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The politics of place identity in  
peri-urban environments. What role for  
productive farming landscapes? A case  
study of Wollondilly Shire, NSW,  
Australia

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By

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## CERTIFICATE OF ORIGINAL AUTHORSHIP

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## ABSTRACT

**P**eri-urban farmlands in the Sydney basin are progressively being taken over by housing developments. In addition, the viability of peri-urban agricultural operations is undermined by the liberalisation of agriculture in Australia. Finally, the arrival of newcomers and the associated loss of the farmers' central position in peri-urban communities lead to the emergence of competing discourse on the peri-urban. Due to these mutations, peri-urban Sydney, like many other peri-urban landscapes worldwide, has become a contested space, where different social groups develop conflicting representations of what the 'identity' of peri-urban areas is.

This thesis examines, through a case study of Wollondilly Shire, how farmlands and farming activities are marginalised in the peri-urban and how this trend might be reversed. To do so, a holistic framework of the 'politics of place/landscape identity' was developed, offering a heuristic tool for understanding how hegemonic, resistant and emergent place identities are produced in the peri-urban landscape.

Two hegemonic place identities were identified, both contributing (sometimes inadvertently) to the marginalisation of agricultural activities. The first identity proposes to accommodate housing development while preserving agricultural uses through the maintenance of a sharp distinction between city and country. However, in planning practices, this rationale is used to characterise housing development as 'in place' and agricultural activities as 'out of place'. The second identity promotes the development of low-density residential development throughout the countryside, leading to a consideration of farming as a nuisance in the landscape. Furthermore, a resistant place identity defended by farmers was identified, which aimed at reasserting farmers' legitimacy in the peri-urban landscape, by considering farmers as using the land appropriately. As of yet, this resistant place identity has not sparked collective action amongst farmers and, therefore, does not renegotiate their roles in the peri-urban. Rather, farmers have developed formal and informal arrangements with various stakeholders, as well as adaptive strategies at the farm scale, which might lead to a renegotiation of their role in the peri-urban.

In the discussion, barriers that might prevent the renegotiation of the role of farming in the peri-urban are identified, as well as ways to address them. Levers for policy change that were identified include the need to renegotiate the meaning of the notion of viability and move beyond a spatial planning based on the city-country divide. Actions that could be taken by farmers and the civil society are also identified.



## INTRODUCTION

**P**eri-urban farmlands in the Sydney basin, like those around many cities worldwide, have the potential to play an increasingly important role in the resilience, sustainability and food security of cities and the health and well-being of their population (Agricultural Reference Group, 2013; Burton et al., 2013; Knowd, 2013; Knowd et al., 2006). With increasing risks of disruptions due to climatic events, urban and peri-urban agricultural production could act as a source of reliable supply of fresh food for Sydney, and hence contribute to its resilience and food security (Burton et al., 2013). Moreover climate change will affect important areas of food production in Australia, such as the Murray-Darling basin, and the Sydney area, with its higher rainfall, is likely to have to play, in the future, a more important role in food production (Cordell et al., 2016). When considering environmental sustainability, peri-urban agriculture has a low carbon footprint and the potential to absorb and recycle urban waste, enhancing this way the sustainability of the city (Agricultural Reference Group, 2013; NSW Agriculture, 1998). Agriculture can also act as a buffer between residential areas and natural parks, while sheltering remnant vegetation (Knowd et al., 2006). From a social perspective, peri-urban agriculture has the potential to increase the liveability of the city by preserving the scenic landscapes around it and providing fresh and safe food to its inhabitants (Knowd et al., 2006; Knowd, 2013). It also has the potential to re-create connections between growers and consumers, by enabling them to have direct interactions (Knowd, 2013). Finally, agriculture in the Sydney basin contributes to the cultural diversity of Sydney, since many migrants from various backgrounds settled as

farmers in the area (Agricultural Reference Group, 2013; James, 2009).

However, cities worldwide and Sydney in particular are progressively encroaching on farmlands, diminishing progressively their ability to provide these services (Millar and Fyfe, 2012; Sinclair, 1999). In Sydney, the population of the Greater Sydney area increased by 18.2% between 2006 and 2016, to reach 5,029,768 people in 2016 (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2016). In 2016 the population of the Sydney area was nearly 65% of the total population of NSW<sup>1</sup> (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2016). Consequently, many greenfield areas are used to develop housing, in order to accommodate this growing population. For example, in the Metropolitan Plan for Sydney 2036, it is planned that up to 30% of new homes be built in greenfield areas (Department of Planning and Environment, 2010). In spite of urban sprawl, peri-urban farming in the Sydney basin continues to contribute to the food production of New South Wales (Department of Primary Industries, 2016; Department of Planning and Environment, 2015; Parker, 2007; James, 2008, 2009). According to the Department of Primary Industries (2016), the Sydney basin produced 6% of the total value of NSW agricultural production in 2016 (780 million of Australian dollars). This number raised to 65% concerning the total value of NSW vegetable production, 36% for poultry production, and 37% for the eggs production (Department of Primary Industries, 2016). Peri-urban farming also contributes to the economy of metropolitan Sydney by providing a benefit with an estimated value of \$4.5 billion (including jobs in storage, processing, retail etc) (Cordell et al., 2016). However, Cordell et al. (2016) argue that if no change is made to the way planning for the Sydney area is done, agricultural production could go from providing for 20% of Sydney's food to only 6%.

The challenge of developing housing while preserving farmlands has existed since the first planning document, the County of Cumberland Planning Scheme (1951), was formulated to manage Sydney's metropolitan area (James, 2009). However, in subsequent planning documents residential development seems to have been favoured over the preservation of farmlands (Cordell et al., 2016; James, 2009; McFarland, 2014). More recently, with the adoption of a neoliberal planning agenda in metropolitan strategies, the focus has been on creating a global city through the proliferation of housing, rather than on the preservation of agriculture at the fringe (James, 2009; McGuirk, 2004).

The consideration of the food system in urban planning is believed to be essential by planning academics (Morgan, 2009; Pothukuchi and Kaufman, 1999, 2000), yet its

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<sup>1</sup>In 2016, the population of the Greater Sydney area was 5,029,768 people, and the total population in NSW was 7,739,274

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integration into the sustainability agenda (Budge, 2013) remains relatively weak in Sydney's urban planning. This results in residential developments being favoured over the preservation of farmlands at the urban fringe, putting considerable pressure on farmers operating in peri-urban areas. In addition, the trade liberalisation in Australian agriculture has also undermined the viability of small-scale farming operations on the nation's urban fringes (Dibden and Cocklin, 2005; Lawrence, 1999; Pritchard, 2005a,b; Vanclay, 2003).

