeded to justify his stewardship of land by discussing and assigning a higher valuation to knowledge derived from experience (that a "countryman" has), than the knowledge of wildlife experts. Peter went on the offensive. He emphasised the "practical" knowledge of farmers while undermining the government's knowledge, using a townie discourse (examined in Chapter 6). His laughter suggests a degree of self-awareness about the vivid but extreme images he was conjuring up.

¹³ This observation should not be conflated with a possible argument that experience has no role in

Accusations, perceived or otherwise of environmental degradation can also be dealt with in other ways . Another discourse deployed by landowners is examined next.

Business

A discourse of 'farming as a business' is deployed in the extracts below. In the first, calls for more regulation of farming are countered by use of this discourse. In the second, the discourse frames Hannah's explanation of the cause of environmental damage in the countryside.

Nick

Well people have said like, as farmers have done things like pulled up hedges and damage, so now we need to kind of, sort of, propose more controls over actual operations being carried out in the way land is managed. Other people have said that's kind of a bad thing because it doesn't give people flexibility to (()).

Stephen

Well I think it's quite important to recognize that farm, farming is actually an industry, it's not, and I think the (()) of the Government is recognizing that, if you like, the trade-off between farming being a business for some people and not a very profitable business

Nick

Obviously you're doing a lot of work, mmm, kind of conservation work, but there's a lot of criticism of farmers for damaging the countryside, why do think that is?

learning to acquire knowledge.

Hannah

You know they thought pulling out the odd hedge wouldn't really matter but when every farmer is pulling out the odd hedge, it obviously does, but with hindsight I don't think any farmers are genuinely scarring the landscape because one of the things we like living in the countryside is how beautiful it is and no farmer wants to live on area of land he has wrecked and it's just a fact that occasionally you have to stick up a silo (mmm) and make it look unattractive but it is a business you know (sure). Farmers are criticised but most people who work in 9-5 jobs should have a go at being a farmer and see what it's like. (laughs)

Farming as a business, also framed articulations, which conceptualised English farming within the global marketplace. The farmers quoted below worried about how they are to compete.

Barney

You look at a landscape like this, there it is basically set out 1710 in the Enclosures Act. (yep) Well how can we, England, expect all this landscape to stay exactly the same (mm) and compete with the rest of the world where we are destroying forests accumulatively, in the world the size of Wales per year, which is exposed to massive intensive agriculture. (mmm) They just ship it into England and mm, you know, how can we compete with that, with very labour bills?

Jim

Perhaps (()) making the point, which is: We're exporting our agricultural production abroad, they've got very cheap currencies. The well, the bar, all these foreign countries have got very cheap currencies and I heard someone

on the radio saying the Caribbean, and so they're glad to have our strong currencies. And they don't have the big welfare planning and the environmental legislation that we do. The production costs are much cheaper, it's no different from Dyson having his things made in Malaya than the chickens being produced in Brazil or China. Very big units going up in China, they will supply the world with chickens soon.

Simon

...we seem to import food from all over the world, from countries that don't have the same regulations and health status, as our animals. It is a double, double standard I think really, erm we're are restricted up to the hilt and erm, yet the imports erm, come in on price. (mmm)

A striking feature of the preceding extracts is their reflexive nature. Much in evidence, is awareness of tension between agricultural production and the need for regulation on environmental and welfare grounds. Manifest within landowners' talk, contradicting McEachern's claims, is a conflict between stewardship (as conservation, ensuring the welfare of animals etc.) and demands for exploitation of the farm (rural land) as a business.

Moral land use

A discourse of 'moral land use' is deployed in the extracts below. Farming as the production of food is scripted as a natural and proper 'way of life'. This construction enables an argument that maintenance of the farming status quo is as a moral imperative.

Andy

They live there [Welsh sheep farmers] because it is the environment they are use to, it is their way of life, and they feel they are not just mowing it and keeping it tidy for no reason, they are producing food. It may not be economical but it is doing something and they have got a reason for doing it. (mmm) If there is sheep in trouble, they get out and see to them. If it was raining and they just had to go and had to do maintenance work like park keepers it wouldn't get done (mmm) wouldn't get done. There has gotta be a reason to do it; if you give em the reason to do it, they will do it.

Nick

Erm have you got into, there has been a lot of criticism recently on farming methods, I was thinking of the food scares. Is that why you have a smallholding?

Caroline

Not necessarily because of that, we wanted this way of life. Well I'm a farmer's daughter anyway and this is how I understand it. We just started off with the ponies and then we needed a goat to clear the ground, all this land and I think that land should be used, that is the way I was bought up. Land shouldn't just sit there. (right) you know, that is another reason why I can't bear set aside, because land should be worked, erm therefore we got this land you know because we wanted to live in the middle of no-where and I thought we gotta use it, so we had to sit there and think about how we wanted to deal with it.

Nick

What do you think of the future subsidies of the Food (())?

Paul

I don't know. I suppose it will get more environmentally linked in that we will have to start. Father likes to use the term, "we will end up glorified park keepers". I suppose just, you know, pottering around, mowing the grass and making it all look pretty sort of thing (mm).

Moral land use is equated to farming. Threats to the continuation of this 'way of life' are deemed unacceptable¹⁴. As McEachern also finds in North Yorkshire "Not to use, exploit, 'good' land was ... seen as immoral" (p.165). Moves to decouple subsidies from production, and conservation for its own sake are resisted within this discourse of moral land use in the extracts above. These elements were conceived of as *not* part of farming in this instance (but see use of stewardship discourse where they are), they do not provide critical moral motivation for action, and so farmers fear "end[ing] up glorified park-keepers" (Paul). Caroline for instance criticises set-aside in such a way *and* establishes her credentials as a landowner, in terms of having moral legitimacy, by presenting herself as a "farmer's daughter".

Satisfaction derived from moral or good land use is expressed in the following excerpts through representations of neatness and hard work. Such imagery, rather than being used to fend off threats, allows farmers to go on the offensive, presenting their management as positive. In the following passage Bob makes an assessment of the health of the environment based on his own observations. His ownership and

¹⁴ Such was the thinking behind the setting up of the Common Agricultural Policy, which set out to keep people on the land (DEFRA 2003a).

management is scripted as morally right because he is keeping the land “tidy”. Such tidiness resonates with justifications of landownership based on hard work and stewardship as discussed in previous chapters. Layering of this kind builds up the complexity and apparent permanence of landownership.

Nick

Sure, and what are the, thinking about how you manage the land, what are the important aspects for you?