Social and cultural changes have also contributed to the failure to protect peri-urban farmlands. These changes must be considered in order to better understand the situation faced by farmers in peri-urban areas. Social changes such as residential expansion have resulted in changes to the social fabric of peri-urban communities, with the arrival of newcomers who do not necessarily have affinities with the rural world and particularly farming activities (Argent et al., 2011; Tonts and Greive, 2002; Willis, 2007). Those new residents may also have a different view of what the landscape should look like, and of the practices considered acceptable or unacceptable in the landscape. In addition, a cultural shift is also apparent in how civil society views farming. Initially, farming in Australia was considered to be contributing to nation building, but it is now seen as having a negative impact on the environment (Alston, 2004; Saltzman et al., 2011). Therefore farmers, who were until recently the backbone of rural societies, see their actions being increasingly criticised and challenged (Alston, 2004; Saltzman et al., 2011; Wilson, 2001). This critique is especially pronounced in peri-urban areas where farming practices are scrutinised by non-farming neighbours, sometimes leading to complaints and conflicts between farmers and non-farming landowners (Abdalla and Kelsey, 1996; Kelsey and Vaserstein, 2000; Owen et al., 2000; Sharp and Smith, 2003, 2004). These conflicts are sometimes caused by the intensification of farming (Henderson, 2003; Taylor et al., 2017).

Because of these pressures, the peri-urban environment can be considered as a space in mutation, which is neither urban nor rural. Two ways of understanding these mutations have been developed in the literature: the peri-urban is described either as "suburbs in waiting" (Bunker and Holloway, 2001, p. 13) or as a third space (*tiers espace*) with its own characteristics (Vanier, 2000). When defined as "suburbs in waiting", the assumption is that peri-urban lands are lands which will eventually become urbanised (Bunker and Holloway, 2001; Buxton and Low Choy, 2007). When defined as a third space, the assumption is that peri-urban environments possess their own characteristics and their own identity, which is neither rural nor urban (Allen, 2003; Gallent, 2006;

Gallent and Shaw, 2007; Ravetz et al., 2013; Vanier, 2000). In this conceptualisation, the peri-urban is an emerging form that needs to be considered in its own right. The definition of peri-urban areas as third spaces with their own identities has been adopted by peri-urban local governments in the Sydney area. The Sydney Peri-Urban Network, which represents twelve councils that border metropolitan Sydney, has adopted this conceptualisation of peri-urban spaces to raise awareness about the specificity of peri-urban local governments. Peri-urban local governments define their jurisdictions as having a specific identity based on the mixture of rural and urban lands: they have rural residential developments, extensive and intensive agriculture, important biodiversity, and topographical diversity (Edge Land Planning, 2015). In this thesis the definition of peri-urban areas as third spaces is used to indicate that they have their own identities and are not transitional spaces waiting to be urbanised.

However, the fact that the peri-urban is considered as a third space with its own identity does not mean that this identity has been agreed upon by all the people living in and having an impact on the peri-urban. Indeed, in the literature, the peri-urban is very frequently represented as a space of conflicts, often triggered by competing discourses over the meaning of the landscape, and the definition of what constitutes rurality (Abrams and Gosnell, 2012; Foley and Scott, 2014; Frouws, 1998; Scott, 2008; Walker and Fortmann, 2003). Debates over the meaning of the landscape often invoke questions about the ownership of the landscape – that is to say, question about which groups define what the landscape should look like, and what practices should be considered as acceptable within it (Masuda and Garvin, 2008; Walker and Fortmann, 2003). Such debates are inherently linked to questions of identity and power, because they contribute to defining who belongs and who is excluded, and therefore, whose identity is favoured (Trudeau, 2006). Since our entry point to the study of peri-urban environments is the question of the preservation of farmlands in the peri-urban landscape, we will focus in this study on how the preservation of farmlands and farming activities is considered in debates on the identity of peri-urban environments.

In this thesis we will examine these questions through the prism of notions of place and landscape which focus on an exploration of how power and identity are articulated in a specific place or landscape. The thesis will develop a framework of the politics of place/landscape identity, and it will bring together various dimensions of those two concepts, which have many commonalities, even though they have often been considered separately in the literature (Setten, 2006). The framework of politics of place/landscape identity thus developed will be articulated around three moments of the politics of place

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identity, identified by Larsen (2004), which are: hegemonic, resistant and emergent place identities. We will briefly describe these three moments because they help us to articulate our research questions. Hegemonic place identity refers to the moment when one group controls the development and the meaning given to the landscape, at the expense of others. Resistant place identities exist when one or several groups, contest this hegemonic place identity, and give a meaning to the landscape that is different to the dominant one, while often having no control over the development of the landscape. Emergent place identities refer to situations in which the relationships between groups, the meaning of a landscape and the question of who controls that landscape, are renegotiated between groups.

We chose to study the politics of place identity, and more particularly the role attributed to farmlands and farming activities, in Wollondilly Shire, a peri-urban area, situated in South West Sydney. This area was chosen because it is undergoing important changes triggered by urbanisation, while retaining significant agricultural activities. Moreover, farmlands and farming activities are considered as constitutive of the shire's identity (Wollondilly Shire Council, 2011a). For all these reasons, a case study on Wollondilly Shire appeared both timely and highly relevant to this research.

Based on the three moments of the politics of place identity described above, this thesis asks two principal questions.

The first question is:

What are the dominant and resistant place identities in Wollondilly Shire? A sub-question emerges that stems from our interest in the preservation of farmlands and farming activities in peri-urban Sydney. This sub-question is: What is the role given to productive landscapes in these dominant and resistant place identities?

The second question is:

How much "leeway" do farmers have to make changes leading to an emergent place identity that recasts the role of productive landscapes? This question focuses on identifying the freedom farmers have to renegotiate their roles in the peri-urban.

The structure of the thesis is as follows:

Chapter 2 is divided into two parts. The first focuses on contextualising the case study, and the second presents our theoretical framework. In part 1 we examine the impact of neoliberalism on farming policies in Australia and on metropolitan urban planning around Sydney. This provides a context in which to examine the challenges faced by

peri-urban farming. We then attempt to give a morphological definition of the peri-urban, followed by a more sociological and cultural definition. This helps us to define aspects of the debates over identity in the peri-urban. In Part 2, we present the concepts of place and landscape, and develop a framework of the politics of place-landscape identity, which we use to analyse the politics of place-landscape identity in Wollondilly Shire.

Chapter 3 presents the methodology for the study. After a few words on the personal trajectory of the author, we justify how adopting a constructionist epistemology was relevant to answering the research questions. We then explain why we adopted critical theory and then adapt elements of Gibson-Graham (2006)'s theory of diverse economies to our context in order to move beyond a critical approach and look at the possibilities for positive change. Thirdly, we justify the choice of a case study approach, and present the methods of inquiry (semi-structured interviews and document analysis) and the methods of analysis employed in this thesis. Finally, we reflect on the standards of quality in qualitative research, and discuss some ethical considerations.

Chapter 4 presents the results which focus on the dominant place identities in the peri-urban. We identify two hegemonic place identities which operate in different areas of the shire. These two place identities, which are based on different representations of what the development of the landscape should be, both contribute, sometimes inadvertently, to marginalising farmlands and farming activities in the peri-urban landscape.

Chapter 5 presents results centred on farmers' resistant place identities. As farming is (sometimes inadvertently) marginalised in peri-urban landscapes, farmers develop a resistant place identity that is partially threatened by their lack of group continuity, due to the dilution of the farming community, but enhanced by a sense of distinctiveness. Farmers develop a sense of being 'distinct' from non-farming landowners on the basis of their divergent representation of the landscape (place of production versus place of consumption) and their vision of what constitutes appropriate practices in the landscape.

Chapter 6 focuses on how various types of arrangements that are put in place by farmers and other stakeholders in response to external pressures can be considered as contributing to the creation of an emergent place identity by re-shaping the role farmers have in the peri-urban landscape.

Chapter 7, the final results chapter, examines how farmers' place identities influence farmers' views of the future of their farms and their adoption of adaptive strategies. We also consider whether the adoption of adaptive strategies by farmers has the potential to contribute to an emergent place identity.

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Chapter 8 discusses how the findings from the Wollondilly case study diverge and converge with the existing literature on peri-urban conflicts. We then see how our results provide an indication of what the possible futures for farmlands in Wollondilly Shire may be. Next, we consider how a focus on a politics of place-landscape identity was essential for understanding the challenges faced by peri-urban farming in Wollondilly Shire. Finally, we identify the limitations of our research.

Chapter 9 summarises how we answered our research questions and what the results mean for the future of farming in Wollondilly Shire before pointing toward possible future research.



## SETTING THE SCENE

### 2.1 Part 1: Contextualising peri-urban farming

The question of farming in peri-urban environments is situated at the intersection of metropolitan urban planning, and issues related to the liberalisation of Australian agricultural trade. Low Choy and Buxton (2013) identify two perspectives on the process of peri-urbanisation. Firstly, a rural perspective sees agricultural activities in peri-urban environments as declining because of the low returns from farming. These low returns can be attributed to "market factors" such as the "cheaper imports from overseas large supermarket chains sourcing products from regions across the country where farmers can produce at much larger economies of scale" (Merson et al., 2010, p. 72). More broadly, the liberalisation of the agricultural sector in Australia can be considered as one of the reasons for the decline of farming in peri-urban areas. However, the liberalisation of the agricultural sector, which impacts farming all over Australia, is not enough to explain the difficulties of farming in peri-urban areas. A second perspective called urban perspective by Buxton and Low Choy (2007) sees peri-urban farmlands as facing pressures for residential development, leading to land speculation, and the conversion of lands from agricultural to residential uses. For Cook and Harder (2013), selling land in peri-urban environments and resettling in areas with lower land values is considered by some farmers as a strategy to keep their businesses afloat. They also explain that individual strategies such as these are often aligned with state-level support for the rezoning of land from agricultural to residential. In this context, the subdivision of farmlands is

considered to be "a key source of financial security for many growers" (Cook and Harder, 2013, p. 414). The conversion of lands from agricultural to residential uses also means that the price of land in these areas has increased, hindering farmers' ability to buy land to expand their operations to achieve greater economies of scale (Roots et al., 2013).

These two perspectives – rural and urban– suggest that the decline of peri-urban farming is caused by the impact of market forces (and more broadly the liberalisation of the Australian agricultural industry), or the expansion of residential areas over farmlands around the city, which are issues within the remit of metropolitan urban planning decision-makers. The question of peri-urban farming is therefore situated at the intersection of the liberalisation of the Australian agricultural industry and urban planning issues.

In this chapter, we will examine both the impacts of neoliberalism on agricultural policies in Australia, and the conflict between housing development and the preservation of farmlands at the urban fringes in metropolitan planning, because these two phenomena impact farmers' ability to continue farming in the peri-urban, and are therefore essential contextual elements for better understanding the situation.

We will first describe the impacts of the liberalisation of Australian agricultural market on Australian farmers. We will then examine how the need for housing development and the preservation of farmlands at the urban fringes are articulated in Sydney's Metropolitan Plans. In conclusion, we will define the peri-urban, and more specifically its morphological, social and cultural characteristics, in order to situate our research and to demonstrate the relevance of a place/landscape entry point to study farming in the peri-urban.

### **2.1.1 The (neo)liberalisation of the Australian agricultural market**

Since the 1980s Australia has undergone a policy shift toward the liberalisation of its agricultural market, letting the market regulate production and trade. The government's role is primarily to provide a supportive legislative framework for the private sector. The impact of neoliberalism has been presented by its supporters as the only way to move forward in terms of policy (Pritchard, 2005a). They have insisted on the "inevitability, rationality and superiority" of a policy promoting the liberalisation of agricultural trade (Pritchard, 2005a, p. 1).

### 2.1.1.1 Nature of the neoliberal measures

During the 20th century, Australia had one of the most protected economies among developed capitalist countries (Smith and Pritchard, 2015). It benefited from administrative intervention that ensured "fair' and equal prices for agricultural products among producers" (Pritchard, 2005a, p. 3). During the 1960s the protection of Australian agricultural trade was questioned by supporters of the Chicago School, an economic school of thought that emerged in the 1940s at the University of Chicago (Pritchard, 2005a; Smith and Pritchard, 2015). The economists of this school, including Milton Friedman, took a stand against the Keynesian school of economic thought. They supported an economic paradigm based on neoclassical price theory and called for reductions in regulations on businesses. Supporters of neoliberalism were hired in the Canberra bureaucracy and progressively implemented a radical change in Australia's agricultural policy (Pritchard, 2005a). According to Pritchard (2005a) "three major economic debates" illustrate the shift in Australia from a protectionist to a neoliberal agricultural policy (p. 5). The first change occurred during the 1960s and 1970s and resulted in the adoption of a more liberal line in terms of manufacturing protection. In the 1980s the second change occurred, with trade liberalisation through the World Trade Organisation (WTO) (Alston, 2004). At first Australia, which lost its privileged access to the United Kingdom market due to the entrance of the UK into the European Common Market, developed bilateral trade agreements with Japan, the Middle East and the USA. However, those bilateral agreements were not enough to ensure a secure future for agricultural exports. Soon, a multilateral approach was adopted, and a meeting in Cairns in North Queensland ('the Cairns Group') before a round of the GATT (General Agreements on Tariffs and Trade) formed the "basis for [the] collective pressure being exerted on agricultural protectionist countries via the multilateral system " (Pritchard, 2005a, p. 7). The last change occurred in the 1990s and consisted of the progressive deregulation of domestic agricultural marketing arrangements in favour of free market principles. In this context, statutory marketing boards and collective agricultural bargaining frameworks were dismantled and the National Competition Policy legislation was enacted, which aimed at revoking all legislation impacting on competition except where social benefits could be proven. This change in Australia's agricultural policy is described by Dibden and Cocklin (2005) as a transition from a "state-sponsored and subsidised productivism" to a "competitive or globalised productivism" which they define as a "productivism shaped by neoliberalism" (p. 136). The reliance on market forces, and the reduction of government intervention forced farmers to trade unprotected in the world market (Alston, 2004;

Dibden and Cocklin, 2005). These changes in agricultural policy have been supported by the National Farmers' Federation (the peak Australian farming organisation) which primarily represented large-scale farmers, leaving small-scale farmers unrepresented (Alston, 2004).