Bob

Um I like to see the birds around. Um, we got some old trees out here which normally you know, you’d knock them down and we’ve got the woodpeckers around which are getting scarce and as long as I can see the woodpeckers nesting out there I’m quite happy to leave the old trees for them, and (.) err, I like to see the land looked after. I think it would be wrong just to um, let the land go (()) which, you know they say let it go wild for conservation. Um, I think you can do enough for conservation and look after your land quite well. Err, (.) you know I likes to see it tidy and I likes to see all the birds and that around, you know. I think that’s how the countryside should be kept, not a mass of bushes, just as badgers should round here.

No claim is being made that all landowners object to or disagree with environmental concerns, but rather that this moral discourse transcribes a structure in which debate is taking place. For example, Derek uses the term ‘park-keeper’, acknowledging the moral framework, even though he does not use it as a reason to resist change.

Derek

Well you have just got to bend with the times. I mean the changes are quite incredible, but change, everybody has to suffer change the whole of mankind is always changing. It is dynamic, there is nothing static about the way we live (sure) and er I mean we were talking about the Industrial Revolution, well think how that would change people lives, I mean dramatically. (mmm) Having gone on for centuries just about the same, I mean no, I mean if food can be grown in the world cheaper than we can grow it here (mm) and they pay us to be park keepers, which in fact is what they are doing (yep) I don't see any complaint about it.

The key finding of this chapter is that discourse is deployed strategically. Landowners draw upon a repertoire of discourses: accommodation, stewardship, blame, knowledge and moral land use, to achieve effects, the meaning of which is endemic to the local segment of talk. As a social exchange, the meaning of land alters across the course of an interview.

Returning to the apparent paradox within McEachern's findings, it can now be seen that conservation and exploitation (amongst other discourses) structure farmers' talk. The conflict or tension between the two positions has been shown to run through exchanges. This means that a rational decision on the part of a farmer, is to challenge environmental objections to building development by recourse to the opposing discourse of business. That McEachern finds only a discourse of accommodation in the course of the 'everyday', may simply be evidence that farmers were not challenged rhetorically over the course of those days when the researcher was around.

The next chapter weaves into the discourse use examined so far, another strand of complexity. Chapter 6 analyses how landowners construct meanings of *rural* landownership as they deploy discourses of rurality.

Chapter 6: Discourses of Rurality

Chapters 4 and 5 were concerned with discourses of property and management which construct the meaning of land for owners. This chapter explores in detail the meaning of rural(ity) constructed by those interviewed. For, although all the landowners interviewed were in areas commonly referred to as the countryside, this in itself does not reveal much about how the meaning of rurality is constructed by landowners (see discussion in Chapter 3).

In a survey of residents living in six English parishes, Halfacree (1995) finds that interview responses contained many components recognisable as part of the culturally familiar image of the rural idyll. Within the interviews there was no naive acceptance of the idyll on the part of the residents, but instead evidence of an “...engaged and often critical reflection on rural living” (p.1). This is a hegemonic social representation and Halfacree (1993) notes that discourses are related to social representations within specific instances of text and talk. This chapter explores further the relationship between discourses of rurality and the rural idyll.

Discourse analysis shows firstly that idyllic elements were deployed by landowners; secondly that they invariably referred to people rather than place; and thirdly were used selectively according to the discursive situation. The effect created in each instance is done so in reference to an overarching framework of either the social representation of the rural idyll *and/or* urban dystopia. Both the rural idyll and urban dystopia form part of what Baker (1997 p.147) calls “cultural competence”. Two other discourses are found to be part of the repertoire of discourses available to

landowners: 'no difference between townies and country people' and 'townie farmers'.

Country people

Discourses of country people was identified from idyllic elements found within landowners' talk. The rural idyll is understood as a picture of a "a less hurried lifestyle where people followed the seasons rather than the stock market, where they have more time for one another and exist in a more organic community where people have a place and an authentic role. The countryside has become the refuge from modernity" (Short 1991 p.34). Consideration was given to the local discursive context within the interviews where idyllic elements were deployed. This was productive in understanding how the country people discourse was drawn upon as owners talked about and constructed rural landownership.

...country sense

As discussed in Chapter 4 and 5, when discussing management of land, landowners can represent farming as stewardship. This is reduced to, and simultaneously reinforced in the extracts below, by constructing landowners and farmers as country people. So for instance, while discussing farmers and their relation to conservation, Clive says that "most farmers at heart, well country people and value the country things" they have a "country sense". Similarly Adam sees "countrymen" as being able to take "the sensible view" of balancing wildlife and production for "I think most of us are very conscious, most countrymen are pretty conscious of what it going on the countryside". Such assemblages script landowners as a 'natural' part of the

countryside and as such 'tradition suggests' it is only 'right' that they stay on 'their' land (implied by use of the discourse of moral land use, see Chapter 5). This is neatly surmised by Barney: "we were born and bred to do this [farm] and erm, we're going to carry on doing it until we die"¹⁵.

Nick

Right and how, thinking in general terms, which you describe the wildlife on the land you manage?

Adam

Well I think it is probably as good and as varied as it was. Erm it changes from time to time there is no question about that, but you know, farming practices are bound to have an impact on wildlife, no question about that at all. Erm if you want to reduce the weed burden in a crop, crop of wheat, it's going to have some effect on the bird population and a small mammal population that would have existed in a crop of wheat. Erm but these things can always live together and if there is a sensible view of, of what you are trying to do, I think most of us are very conscious. Most countrymen are pretty conscious of what goes on in the countryside and erm I've heard over the 50 odd years I've been farming, err extraordinary stories about the effects of sprays on the hare population and they are still there in exactly the same numbers, and er it's amazing how resilient nature is and how it will live with the changes that are necessary.

¹⁵ The hypothesis that this statement was for discursive effect was corroborated later in the interview when Barney stated that the sale of his land is imminent.

Nick

Mmm, so the amount of people on your land [on footpaths] has increased, has it?

Clive

No I don't think it, as much... they just seem, don't seem to think. They just, the countryside is sort of such an alien environment to them. You know, originally, go back years, most people who lived in the countryside had sort of countryside sense, (right) and now most of them are people who come out here, dormitory people, who work in Cheltenham and erm the countryside is just something green they see out of their windows. You know, they just don't have that country sense...

...tradition

Bob constructs farming with reference to a discourse of tradition: "You're born into it and you sticks to it, don't you?" This overlaps with a discourse of fate (see Chapter 4). Both Caroline and Hannah also justify their management ("farming") of land by deploying the discourse of tradition. Again this discourse is overlain by the discourse of stewardship examined in Chapter 4 and 5.

Nick

So you came from, is farming in your family?

Bob

Yes, yes. Well I suppose, you're born into it and you sticks to it. Don't you? And years ago everybody, well 90% of the sons just carried on. Well now I bet there are around 10% of the sons stay on the farm because they aren't

getting any, well they see their mates earning good wage and they aren't going to stay on and work seven days a week for nothing. You know. So, um, well I think its time government sort of, you know, how they keeps on about all these subsidies and that, but um, without the subsidies I wouldn't be a farmer in twelve months. That is all that keeps everybody going.

Hannah

Well I come from a farming background. This is a lifestyle we're very privileged to have erm the land. Care of the land under us. My father was a hobby farmer too, although he was a bigger one, we've got 100¹⁶ acres, he had about 1000¹⁷ acres (right), but he was a successful businessman as well and he farmed in a traditional way. This was along time ago now. I think it, I hope that the people think that the way I farm this is good. Because I come from a farming background I think I am qualified to farm this land (right).

Nick

Erm have you got into? There has been a lot of criticism recently on farming methods, I was thinking of the food scares. Is that why you have a smallholding?

Caroline

Not necessarily because of that. We wanted this way of life. Well I'm a farmer's daughter anyway and this is how I understand it. We just started off with the ponies and then we started off, with we needed a goat to clear the ground, all this land and I think that land should be used. That is the way I was bought up, land shouldn't just sit there (right) you know. That is another reason why I can't bear set aside, because land should be worked, erm

¹⁶ Holding size rounded down, see Chapter 3 for explanation.

therefore we got this land you know because we wanted to live in the middle of no where and I thought we gotta use it. So we had to sit there and think about how we wanted to deal with it. Erm, but yes because of the scares, yes people are willing to buy happy pork or what ever. So they come to me and it is quite good from that point of view, but yeah there are, I don't agree with some farming methods I suppose.

Both interviewees, rationalise their land use with reference to their farming background. A sense of tradition and inherited expertise is evoked. Hannah in particular is very direct, she asserts "...because I come from a farming background I think I am qualified to farm this land". The term 'farming' is as a rhetorically self sufficient rationalisation of actions, because it resonates with the rural idyll within which farming is *the* accepted, traditional form of land use.

In the following extracts, country person discourse overlaps with a discourse of knowledge. Local expertise as country sense (or wisdom), is valued over other expert knowledge.

Nick

So erm, so you said you had grown into farming. What's that kinda meant, what's that meant to you?

Matthew

Well how it evolved? (mmm) Well we would meet as a family and I would look to Dad, as it were, to tell us what to do. (yeah) Erm having left school, I had a year off and went back to college on a daily, one week, er one day a week day release sort of job(right). Went to agricultural college (right) for

¹⁷ Holding size rounded up, see Chapter 3 for explanation.

four years I think (right) and erm then when I came back from that, Dad let me try what I'd been taught. (right) So I decided making more decisions, (right) after I'd tried what I'd been taught, we kinda of went back to the way the farm had always been farmed, because that was the way it kinda worked best. (right) Believe it or not! (right) (both laugh)

...community

When community is evoked in the passages below, it is done so by reference to what has been lost: a lowering of moral values, a slow death of a previously organic community. A picture is painted of a lost idyll, which paradoxically, is scripted as having been destroyed by incomers motivated by the very same, but even more (sic) naïve idyllic view of the world. These outsiders are accused of clinging to the rural idyll in face of the 'reality' of modern farming, of having unrealistic expectations. In the words of Andy "they want to play happy villagers". Instead of presenting both farmers and incomers as involved in a process of change, incomers are in the instances detailed below, scripted and blamed as the cause of the countryside's problems. For they "chucked out the natives ... they can't understand" (Matthew) and "are doing everything to stop you [a farmer] earning a living" (Andy).

Nick

Why, why, why, why so ignorant about what is going on farmland.

Matthew

Why? Probably because in the situation where we are, in a village. When I was growing up all the houses in the village were inhabited by villagers who has been here for a generation or 2 or 3. (yeah) Way before my time but, it was like the Browns or the Jones or whatever had lived in the house and had

done for the last God knows how long. (mmm) But they, because we are in the commuter belt area, houses values have changed, and therefore the new people coming in chucked out the natives (yeah) and er the new people don't understand the countryside (mmm) the same way. They see it in a different way completely, they don't have the understanding (mmm) in how it all works together. They kind of expect too much, the world is not perfect, farmers are not perfect (mmm). You know if you have got live animals you've got dead animals. They can't understand that sometimes (mmm) and you know healthy animals - sick animals. Farmers shouldn't have sick animals, but you get sick humans, why can't you have sick animals? You've got to put them right, it is not an overnight [clicks finger] just like that is it? Some things are more long term, that's where the problem lies I think.

Andy

We don't have, we don't really have too many problems [with people wanting to follow a footpath through our farmyard and barn]. Most of the people who come are very understanding, and they, most of them if they come to the buildings. They say, no, we don't want go through, they say that is not where we wanna go (mmm). Some of them, they come, they are usually locals, they insist on walking through there, we take no notice (right).

Nick

So there are people you kind of know? In the (oh yeah, oh yeah) These people have kind of moved into the area rather than the? (yes, yeah, very much so, very much so)

Andy

You know the villages are being destroyed because farms are getting bigger. There is less, there is less er labour required on, one the farms, so the village youngsters are moving away, (yeah) which eventually leaves houses which people buy as second homes and weekend homes and things. They come into the, they come into the area and they seem to think oh it's a village you know. You erm, we had one instance we had our milk collected at night. We use to send a 38 ton artic to collect it, some of the villagers tried to stop the artic coming (mm) you know. They wanted their milk as cheaply as they could get it (yeah) but they expected, I don't know if they wanted horses and cart to come and get it. (Nick laughs) That is where, see you don't get village life without, you got village life because everybody depended on everybody else (yeah) you worked together and you played together. Most of these people, they come, you should have met XXXX (laughs), but they come and they it is a weekend, they want to play happy villagers and they think you should just go and mix with 'em, while the rest of the week they are doing everything to stop you earning a living. (laughs)

In the preceding extracts, the countryside presented as a depository of authentic, idyllic lifestyles is threatened by the town as modernity (cross reference with non-farming examined in Chapter 1 & 2). Counter-urbanisers are scripted as have artificial ideas, and of being in the process of self-deception. They are not seen as sympathetic to the plight of farmers, contrary to available evidence (see for example Milbourne *et al.* 2000). Incomers are blamed for negative change in the countryside. This discourse strengthens Andy's case that it is unjust that he has not been granted permission to move a footpath by the Local Authority. Matthew deploys the

discourse to counter arguments that there should be more environmental regulation of farming (discussed at length just before the extract cited above).