In order to secure this policy shift, several strategies were used: econometric modelling was used to support the argument that these policies would have a positive impact; debate on the distributional outcomes of those policies did not occur; and the absence of "market distortion" was promoted as the ideal situation in relations between "food, agriculture and society" (Pritchard, 2005b, p. 1). In combination, these strategies resulted in neoliberalism being portrayed as an apolitical process, and other types of policies were framed as interventionist. This had the effect of legitimising the neoliberal policy approach (Pritchard, 2005b). More generally, the changes in agricultural policy were justified by references to the need for "economic efficiency, transparency, accountability, and an assumed superiority of market competition over government involvement" (Dibden and Cocklin, 2005, p. 136).

### **2.1.1.2 Impacts of neoliberal policies on farmers**

The shift in agricultural policy from state-sponsored and subsidised agriculture to competitive productivism had numerous effects on Australian farmers, and more particularly small family farmers, a group that remains dominant in Australian agriculture in comparison with corporate involvement (Garnaut and Lim-Applegate, 1998). The effects of these changes, identified in the literature, are: the degradation of farmers' terms of exchange and the integration of farming into the circuit of industrial and financial capital, leading to the increasing power of food processors and supermarkets over farmers, the reduction of farmers' negotiating power, and finally, an increase in farmers' stress and depression (Alston, 2004; Lawrence, 1999; Merson et al., 2010; Richards et al., 2012; Vanclay, 2003). In order to counter these negative effects, farmers have adopted several strategies, such as pluri-activity, the adoption of alternative crops, and niche marketing (Alston, 2004; Vanclay, 2003).

The first consequence of the adoption of competitive productivism was the degradation of farmers' terms of exchange. This was due to the increased importation of cheap produce from overseas, and the subsidising of some competitors in world markets, such as the USA and the European Union (Alston, 2004; Merson et al., 2010; Vanclay, 2003). As a consequence of the degradation of farmers' terms of exchange, farmers' returns fell, leading some operations to be non-viable (Alston, 2004).

The second consequence was the integration of farming into the circuit of industrial and financial capital (Lawrence, 1999). Because of state deregulation, farmers started to negotiate directly with food processors and supermarkets (Lawrence, 1999). Coles and Woolworths account for 50% of all fresh produce sales in the country (Australian Competition and Consumer Commission, 2008; James, 2016), and so they exert strong buying and regulatory power over small farmers. As a result, Coles and Woolworths have been able to impose their own standards in regard to food safety and cosmetic appearance, putting therefore more constraints on farmers (Knowd, 2006; Richards et al., 2012). Since the retail sector in Australia is very concentrated, farmers often have no choice but to sell their produce to the two major supermarket chains. They therefore enter into "unequal relationships with supermarkets" since they have no negotiating power, and become "price-takers" (Richards et al., 2012, p. 236) (Knowd, 2006). Another example of the diminution of farmers' negotiating power is the adoption of contract farming, where farmers lose autonomy by having to follow a company's rules. They also lose their negotiating power, since large companies have the opportunity to sign contracts with farmers in other parts of the world (Lawrence, 1999; Vanclay, 2003).

The third impact of neoliberalism on farming has been an increased level of stress and depression among farmers and the loss of traditional values and lifestyles in Australian farming (Alston, 2004; Lawrence, 1999).

The adoption of competitive productivism in Australia led many farmers to leave the sector, but others persist through the adoption of various adaptive strategies, such as the cultivation of alternative crops, niche markets, pluri-activity and alternative sources of income, such as the Family Allowance and Family Allowance supplement<sup>1</sup> (Alston, 2004; Vanclay, 2003). However, Vanclay (2003) notes that some of these adaptive strategies, like the adoption of alternative crops, niche markets and pluri-activity, are not possible everywhere, and are not always successful. They therefore do not always provide solutions to individual farmers' situations.

The liberalisation of the agricultural market and the negative consequences it triggered provide a partial explanation for the decline of farming in peri-urban areas, and for the difficulties encountered by farmers who remain in peri-urban areas. However, as seen earlier, this process, as presented by Low Choy and Buxton (2013), is not sufficient to explain the challenges encountered by farmers in peri-urban areas. The demand for residential areas at the fringes of cities, and the speculation that ensues from it, also

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<sup>1</sup>These allowances are part of the Australian Government safety net, and are not specifically intended for farmers.

help to explain the pressures put on peri-urban farming. This phenomenon is inherently linked to the importance of, and the consideration given to, the conservation of peri-urban farming in metropolitan planning documents. In the next section we examine the evolution of metropolitan planning in the Sydney region, with a particular focus on the attention paid to peri-urban farming.

### **2.1.2 Planning: Sydney Metropolitan Strategies and the protection of peri-urban lands**

The decline of farming in peri-urban environments can be explained partly by the adoption of a neoliberal agricultural policy in Australia, and partly by the development of residential areas on land previously farmed. This phenomenon of expansion of the city over farmlands, sometimes negatively called urban sprawl, is an issue related to metropolitan urban planning, and its ability to balance the extension of the city with the conservation of farmlands in fringe areas. However, it has often been observed that planning for peri-urban environments is associated with difficulties that Tacoli (1998) and Vanier (2000) attribute to the lack of recognition of the complexity of rural-urban interactions, and the failure to consider peri-urban spaces as areas requiring contextualised planning. Farmlands around Sydney, and around Australian cities more generally, have often suffered from the urban-centred views of planners, and they are frequently considered to be suburbs in waiting (Bunker and Holloway, 2002; Cook and Harder, 2013).

However, ecological sustainability, food security and climate change mitigation in the future of Australia are increasingly present in the public discourse (James, 2008; Parker and Morgan, 2013). Some concepts and practices have been developed that contribute to the defence of farmlands in close proximity to urban centres such as, for example, the ‘food miles’ concept, farmers’ markets and community gardens (Budge, 2013). Moreover, advocacy groups (e.g. the Food Fairness Alliance) organise themselves to campaign for the recognition of the importance of maintaining food production close to the city due to questions of food security and social justice (Parker and Morgan, 2013).

This increasing acknowledgment of the importance of maintaining food production close to the city is accompanied by a discourse on the need to include the food system in planning policies all over the world, and more particularly in Australia (Budge, 2013; Morgan, 2009; Pothukuchi and Kaufman, 2000; Roots et al., 2013). Therefore, in order to change the status of peri-urban farmlands from suburbs in waiting to valuable farmlands,

there is a need to integrate the food system into planning policies. Budge (2013) suggests that to achieve this integration, the food system needs to be framed as a component of the sustainability agenda which is now part of every planning policy. This line of argument has also been adopted by the SASA, the Sydney Agriculture Strategic Approach Working group, which considers that taking into account peri-urban areas in planning is a way to "brand' Sydney as a world-leading food-secure metropolitan area" (Sydney Agriculture Strategic Approach Working Group, 2017, p. 2). Even if it does not explicitly link the food system to sustainability, SASA argues that taking into account peri-urban areas could enhance the food security of Sydney, and therefore its sustainability.

In the next section, we first examine the renewed interest in agriculture and food by planning academics and practitioners, through the emergence of the notion of a food system, which encompasses production, processing, distribution, consumption, and waste management. Since this study is concerned with the maintenance of agriculture at the urban fringe, we will focus on the production dimension of the food system. Therefore, we will then examine how the question of housing development versus the protection of the natural and cultivated environments (production) at the fringe has been tackled in Sydney's Metropolitan Strategies from the first Metropolitan Strategy in 1951, until the most recent one released in 2015.