Townies

Discourse of townies were identified from elements of urban dystopia found within landowners talk. As the antonym of the rural idyll, urban dystopia is a vision of the city where there are “...sharp inequalities, exclusion, exploitation, repression and planning disasters...”(Baeten 2002 p.148). Again, as with idyllic elements, consideration was given to the effect of discourse deployment on the local social exchange within the interviews at a given instance. Discourses of townies constructed rural landownership by emphasising what the rural is not.

Paul called people coming from the urban dystopia, “townies”. Other idioms referring to the same group included: “people ...not coming from a farming background” (Hannah); “dormitory people” (Clive); “...people who have never been further than Highgate or Hampstead” (Peter) and “people living in a town environment” (Tony).

...ignorant

Townies and their ignorant attitudes are a hindrance to, if not destructive of, the interests of country people. As a scripted consensus of ‘cause and effect’, this ‘shared knowledge’ acts as a powerful device to dismiss alternative constructions of the countryside and different management regimes. When Paul was asked ‘why are farmers blamed for environmental damage in the countryside?, these elements of the urban dystopia allow him to dismiss such allegations with an air of resignation: “You

kind of expect it, you know. If you live in the middle of town, they wouldn't have a clue what's going on half the time". Paul similarly blamed townies (see below).

Nick

So when people like us, criticise the way farmers manage (()), blame [it] for various bits of damage and degraded environment. What would you, how do you view that?

Paul

...SO incredibly ignorant of what you are doing. (right) As far as they are concerned, you're absolutely polluting everything. You are spraying something completely and utterly toxic that will just kill them if they touch it. (yeah) Its just uneducated, they don't know. You know they think the worst, they read The Sun or some tabloid rubbish about this, that and the other, doing something or other to you. So peoples' perception of farming gets distorted. [Even,] townies you kind of expect it, you know. If you live in the middle of town they wouldn't have a clue what's going on half the time, but these are the sort of people living on the fringes of the countryside etc. A lot of them they are very ignorant of farming practices...

Peter identifies "the completely artificial environment" of London for perceived agricultural policy failings. Similarly the "town environment" is blamed for DEFRA bureaucracy by Tony (see below).

Peter

... they [the government] listen to the advice of idiots really with no common sense. That niggles farmers from a farming point of view because farmers

tend to be practical people, and whatever their failings and many of them have failings there's no denying that, (mm) many of them are absolutely silly sods, mm, they still tend to be fairly practical people, and the advice that government is [tended to be] from people who have never been further than Highgate or Hampstead. (mm) They're not practical at all, they just live the London life which is a completely artificial environment. ((My sort of environment in which we work every day,)) [and] I shall go out now and saw up a log (()) (mm) (laughs). A practical thing...

Tony

...was a chap up in what's-its-name, there was a chap writing in the Farmers Weekly [here], back when the foot and mouth had just finished. He applied for, and this was up in Yorkshire, ((cause they had had foot and mouth up there)), he applied for a licence to shoot. Um, they had a shoot on the farm apparently and wanted to um um shoot. So he went for a licence and um, um, he was taking the mick a bit really because they tend to ((say something, was it now)) Um the people who were shooting on this ((earth)) shouldn't have any contact with elephants and he said he hadn't seen any, many around Yorkshire for a long time and obviously ((wasn't going to shoot the bloody elephant)). That's just typical of people living in a town environment or something isn't? [or are] They['re] getting mixed up or something. (laughs)

Hannah

Unfortunately the farms around here are being bought by people who do not come from a farming background and it's good in lots of ways, they don't want their land so they rent it (mmm) to the farmers who do farm and that's

good because it gives them more land. But from a hunting point of view they don't understand the balance of nature (right) and a lot of them say they don't want the hunt on their land, which it means it is virtually unhuntable around here...

...atomistic

A number of other characteristics given to townies can be picked out from the interviews. They are variously presented as: less community orientated, more selfish or atomistic than those from country communities (see Jim and Simon extracts below), of living in an artificial world, of wanting to escape from the 'real' world (see passages from interviews with Jim and Tony). Townies are scripted as being out of pace with country life, which in a number of interviews was illustrated by asserting that ramblers have a "need to walk" (Bill) though the countryside on "motorway footpaths" (Barney). These discourses serve to account and dismiss demands which an individual landowner (not all) might perceive to be unreasonable.

Jim

When I first started farming people were very nice and everything else and it was more of the locals using them [footpaths] but now you can get the err, awful expression this coming from me, you can get the sort of real lefty out of XXXX who wants his rights. Some people are more aggressive now, do you know what I mean? People have become more haven't they? You know more righteous. Yeah and I respect footpaths and private paths and people using them. There is some abuse of course. These young girls on horses, people get on a horse and they think they can go anywhere on it, they still

do! And some people walk their dogs across fields that they shouldn't. You can tell them but they never really take any notice.

Simon

But my experience is that new landowners are very protective of their land (right) so people who made money out of something and then have bought a country property with land, they really watch their boundaries and erm, much more so than people who had it for centuries perhaps. (right)

...artificial

A discourse of the 'city as artificial' accounts for townies' actions in the following passages. Townies are scripted as cut off from the countryside and this is why they make unreasonable policy demands.

Jim

I think you know the rural policies or rural something. There's got to be more temperance in the countryside yet, it can't just be rich get-outs, vulgar, rich get-outs. That's what they are. People round here, we've got quite important people, quite famous people, very wealthy people. It's a bit unreal. You've seen it haven't you? When you go round?

Tony

When I say freedom, [not freedom,] from paperwork. There's a terrible amount of bureaucracy now amongst it, half of it could be done away with. (mm) But then that's a fact having Government on anything isn't it? I think you sort of like say get involved it becomes a um they're know how to make problems don't they? (sure) Rather than solve them (mm) or seem to

anyway. (mm) They've got people in charge that haven't got a clue what they're on about (mm) a lot of the time, you know. They're not farmers or they're living in the middle of London (right) and they wouldn't even know what was going on down here would they? It's all like they're advised by, I expect um, um they're under these you know like these ...aren't they and they just (laughs). They're living in a cocoon really, not living with what that reality is [isn't]. (mm) I don't know how these folks in Wales and that survive I'm sure (mm). They must, well they don't live.

The elements considered under the headings, Country people and Townies, together form a familiar dichotomous construction: the rural idyll and urban dystopia. In addition to these discourses, analysis finds that are other discourses in which the divide between the rural idyll and urban dystopia is denied or subverted for different effect. These are discussed next.