### **2.1.2.1 The food system**

Agricultural activities have been historically part of city environments (Budge, 2013), and the provision of food to cities was an essential element of early planning (Vitiello and Brinkley, 2014). Pothukuchi and Kaufman (2000) refer particularly to the concept of the garden city developed by Ebenezer Howard, which provided a relatively holistic view of how the food system should be integrated into planning. Indeed, the garden city was designed in a way that would allow for the development of farming activities around the city, in a determined greenbelt. The proximity of rural and urban uses was meant to benefit both city and country by enabling city dwellers to access food and recycle the waste of the city, and by enabling farmers to transport their food cheaply, and use the city's waste as fertiliser.

However, during the 20th century, the mechanisation of farming, faster transportation, refrigeration and food processing reduced the need for access to fresh food in proximity to the city, and this enabled or even encouraged the expansion of cities on farmlands (Budge, 2013; Pothukuchi and Kaufman, 1999). Cities could from now on provision themselves with agricultural products from all over the world, and farming

and food issues progressively disappeared from urban planning documents. In addition, Pothukuchi and Kaufman (1999) argue that food became progressively taken for granted, and was no longer considered as an urban issue, unlike other issues such as housing.

Morgan (2009) argues that of all the basic human needs, air, water, shelter and food, only food has not been considered by planners. Pothukuchi and Kaufman (2000) follow a similar line of argument by explaining that urban planning has traditionally focused on land use, housing, transportation, the environment, the economy, health, education and energy, and has overlooked the food system. However, in the last twenty years, the importance of planning for food and agriculture at the urban level has been raised again by academics, and they have introduced the term 'food systems' (Morgan, 2009; Pothukuchi and Kaufman, 1999, 2000). According to Pothukuchi and Kaufman (2000) the food system can be defined as "the chain of activities connecting food production, processing, distribution, consumption and waste management, as well as all the associated regulatory institutions and activities" (p. 113). Some scholars (Cook and Harder, 2013; Morgan, 2009; Morgan and Sonnino, 2010) view the consideration of the food system as particularly important, since a new food equation is emerging that highlights the necessity to take food into account in planning. The new food equation resulted partly from the food price surge of 2007–2008, which placed food security on the agenda as a national security issue (Morgan, 2009; Morgan and Sonnino, 2010). The increased attention given to food has also been due to concerns about the effects of climate change (water scarcity, heat waves), an increase in land use conflicts and rapid urbanisation (Morgan, 2009; Morgan and Sonnino, 2010). To this list we could add declining oil stocks and the control of food economies by corporate interests (Cook and Harder, 2013).

However, several obstacles to the integration of the food system into planning have been identified by Morgan (2009) and Pothukuchi and Kaufman (2000). Firstly, planners do not consider the management of the food system as one of their responsibilities. This is because they consider the food system to be a rural issue that they are only marginally implicated in. They therefore do not take into account the fact that the food system has a 'cross-cutting' component which is strongly related to elements of urban planning such as land use, public health, social justice, transport, employment and economic development (Budge, 2013; Morgan, 2009; Pothukuchi and Kaufman, 2000). Secondly, their understanding is that the food system is driven by the market, and they assume they therefore have no impact on it. Finally, planners do not receive any funding to plan for the food system. Despite these challenges, many tools, such as food sheds analysis, have been created and used to tackle the question of the integration of the food system

in planning (Freedgood et al., 2011; Peters et al., 2009), and successful examples of such integration exist (Desjardins et al., 2011).

In Sydney, the importance of developing food policies in urban planning and to protect agricultural activities in peri-urban areas has been acknowledged within and outside government bodies. Several initiatives have been taken to bring together a variety of public and private actors around the question of food, and its connection to various issues, such as health, food security, equity, safety, environment etc.

In the 1990s the Penrith Food Project followed by the Hawkesbury Food Project were developed. These programs aimed at removing the barriers preventing people to have a healthy diet, and at fostering links between growers and consumers (Mason and Knowd, 2010). The Hawkesbury Food Project led to the creation of the Hawkesbury Harvest, an agri-tourism project which aims at re-creating a relationship between consumers and growers and more broadly to change the role and perception of farming in peri-urban Sydney (Knowd, 2013; Mason and Knowd, 2010).

In 2005, the Sydney Food Fairness Alliance, a grassroots organisation bringing together a diversity of stakeholders advocating for the development of food policies at all level of government (Parker and Morgan, 2013). Another group, the Agricultural Reference group, created by NSW Agriculture from the Department of Primary Industry (DPI), brought together members of the farming industry, local governments and local food interest groups to advise government on agricultural issues and give recommendations on how to integrate agriculture, and food policy more generally, in urban planning (Agricultural Reference Group, 2013; Mason and Knowd, 2010). Other groups, such as the Sydney Peri-Urban Network (SPUN) and the Sydney Agriculture Strategic Approach Working Group (SASA), which bring together peri-urban Councils around Sydney for the former, and various stakeholders working on peri-urban farming within and outside government for the latter, shed light on the specific challenges faced by peri-urban areas and attempt to develop policy solutions.

Finally, the Department of Primary Industries (DPI) has produced several policy documents regarding farming in peri-urban areas. The first one is the Strategic Plan for Sustainable Agriculture, produced in 1998 as the outcome of a consultation project (NSW Agriculture, 1998). This strategic plan identifies the actions that need to be taken in planning in order to maintain and develop a long-term sustainable agriculture in Sydney. More recently, in 2015, the DPI developed a Right to Farm Policy, which aims at addressing the questions of land use conflicts between farmers and non-farming landowners in peri-urban Sydney (NSW Department of Primary Industries, 2015).

Within and outside government bodies, the importance of developing a food policy and to maintain agriculture in the Sydney basin has been increasingly recognised, leading to the development of several policy documents, and the creation of groups composed of heterogeneous stakeholders aiming at influencing urban planning. However, it seems that these initiatives did not necessarily lead to visible changes in urban planning. Regarding the Strategic Plan for Sustainable Agriculture, Knowd (2013) writes that "despite this agriculture did not gain recognition in the strategic planning for Sydney in the decade that followed" (p. 51). To give another example, Parker and Morgan (2013) when evoking the participation of the Food Fairness Alliance to the Agricultural Reference Group, wrote: "membership of such bodies is not necessarily an indicator of success in influencing policy" (p. 118).

In Sydney, as in Australia more generally, even if the question of peri-urban agriculture and more broadly of the food system is considered as being a question of importance by some stakeholders within and outside government, the notion of a food system has not yet been featured in urban planning, and the consequences of the loss of agricultural lands are rarely considered. This is particularly true in the case of Metropolitan Strategies, the documents which provide guidance for the development of the region's cities and its fringes, and for local and regional government agencies in the country (Budge, 2013; Roots et al., 2013). Planning documents, and particularly the Metropolitan Strategies, often focus on core industries which are providing jobs and driving economic growth. In this context, food and agriculture are rarely considered as core (Budge, 2013). The links between food production and land use planning, or between food production and growth, are not well established and this prevents a coherent and comprehensive treatment of the food system in planning (Budge, 2013; Roots et al., 2013).