No difference between townies and country people

In the following extracts where footpath access is discussed, landowners construct a model of townies and country people where there is *no* essential difference between them. Two stages are apparent in the process of discourse construction. Firstly, the countryside is domesticated: equated to the domestic garden. Evocation of such a widely distributed form of property provides what "appears to be a broad consensus of values regarding ...ownership" (Newby *et al.* 1978 p.334). In the second stage, predictability scripts that "you" would not want somebody "to come along and take your garden". This version of the discourse 'no difference between townie and country people' is deployed to counter claims being made for more footpath access over farmland. At the time of the interviews, the Countryside and Rights Of Way Act

(known as the 'Right to Roam' Bill on its passage through Parliament), had just been put on the Statute Books.

A slightly different version of the 'no difference between townies and country people' discourse presents agriculture as just another industry. Farmers are scripted as being unique in allowing access, where as 'really' they are not different to other industries.

Nick

Hmm do you think farmers should be compensated for the loss? Do you think they're losing something by having people, access on their land?

Adam

I think in most cases they are not losing anything at all. I think if they are losing something, then of course they should be compensated. If society wants something, if they want to come along and take your garden, erm for a new road or railway, of course you should be compensated. And exactly the same things applies if somebody comes along and takes half my factory floor away from me, or makes it actually impossible to work in my factory. Then, then quite justifiably I would have thought that I should expect some compensation.

Nick

So have you had a lot of problem with ramblers on your land with dogs?

Bill

No, not a lot. They just wind me up. Um, you see at the moment what have we got, we've got a single suckling herd with the calves and a bull. Left to their own devices there is absolutely no problem. You go in there with a dog and the mothers will get instantly protective and there's nothing cows like more than actually to have a go at a dog. And certain dogs see that as a game and then wind up the whole field and then the field will. He's through the fences and gone. When in actual fact - a farm is in fact still a food producing factory and if you were to walk your dog through ICI, Smith's Industries whatever, you will have a gate man to deal with, and even if there were a footpath [to deal with], that path would be fenced either side and you wouldn't actually make your way into the factory. You can't do that with farms and common sense says you shouldn't you know. The public have a right to enjoy the countryside without having to peer through fences and things but they've got to respect. I'm talking about normal farms around here, I'm talking about lowland farms, yeah, lowland farms. Mountain, heath and moorlands have been sorted, hasn't it?

Nick

So when the Freedom to Roam Act went through for upland and moorland, do you think that's a good idea? Do you want it to be extended to other areas?

Peter

Yes, I do in a way, if it works. If it were extended to, yes the whole area of our farm, first of all for us because we don't actually make any money out of farming, to some extent the farm is an extension of our garden. (mm) I mean, if you're really truthful, it's probably the case in all farms. Nearly all farms it is actually an extension of his private property and you don't particularly want everybody roaming all over your property any more than you want them roaming all over your garden and front drive.

Nick

So you're not saying you like it [the Right to Roam] on your land for instance? Not something you'd like on your land?

Stephen

Um - I just don't think, I mean it's not, it doesn't seem to me to be a sense of, if you like fair play apart from anything else. I mean, the land is being used for a particular purpose. (right) It's not sort of, you know, a green playground. (mm right) There's plenty of access to it but you know there are people trying to earn their living on it (mm) and the idea that people should be careering around, you know taking their dogs out and sitting in the car and saying go run round the field, (mm) seems to me to be lunacy and it's actually interfering- not directly with me- but it's interfering with somebody's livelihood. I mean, (right) you have the right to roam around somebody's offices? (mm right yeah) I think the answer's no. (Yep). Wouldn't think many people round here would give you a yes like (laughs) (no).

When Peter is asked (see above) whether he thinks the “...Freedom to Roam Act...[is] a good idea?”, he replies “If it were extended... we don't actually make any money out of farming”. This statement is a non sequitur, i.e. in logical terms as a conclusion it does not follow from the premise. However in terms of discourse use, it is illustrative of the process of ‘casting around’ for a suitable discourse to deploy. Peter then proceeds to use a discourse of no difference between townies and country people. The same thing could be said of Stephen's mention of “fair play”, although use of this differs slightly, in that it imbues subsequent use of the discourse with a positive attribute i.e. fair play.

A feature of note in the interviews with Adam and Bill is that Nick phrases his questions using social groupings “farmers” and “ramblers” respectively, while the interviewees respond using categories of land and buildings. Adam equates a “garden” to a “factory” to a farm, Bill “a farm” to “a food producing factory”. Attributing characteristics to objects and place is potentially less controversial than assigning qualities to people¹⁸.

Townie farmers

In the following extracts, landowners draw upon a construction of the *townie farmer* to blame for environmental damage and the loss of the small family farm. “Commercial farmers” are associated with environmental damage (Jamie); are scripted as “not farmers” but “businessmen” (Andy), whereas “smaller family farms ... aren't there to get every penny out of the ground” (Bob). John predicts that “if big

¹⁸ In this respects there are parallels with the way the concept of the is used to construct race (see Wetherell and Potter 1992).

farmers keep going as they are, they are just going to turn the countryside into a, well a factory really”.

Nick

There's seems to be a lot of blame in the media that farmers or landowners are responsible for environmental damage? How do you feel about that?

Jamie

Yeah. Well I mean - I think the answer to that is that if you go to a commercial farm - a real commercial farm - I'm saying that we're really - we're not really commercial because we're not in essence producing very much - but if you go to the Norfolk Fens and all that stuff - um I would say that people are probably right.

Nick

Anyway I think we should finish now, just got a few to wrap up; should be quite quick. The first one is quite open-ended, but how would you like to see things managed in the future, thinking about your farm and the countryside in general? ...

Andy

...But I would certainly like to see more farmers (mmm) and I said not necessarily big employers (mmm) just enough to, we get back to being normal people then (laughs). Because most farmers now, the big ones, they are not farmers they are businessmen (mmm) and that, I don't care for that.

Nick

Who would you like to see farming in the future? What kind of people?

Bob

I think it, to me I think it should still stick in the smaller families. I don't think these big estates should get in where they sort of puts a manager in and they farm 1000's of acres and just put corn on it all. No, I don't agree with that. I think it should still stick with smaller family farms, 'cos they are the ones whose going to look after the countryside and that. Um, these big estates, they put thousands of pheasants down but they only go and shoot them don't they! (Laughs) Keep it as it is I would have thought, still stick with the smaller family farms, and they are more prepared, they aren't there to get every penny out the ground, whereas these managed estates that is what they're there to do isn't it? Is earn every penny they can for whoever supplies the money.

John

Mm, if you want to keep farmers in the country, I think so, yeah, otherwise we're going to end up with a thousand big farmers and that's going to be it.

Nick

((Mm, what then? You'd lose it)) ?

John

Mm, well if the big farmers kept going as they are, they're just going to turn the countryside into a, well a factory really (mm) you know, its not going to

be a, it definitely won't be as it is now anyway, if the big farmers keep rolling on as they are.

In much the same way as Multi-National Companies are used as a metonym for globalisation, so representations of large scale commercial farmers are deployed as a metonym for modern agriculture. Such manipulations of language in the dialogues above, value 'big commercial' farmers negatively compared to the 'positive' contributions made by their smaller counterparts. The landowners assigned themselves to the latter group. Such a construction finds resonance with the image of the threatened small 'family farm'.

In summary, discourses of townies, country people, no difference between townies and country people and townie farmers, constitute a cultural repertoire from which landowners draw. Discourses are to quote Baker (1997) "... powerful statements about *what could be the case*, how the social order *might be arranged*, whether or not it really is" (*emphasis in original* p.143). These discourses 'work' i.e. they have the effect they do, because they draw upon culturally familiar social representations, namely the rural idyll and urban dystopia. In the final analysis, this relationship is critical in understanding how landowners construct rurality.

Chapter 7: Conclusions

The meaning of rural land for landowners can usefully be understood through an analysis of discourses of property, management and rurality. Six discourses of 'property' etc. were used as analytic tools in Chapter 4 to examine how discourses were deployed by landowners and to what effect. On occasion ownership was justified by owners scripting it as equivalent to the property of others. Powerful comparisons were drawn with widely owned items such as cars, gardens and houses. In claiming property rights, appeals were made to the interests of everyone in possession of such items. This process blurs the division between individualistic and altruistic intentions. A discourse of the natural order of things was used to describe landownership. Orientation towards this discourse was shown by those who had *not* inherited land, as well as those who had; emphasis was given to the 'fact' that rural land and its management had a hold upon 'owners', not vice versa. This was used to beg the question 'who owns who?' Hard work was used forcefully to justify ownership of land. From analysis of the use of this discourse, an image of a legitimate owner as someone who spends time 'working the land' was apparent.

Metonymy was used by landowners to give land meaning in a particular discursive instance, by making reference to only one aspect of management or ownership. Contemporary use of stewardship discourse tends to emphasise environmental benefits, whereas in the past stress has been placed on stewardship as the embodiment of noblesse oblige and paternalism. Instances were found within the interviews where reference was made to such 'traditional' elements. It makes sense therefore, not to conceptualise discourses as contemporary or archaic, but to consider shifts in emphasis over historical time *and* the length of a piece of text or talk. As

livestock was used as a metonym for 'the farm', so farming was used as a metonym for landownership.

The same discourses were used to different effect in different discursive contexts. For instance stewardship was not only used as a justification of landownership, it was used to convey a sense of aspiration and to represent memory, of being a living, material connection to the past. The discourse 'no-one is in farming for the money' resonates and in some senses draws support from farming/non-farming, production/consumption and productive/post-productive conceptualisations of the countryside. Understanding the deployment of 'no-one is in farming for the money' is complex, as appeals to different aspects of capital are constructed

As a metonym for landownership, "farming" was deployed by landowners within discourses of rural land management. Chapter 5 describes instances where accommodation was used by landowners to describe and represent what they do 'as farmers'. Farming was presented as the actual embodiment of stewardship, as the 'correct' way of negotiating between the nurture of land, livestock, wildlife etc., and the exploitation for business within a capitalist system. However discourse use is strategic. Criticisms of farming made on environmental grounds are countered by the exploitation of discourses of business. Criticisms of farming on business grounds are met by exploitation of discourses of environmental stewardship. Stewardship as experience is given higher value than 'expert' knowledge. Methods used to acquire the latter are called into question within a framework of townie and country. Townies are scripted as ignorant or hostile to country people, and therefore townie knowledge is tainted, motivated by this 'hidden' agenda. An alternative way to deal with environmental criticism was to deploy a discourse of blame to place responsibility

elsewhere. This could be given a geographical dimension to more 'precisely' pinpoint culpability.

Environmental degradation caused by agriculture was, in a number of instances, accepted by landowners without admission of responsibility. Landowners discussed reflexively the tensions between the demands of the market and the need for protection of the countryside. Running through a number of interviews where management was discussed, was an orientation towards a discourse of moral land use. This presented farming as a moral 'way of life'. This was used for instance, as both a way to argue that farmers should be protected by subsidy to "farm" not act as "park-keepers", and conversely within an account in which agri-environmental payments were conceptualised as inevitable and acceptable change.

Discourses of rurality were employed to give meaning to *rural* landownership. Landowners used three models of the social world as they sought to rationalise and understand their place in society. The dichotomous townie/country model was analysed in Chapter 6. The term 'townie' was used as an analytic label rather than town, to distinguish the concern of this thesis with the cultural construction of rurality, rather than the geographic space of the countryside (see Chapter 2). The deployment of townie and country discourses was found to reveal an orientation towards the rural idyll and urban dystopia. Attributes of each were drawn upon as landowners deployed discourses to different effect. For example opposition to hunting, leaving gates open, and blaming farmers for environmental damage is cast as a sort of thing that townies would say, as being typical of townie attitudes. On the other hand country people were presented as having an innate "country sense", a 'natural' feel for stewardship.

In other discursive contexts, other models of society were employed. For example 'no difference between townie and country people' was used in a number of instances to counter claims for more public access to land. Equivalences constructed between rural land and factories, rural land and gardens, could be used to undermine the 'sense' of access claims. A third model was used to locate the source of threats to the countryside - townie farmers. This group were scripted as large-scale commercial farmers only interested in farming as a business enterprise. The category non-farmers discussed in Chapter 2 resonates with the townie farmer model of the world.

All the three models of rurality were used in relation to social representations of the rural idyll and urban dystopia. These are shared discourses of knowledge from which landowners, as culturally competent members of society, draw attributes as they explain and rationalise the world in terms of discourses of rurality.

The many forms of the non-farming/farming dichotomy were examined in Chapter 2.

A sociology of the study of rural landownership reveals that dichotomies such as consumption/production, work/leisure, full-time/part-time, productive/post-productive are applied as models of the world to understand different periods of history. However, they all relied on essentially the same attributes as those that structure the non-farming/farming dichotomy (see Chapter 1 and 2). In all but the very abstract, they are contradictory and confused concepts.

Discourse analysis in this thesis reveals that landowners use concepts of the rural idyll and urban dystopia, of the townie/country person and of the townie farmer (as non-farmer) to explain what they understand by landownership. These dichotomies frame but do not determine the talk of landowners. By the same token, dichotomies are available to researchers as analytic tools. Although an opposite always exists in

the abstract, a concept of dichotomy rather than duality, allows for the use of a category without automatic assumption of the existence of the other.