In this section, we have demonstrated that the question of agriculture and food has been put at the forefront of the planning concerns by academics and diverse stakeholders within and outside government bodies, but it has not yet been fully addressed by practitioners in urban planning documents. Since we focus on the production dimension of the food system (the maintenance of productive farmlands at the urban fringe), in the next section we identify how the question of balancing housing provision with the preservation of agriculture at the fringe is tackled in Sydney metropolitan planning.

### **2.1.2.2 Orientations of the past Metropolitan Strategies**

The direction of Sydney's development is mostly determined by the Metropolitan Strategies. In the 1950s, the McGirr state government consolidated 61 municipalities

and eight shires into an entity called the Greater Sydney area (Wilkinson, 2011). This consolidation aimed at enabling the creation of plans (Metropolitan Strategies) that would encompass Sydney and its surroundings (Wilkinson, 2011). These strategies define the main objectives for the Greater Sydney region in terms of infrastructure, housing, jobs, environment and other domains. Understanding the Metropolitan Strategies is therefore essential when focusing on peri-urban farming, since they define the planning directions for Sydney, and also for its surroundings, including peri-urban areas. James (2009) explains that ever since the first Metropolitan Strategy was developed in 1951, there have been ideological tensions between economic competitiveness (Sydney as a 'Great City' or a 'Global City') often associated with housing development, and the preservation of farmlands and the natural environment.

Before the Second World War, the population of Sydney was relatively steady and land use planning was done by local governments (McFarland, 2014). After the Second World War, a wave of immigration from Europe, and the beginning of the baby boom, led to a significant increase in population, and consequently to an increase in the need for housing, leading to the suburbanisation of Sydney (McFarland, 2014). In 1951, the first Metropolitan Strategy, known as the County of Cumberland Planning Scheme, was put into effect in order to manage the process of rapid urbanisation around Sydney. Influenced by the approach conceived by Patrick Abercrombie in London, the plan contained a green belt around the city, clearly demarcating the boundaries of the city (Bunker and Holloway, 2002; James, 2009; Mason and Knowd, 2010). The idea was to maintain rural areas in proximity to the city and prevent urban sprawl. However, the policy has partially been a failure, and the green belt was progressively overtaken by urban development to accommodate the increasing population (Bunker and Holloway, 2002). One of the reasons for the failure of the policy is, according to Wilkinson (2011), planning for the provisions of freeways. Smallholders progressively sold lands further away from the city to people who were able to use their cars to go to the city. Moreover, still according to Wilkinson (2011), political decisions were taken at the end of the 1950s and the beginning of the 1960s to release land to accommodate the growing population of Sydney.

The second Metropolitan Strategy was released in 1968 (the Sydney Regional Outline Plan) and changed direction by emphasising the importance of the expansion of the city in order to accommodate an always-increasing population, and to bring order to this expansion (Bunker and Holloway, 2002; James, 2009; Mason and Knowd, 2010). The Sydney Regional Outline Plan was therefore in conflict with the curtailment of urban sprawl promoted by the County of Cumberland Planning Scheme. According to Hogan

(2003) the development of suburbs in Australia can be explained by the democratic ideal of universal home ownership. In this Planning Scheme, rural areas are considered according to their suitability for urban expansion (exclusion of areas with a difficult topography, water catchments etc.), and agriculture is considered as a marginal use of the land that does not employ a significant number of workers (Bunker and Holloway, 2002; Wilkinson, 2011). During that period progressive land releases occurred in rural zones along three corridors: the North West, the West and the South West corridors (Wilkinson, 2011). The Sydney Regional Outline Plan clearly takes an urban-centric perspective in which housing development is valued over the preservation of agricultural lands. This is apparent in the fact that rural zones are called Non-Urban zones (Bunker and Holloway, 2002; Merson et al., 2010). They are defined by the fact that they are 'not urban', rather than by what they are: agricultural lands. Therefore, the attention brought to peri-urban farmlands in the County of Cumberland Planning Scheme disappears in the 1968 Planning Scheme. According to Knowd (2013) the lack of consideration of agricultural lands in the Sydney Regional Outline Plan and the subsequent Metropolitan Strategies comes from the unstated stance that dominates metropolitan planning, which is that agriculture is considered as having no role to play within the Sydney basin, and that farmlands are only lands waiting for a higher and better economic use.

During the 1960s and 1970s environmental issues were progressively brought to prominence through various campaigns for the defence of the environment, particularly the Green Bans movement. This movement aimed at protecting bush near Sydney Harbour from development (Anderson and Jacobs, 1999; Bunker and Holloway, 2002; James, 2009). The increasing awareness of environmental issues among Sydney's population was addressed by legislative changes, with the adoption of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act in 1979. This Act takes into account the environment through integrated land use planning, and enables the preservation of agricultural lands through the State Environmental Planning Policy which aims at controlling the sealing of agricultural lands (James, 2009; Wilkinson, 2011; Prior and Maurel, Prep). However, it is noteworthy that this environmental movement focuses on the protection of parklands and the natural environment rather than farmlands in urban fringes (James, 2009). Moreover, the release of land for housing continued in the 1970s, toward the Sydney's South West region (the Macarthur Growth Centre) (Wilkinson, 2011). Despite a greater consideration of environmental issues in the 1960s and 1970s, the preservation of farmlands in peri-urban Sydney seems still to be at risk.

In 1980, the Review of the Sydney Regional Outline Plan was released. In this

document, the necessity to consider the impact of growth on the environment was acknowledged. Moreover, the release of lands for housing was not a priority since the population increase forecast in the Sydney Regional Outline Plan did not eventuate (James, 2009).

The next Planning Scheme, Sydney into its Third Century, produced in 1988, focuses again on the necessity to balance development with the protection of the environment. This plan acknowledged a certain number of constraints to the expansion of the city, such as water catchment, flood prone areas, and national parks, and acknowledged the importance of maintaining agricultural lands in the Sydney region (James, 2009; Wilkinson, 2011). However, the policy planned to house the increasing population on the fringe, and the conservation of farmlands on the fringe was not a major concern (James, 2009; Wilkinson, 2011).

Cities for the 21st Century Metropolitan Strategy was produced in 1994 as a continuation of the Sydney into its Third Century plan. It also recognised the importance of environmental issues, but gave priority to water and air pollution, and did not tackle the question of the protection of agriculture around the city (James, 2009). Moreover, this planning document was, according to McFarland (2014), "openly neoliberal", and enabled market forces to "drive the type, timing and location of development", meaning that the protection of lands at the fringes was not a priority (p. 8). In 1998, a new Metropolitan Strategy, *Shaping Our Cities*, aimed at protecting primary production, and at minimising conflicts between farming and other (incompatible) land uses (Wilkinson, 2011). However, this Metropolitan Strategy also zoned important rural areas around Sydney as rural residential, especially in the Hawkesbury, Penrith, Baulkham Hills, Liverpool and Camden local government areas (Wilkinson, 2011). Since the second Metropolitan Strategy (the Sydney Regional Outline Plan), the preservation of the environment has been part of the agenda, and the preservation of agricultural lands has often been considered, but the release of land for housing development was often been favoured.