Contemporary rural landownership

A notable feature of the way discourses were found deployed was that at any given instant, each appeared enduring, innocuous and mundane. For example, in terms of discussing land management, using a discourse of accommodation: “keeping it [the land] beautiful ... and making a bit of money” is far from reproachable. At face value this discourse appears to form the basis of an unimpeachable explanation of management and a ‘natural’ moral claim to ownership. It is only by considering when and how a discourse is deployed in comparison to others that the contested nature of land management within talk comes into sharp focus. Unless critical analysis is undertaken, discourse use can appear decidedly apolitical. This is not without its consequences, as Mabey (2000) explains eruditely with regards to stewardship:

The notion of 'stewardship' became part of the ecological litany sometime before Prince Charles gave it air time. It is one of those intrinsically good sounding words, redolent of responsibility and doing one's duty. Yet it is, when you think about it, and odd choice for a form of relationship to supplant the discredited idea of human 'dominion' over nature. A steward, in anybody's dictionary, is simply a deputy, someone who manages or administers on another's behalf. On whose behalf are we the stewards of the planet? Not, presumably, its literal owners. God, then, or Gaia? I suspect that most of those who use the word might answer ' the planet itself', which at best is a piece of

sophistry, and at worst a reworking of the patronising view that nature needs to be in human custody for its own good. This is asking for a warder, not a steward.

But its most dangerous undertone is precisely that subtle buck-passing, that denial of personal control. Managing nature not for yourself but for some unnamed or abstract other lifts you clear of the messy business of value judgment and political choice, and certainly from the need to consider whether the job needs doing in the first place.

(Mabey 2000 p.306)

The subtleness of the construction and use of discourses can all too easily leave the impression that there is little which is contestable in the management and ownership of rural land. This must partly account for the lack of public debate on a wider “...interpretation of property rights...” (Cobb *et al.* 1999 p.229). Paradoxically this leaves little *explicit* discussion of the politics of property rights, even as rural landownership is constructed and given meaning in public talk.

Of course, lack of debate can only be considered a problem, if it is considered there is a need for change in the way land is used in the UK. However, the weight of scientific evidence suggests that the environment has suffered severe degradation from farming over the last 50 years (for a review see Cobb *et al.* 1999). Suggestions for modifications to the current property regime to help meet the challenge of moving towards sustainable land use exist (see for example Bromley and Hodge 1990; Cox *et al.* 1988; Selman 1988). Some suggestions are more novel than others,

but all offer suggestion for resolving the problem of preserving the notion of private ownership while meeting social and environmental needs. They await widespread consideration and discussion. Not one of them it is worth noting amounts to wholesale nationalisation or privatisation of land, this is yet another dichotomy which requires transcending if productive debate is to ensue.

Discourse, dichotomy and construction

Rural landownership is constructed in language but refers to place. Narratives and discourses obscure while in many ways actually 'are' rural landownership. This presents a significant challenge to the would-be researcher. Summaries of the material and textual terrain, in what amount to stereotypes of types of landowners and their attitudes, undoubtedly captured some important information. However, there is a need to ensure that categories do not simply pander to our prejudices. Everybody, whether they are landowner, home-owner, gardener, politician, journalist or researcher etc., participate in a continually fluctuating discursive jig-saw. The construction of narratives (upon which discourses hang) is a part of everyday life. They comfort, excuse, justify etc., in short they help interpret a complex world in everyday situations. But at some point there is a need to go beyond home-spun stories, our shared working knowledge, to look for more sophisticated understandings of society.

Dichotomies, in large part the equivalent of what Sayer (1989; 1991) calls dualisms, occupy a prominent position within discussion of landownership, but have an inability to deal analytically with complexity and apparent ambiguity. This was borne out in the course of research. Numerous different discourses grouped under

property, management and rurality were found to be useful as tools to explain landowners' language use. The dichotomies surrounding landownership, (already shown to be problematic in describing change in social structure or land use see Chapters 1 and 2), were of little use in analysing the multifarious and fragmented patterns defusing spoken language.

Discourses however did gain meaning in relation to dichotomies. This is particularly apparent with discourses of rurality. Discourses of country people and townies made reference to notions of the rural idyll and urban dystopia respectively. Although reference was only ever made to fragments of the latter, in so doing persuasive weight was added to a rhetorical point made. Sayer (1991) suggests that the critical issue with dichotomies is to determine how they are defined and related. It would appear that both discourse analysis derived from the notion of interpretative repertoires advanced by Potter and Wetherell (1987) and social representations developed by Moscovici (1984) have complementary roles to play here. Discourse analysis is able to analyse the local function of language, while the theory of social representations helps account for the shared knowledge within a particular culture on which discourses depend for meaning i.e. in this case discourses of rurality refer to the rural idyll and urban dystopia. The finding that there were other discourses in use which collapsed (Townie farmers) and subverted (No difference between townies and country people) the binary divide between rural idyll and urban dystopia is further evidence that people are not merely cultural dupes (see also Halfacree 1995). Discourses of rurality were artfully manipulated according to discursive circumstance, but in reference to an over-arching dichotomous framework of rural idyll and urban dystopia.

Rather than *what* or *who* is rural (see discussion in Cloke and Edwards 1986; Hoggart 1990; Mormont 1990), discourse analysis focused on *when* things are rural and how rurality was constructed in a particular instance. As such analysis exposed and accounted for heterogeneity and strategic use in everyday lay constructions of rurality. Finding definitions of the countryside on which all might agree continues to concern policy makers (see for example The Countryside Agency 2004). Such exercises can never be successful in reaching a definitive consensus, as definitions of rurality will vary according to discursive context. However debate over definitions can however avoid arid futility if they are couched in terms of utility i.e. is a definition suitable for a particular purpose (cf. Newby 1986). This allows for recognition that an alternative formulation may be suitable given different objectives, be they academic or other. Utility also provides a convenient way to escape the gravitational pull of thinking of the countryside (or that matter any object) in terms of the popular dichotomy: social construction or material object. Conceived in terms of both aspects, the researcher is free to choose or develop tools to reveal something of interest in the object of study, rather than get ham-strung by an inflexible framework and quasi-philosophical argument.

Future directions

In analysing the meaning of rural land for landowners this thesis drew on work which could be characterised as coming from both a structuralist (i.e. Newby *et al.* 1978) and post-structuralist (i.e. Potter and Wetherell 1987) tradition. Lines of interconnection were followed which resulted in a methodology bled from these and other influences. In this respect calls to move away from restraining research in

unnecessary and unhelpful methodological dualisms or ‘armed camps’ are fully endorsed (see for example Phillips 2002; Sayer 1991; Silverman 2001).