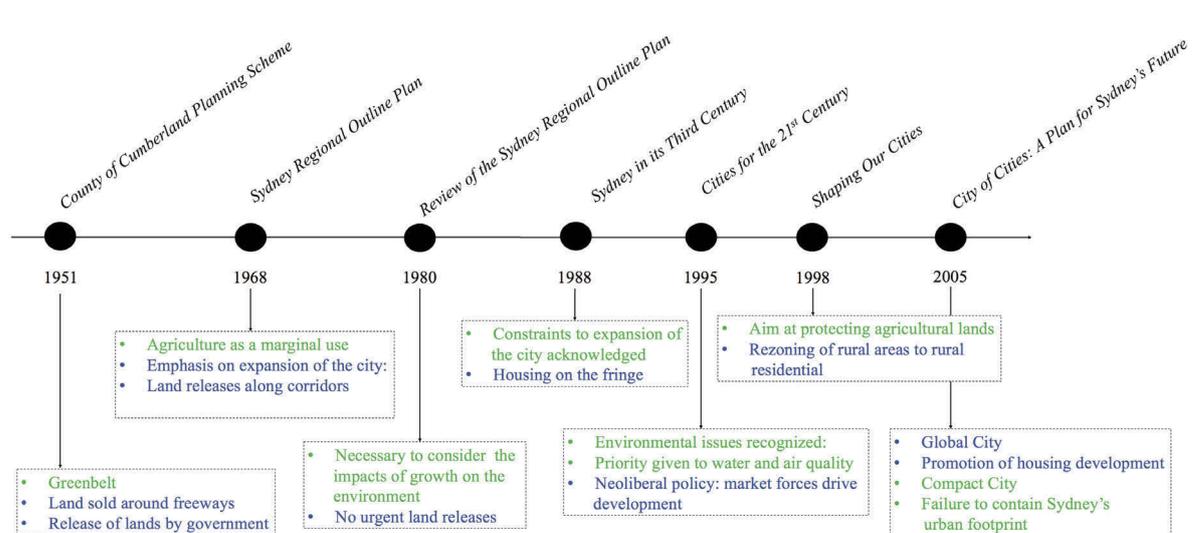
The next Metropolitan Strategy, the *City of Cities: A plan for Sydney's future* produced in 2005, put a strong emphasis on competitiveness by openly marketing Sydney as a 'Global City' (Department of Planning and Environment, 2005; James, 2009; McGuirk, 2004). According to McGuirk (2004), the state adopted the "hegemonic project" of increasing the "global competitiveness" of the Australian economy, which triggered a shift from a protected economy based on Keynesian principles to the "deregulation and reregulation of product, finance and (less so) labour markets" (p. 1027). A hegemonic project can be defined as "the implementation of a particular social vision that links cultural beliefs and

practices with the real experiences of mass society in the economic, social and political spheres" (Nicholls, 1999, p. 133). In this context, Sydney became progressively considered as a "strategic site" in which the ambition of achieving global competitiveness could be enacted (McGuirk, 2004, p. 1028). Consequently, the governance of Sydney since the mid-1990s has focused on the "global economy" and the "global imperative of looking, acting, and being governed as a 'competitive city'" (McGuirk, 2004, p. 1019). In practice, this means that development projects assisted by the state aim at inserting Sydney into "circuits of capital and rising international financial flows", and also that collaboration between the state and "elite development interests" is progressively institutionalised (McGuirk, 2004, p. 1027). The consequence is that the world ranking of Sydney progressively becomes "the metric against which to manage performance" (McGuirk, 2004, p. 1029). This adoption of the 'Global City' paradigm in Sydney's urban planning shows the influence of neoliberalism (James, 2009). In terms of the protection of peri-urban farmlands, the 'Global City' paradigm means that "economic growth and housing the population of Sydney to service that growth" are the priorities of the *City of Cities: A plan for Sydney's future strategy* (James, 2008, p. 3), and that the development of houses, which are considered as a higher and better use of the land, continued on what was agricultural land (Budge, 2013). McFarland (2014) argues that the neoliberal ideology that pervades the Metropolitan Strategies is made visible in policies that consider the rate at which urban development occurs as a measure of economic growth.

However, the protection of the environment is also not entirely absent from the *City of Cities: A plan for Sydney's future Metropolitan Strategy*. The plan has goals with respect to sustainability, the protection of rural activities, and resource lands. These goals include: mapping regionally significant activities, ensuring that Local Environmental Plans maintain viable rural industries, promote a consistent approach to rezoning in order to prevent incompatible land uses, and focus land releases on pre-designated growth centres (Department of Planning and Environment, 2005). The idea of focusing land releases on pre-designated growth centres (the North West and South West Priority Growth Areas), and in this way limiting the extension of the urban footprint, stems from the compact city paradigm. This paradigm was explicitly adopted in this Metropolitan Strategy, and was intended to create a more sustainable city by containing Sydney's footprint, and by finding a balance between developing Sydney as a 'Global City' and protection of its environment. However, according to James (2008), "the lack of any action on this in terms of policy or planning suggests superficiality within this gesturing to sustainability in terms of urban agricultural land" (p. 6). This is illustrated by James

(2009) in that only 65% of housing is to be situated in the South West Priority Growth Area, meaning that 35% will be situated outside of it. This challenges the effectiveness of growth centres in containing Sydney's urban footprint and protecting farmlands. Moreover, according to Malcolm and Fahd (2009) the areas identified as growth centres in the City of Cities strategy are home to 52% of the vegetable growing operations in the Sydney Basin. What we can see here is that limiting the expansion of Sydney's urban footprint through the creation of growth centres seems to be only moderately effective in protecting peri-urban farmlands.

As explained by James (2009), and illustrated in the chronology of the Metropolitan Strategies presented below (Figure 2.1), the need to raise Sydney to the rank of a 'Great City' or a 'Global City' through housing development, and the need to protect the environment, have existed in all the Metropolitan Strategies since the County of Cumberland Planning Scheme. Moreover, during the 1960s and 1970s consideration of the environment was more strongly integrated into Metropolitan Strategies, and the concept of sustainability progressively appeared. However, despite the emergence of the concept of sustainability, the preservation of farmlands was not always put at the forefront of the sustainability agenda, and the focus seems to have been more often on the protection of the natural environment, parklands, bush, air quality and water quality, while peri-urban agricultural lands were (tacitly) considered as having no role to play in the Sydney basin (Knowd, 2013). As a consequence, the release of lands for housing development in peri-urban Sydney occurred throughout the second part of the 20th century and the beginning of 21st century. In addition, the only plan that aimed at strongly protecting peri-urban farmlands through the development of a greenbelt, the County of Cumberland Planning Scheme, did not succeed, and housing development occurred on lands that were intended to be part of that greenbelt. Finally, the increasing influence of neoliberal ideology on Metropolitan Strategies in recent decades, and the focus of the more recent Metropolitan Strategies on raising the profile of Sydney to that of a 'Global City', means that the development of housing has often been preferred to the protection of farmlands. The measures to protect farmlands seem to remain for now largely aspirational.



**FIGURE 2.1:** Chronology of Sydney Metropolitan Strategies. In green are the elements of the Metropolitan Strategies supporting the preservation of peri-urban farmlands. In blue are the elements of the Metropolitan Strategies impacting negatively on the preservation of peri-urban farmlands.