As land is a commodity traded in the market overlain with numerous culturally affected images and narrative representations, there appears much to be gained from bringing together what can be learnt from political-economic and discursive approaches to questions of rural land. To give but one crude illustration, markets as the saying goes, ‘can be talked up as well as down’. Thus there are exciting opportunities for researchers who dare to combine insights from different research approaches.

The spoken responses of people to particular events are framed and mediated through mobilisation of particular discursive constructions. Analysis of the deployment of these, holds out the potential for improving explanations of how people understand their relationships with institutions such as the government or science, and how evaluations are reached of ‘official’ constructions of the world. This process of analysis is currently being conducted by the author on the 2001 UK Foot and Mouth epidemic¹⁹.

¹⁹ Caught Between Science and Society: Foot and Mouth Disease, ESRC funded project. Award Holders; Nerlich, B., Seabrook, M., Hillyard, S. & Hamilton, C., ESRC Award Number: L144250050.

Appendix 1: Letter to landowners

Dear

I am interested in talking to owners of land in the countryside. My aim is to gain a better understanding of opinions and values surrounding countryside issues. In the long term my hope is to influence the better design of countryside and farming policy by drawing upon analysis of what those 'on the ground' are saying.

To be able to complete my studies for my PhD, I need to speak to a wide variety of people from owner-occupying farmers to hobby owners. I would very much like the chance to speak to you if you own land. My interview is designed so as to be deliberately open-ended and allow discussion of topics that may arise, as well as covering in broad terms issues such as planning and access. This should take no more than 45 to 60 minutes and everything discussed will be treated confidentially and used anonymously in the final report.

I hope you feel that you can help. I will ring next week to arrange at your convenience a suitable time and place for the interview.

Many thanks for your help in advance.

Yours sincerely,

Appendix 2: Interview schedule

Interviewers introduction for interviewees

The research I am undertaking is designed to find out about issues surrounding rural land ownership.

I am interested in opinions and attitudes of different individuals involved.

The interview will consist of a number of questions and issues all topical and relating to rural land.

My interest in this information is to be able to feed it into the wider debate being held at the moment on the future shape of the countryside.

I'm not being commissioned directly for doing this work by any organisation or government agency. The research is my own, and is undertaken for my doctorate studies at the University of Gloucestershire in Cheltenham.

All we discuss will be confidential and anonymous in my final report. I would like to record the interview so I have an accurate record of what is said.

Before we begin, do you have anything you want to ask me? Have you been interviewed before?

1. Ownership questions with Prompts

1. How long has your family been on this land?
2. What is your aim for your farm/land (*note terms used to describe their holding*)?
3. What is good about having land?
4. What is bad about having land?
5. How do you feel about your land in general?
6. Let's talk a bit about management. What are the most important aspects of managing your land?
7. What is the condition of you farm/holding?
(*looking for what they mention i.e. soil/land/wildlife etc.*)
8. What is the state of the land, in terms of being healthy or unhealthy?

Food production

9. What requirements are there on the way produce is grown on you land?
10. List the most important ones which effect you.
11. What restraints are placed on the way produce is grown on you land?
12. What is your experience of these?
13. A lot of people blame farming methods for the recent food scares, would you agree with this?

Environment/conservation

14. Please describe the wildlife on you farm?
15. What is the condition of the wildlife on your farm?
16. Are you in any environmentally designated areas or conservation schemes?
17. What do you have to do in these schemes?
18. What do you think of such schemes?
19. Do you carry out management which effects the environment anywhere else on your land?
20. There is a lot of concern about the environmental damage being done to the countryside and it is blamed on farming, what is your view on this?

Access

21. Do you have any public access on your land?

(What is your experience with it?)

22. Have you had experience with people on your land in areas other than those designated for public access?

23. Recently the public has been given greater access to the countryside with the introduction of the so-called 'Freedom to Roam Act'. There are calls for even more access, what are your views on this?

Planning

24. There is a proposal to extend control of farm management, through landscape boards, which work similar to planning committees, in that you would have to seek permission to undertake certain activities. What would be your response to such a proposal?

Ownership

25. There are debates, especially in Scotland over land redistribution. I know this is not on the agenda in England, but have you felt the need to justify your land ownership?

(Can you explain)

(How do you account for your management of land?)

Future of the countryside

26. Thinking about all we have talked about, what do you think the countryside should be managed for?

27. Who should manage it?

28. How should management of the countryside be planned? Should it be left to the market or controlled by the state?

2. Demographic and descriptive questions

I will finish on a few quick questions some of which you may have answered already, but I would like to go over them quickly to make sure I have an accurate record, that would be very helpful.

1. What is the size of this holding?
2. How long have you occupied this holding?
3. How long has your family been on this land?
4. Do you own or rent land, or have a mixture of both on your holding?
If rent some land go to 5. If owner-occupied go to 7.
5. Who do you rent the land from?

Private individual/ local authority / other

6. Do they specify any conditions of management of the land?
Go to 8.
7. How is your land held? Are you the sole owner/tenant, in partnership etc.?
8. Who manages the land – you, a farm or estate manager, contractor, others?
9. What activities do you undertake on your holding?
10. Do you have any other household sources of income other than from agriculture?
If yes go to 11, if no go to 15.
11. What % approximately of your household income comes from agricultural activities on the land you occupy, as compared with other land based and non-land based activities?
If no other rural land based activities go to 12.
12. Does your household have any other occupations or income sources apart from those which are rural land based?

Yes No

What are they?

Off-farm or on-farm?

If yes go to 13, If no 14

13. *(Having gone through various 'academic' measures)*

What label would you give to describe yourself?

14. Are you or those in your household a member of any farming, countryside or environmental organisations?

Yes No

Which ones? _____

15. If there were a national election today, how would you vote?

16. Male Female

17. Could I ask you age?

16-25	56-65	
26-35	66-75	
36-45	76-85	
46-45	86-95	
46-55	96-105	

Thank you for your time and assistance.

Can you suggest another landowner who might assist me with my studies and allow me to interview them?

Appendix 3: Transcription conventions

Er, umm	Include speech 'errors' and particles which are not full words
(yes) (mm)	Include short acknowledgement in brackets
((word))	Word in a double bracket is a possible hearing
(())	Empty double bracket – transcribers can't hear what is said
[word]	Square brackets for author's description
WORD	In capitals if louder than surrounding speech
XXXX	Name deleted for reasons of confidentiality
...	Point from which extract cut from full transcript

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