### 2.1.3 A Plan for Sydney 2036 and A Plan for Growing Sydney

A close reading of the two most recent Metropolitan Strategies, A Plan for Sydney 2036 (Department of Planning and Environment, 2010) and A Plan for Growing Sydney (Department of Planning and Environment, 2015) confirms that the more recent Metropolitan Strategies are taking a similar orientation to the previous ones. As yet, the two most recent Metropolitan Strategies have not been the subject of in-depth analysis. For this reason, we analysed those two strategies in order to assess their orientations.

In these two strategies, the aspiration to raise Sydney to the rank of Global City still appears as the main objective, and the adoption of a neoliberal strategy in which the government supports the private sector is still considered as the way to achieve this goal. When it comes to balancing housing development and the protection of the natural and cultivated environments, the two strategies adopt the compact city paradigm, which is intended to enable Sydney to find this equilibrium. However, deeper analysis suggests that the compact city concept does not successfully protect peri-urban farmlands. Finally, in the last section, we will see that the integration of the question of preservation of peri-urban farmlands in the sustainability agenda remains problematic.

### **2.1.3.1 The neoliberal project of the Global City**

As shown by McGuirk (2004), raising Sydney to the rank of Global City through the adoption of a neoliberal policy has been the hegemonic project of the state for the last decade or so. This aspiration to make Sydney a Global City is still presented as the main objective of the two most recent Metropolitan Strategies. A Plan for Sydney 2036 states that Sydney needs to maintain its global competitiveness in order to keep its ranking in global comparisons of international cities. In this document Sydney continues to aim at being integrated into the network of global cities around the world (Department of Planning and Environment, 2010). A Plan for Growing Sydney is also filled with references to Sydney as a Global City (Department of Planning and Environment, 2015). According to these two Metropolitan Strategies, the actions that need to be taken to maintain the Global City status of Sydney are: focusing on how to grow global business investment, how to expand and diversify the CBD (Central Business District), how to strengthen cities around Sydney (Parramatta as a second CBD, Liverpool and Penrith) and how to reinforce the Global Economic Corridor stretching from Port Botany to Macquarie Park. However, there is also a focus on creating new jobs (760,000 in the Plan for Sydney 2036) and houses (770,000 houses in the Plan for Sydney 2036), as well as a better transportation system, to better connect places where people work with places where they live. Increasing the number of housing opportunities is integral to the development of Sydney as a Global City, and is strongly affecting peri-urban farming. The Global City project, through its goal of housing development, is therefore negatively affecting farming in peri-urban areas.

### **2.1.3.2 Government as supporting private sector to provide housing**

The role of the government in supporting the private sector's investments in housing development, and infrastructure more generally, is made obvious in the two Metropolitan Strategies. A Plan for Sydney 2036 states that the government will promote sites for large-scale development, and will be directly involved in achieving desired goals for the regional cities of Parramatta, Liverpool and Penrith. In A Plan for Growing Sydney, the role of the government in supporting private investment is made even more explicit: "the role of government is to create the best environment for investment and development, given it is the private sector (developers and small builders) who provide housing" (Department of Planning and Environment, 2015, p. 64). Based on this principle, it is explained in the strategy that the government will "establish a new partnership model

of cooperation and governance to deliver investment and infrastructure in the Greater Parramatta to Olympic Peninsula Priority Growth Area" (Department of Planning and Environment, 2015, p. 33). It is also said that the government will deliver "key infrastructures to enable population and jobs growth in the Priority Growth Area" (Department of Planning and Environment, 2015, p. 33). Finally, the strategy also states that the government will "remove the barriers which impede the delivery of more housing" (Department of Planning and Environment, 2015, p. 62), that it will speed up the development process through the Housing Diversity Package, and that government land will be used to deliver housing. In the two strategies, the government continues to adopt a neoliberal approach by supporting private investment in business and housing development in order to maintain Sydney's status as a Global City. The two last strategies are therefore a continuation of the hegemonic project described by McGuirk (2004), and one of the main objectives of this project is to increase housing opportunities in the Sydney Basin.

### **2.1.3.3 The Compact City: integrating housing development and protection of the environment?**

The 'spatial' model chosen in Sydney to encourage housing growth through the promotion of certain urban forms, while protecting the natural and cultivated environments is the compact city model, already present in the 2005 City of Cities strategy. The concept of the compact city, which has been widely adopted at the international scale (Bunker et al., 2017; Crommelin et al., 2017), is a spatial planning concept advocating a certain type of urban form. In this section, we define the concept of the compact city, and examine how it is used in the two Metropolitan Strategies to promote an urban form based on urban containment, the development of a polycentric city, accessibility and liveability, while not necessarily protecting cultivated environments at the fringe of the city.

Westerink et al. (2013) offer an appraisal of the different elements characterising the compact city concept. They first identify aspects related to urban forms. The compact city is characterised by urban containment through the densification of existing urban areas and the redevelopment of urban areas, as well as by a polycentric urban form. The polycentric nature of the compact city means that the city is conceptualised as being made of corridors and networks connecting its different nodes. This implies that infrastructure development is integrated into land use planning in order to concentrate developments around transportation nodes. Another central element to the concept of

the compact city that is made possible by the elements evoked earlier is accessibility. The compact city, therefore, is an integrated and networked city where travelling times must be reduced as much as possible, and walkability enhanced. Finally, another element of the compact city evoked by Westerink et al. (2013) is its social nature. One of the aims of the compact city model is to create a social city that will be liveable, and that will therefore attract people (see Table 2.1 for a summary of the compact city characteristics).

**TABLE 2.1:** The characteristics of the compact city as described by (Westerink et al., 2013).

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Urban containment  | Increased intensity through densification or redevelopment of urban areas  |
| Polycentric urban form   | Development of satellite cities within the sphere of influence of an urban area, making it possible to minimise distances between the core and the fringes |
| Corridors & networks   | Increased connection and connectivity within the city  |
| Integration of infrastructure development into land use planning | Concentration of developments around transportation nodes  |
| Accessibility  | Reduction of travelling time; enhanced walkability   |
| Social city  | Attract people to the city by making it liveable and attractive  |

The elements described above are present in the two last metropolitan strategies which aim at creating a connected and networked city (Department of Planning and Environment, 2010, 2015). Both strategies state that one of their main goals is increased accessibility and urban containment through the integration of land use, infrastructure and transport, which would enable jobs to be closer to homes. In A Plan for Sydney 2036 it is explained that the "location of homes and jobs" needs to "match transport capacity", in order to increase economic efficiency, equity and air quality, and to limit social costs and climate change (Department of Planning and Environment, 2010, p. 5). The integration of land use and transport is therefore one of the main objectives of the two strategies, and is considered as correcting the mistakes of the past, which were characterised by urban sprawl and a poorly connected city.

The second element that is central to the two strategies is the creation of a polycentric city. Both strategies state that Parramatta needs to strengthen its role as the premier regional city and second CBD, and that Liverpool, North Sydney and Penrith should

all progressively become centres in terms of the development of work opportunities and services. The main aim of a polycentric city is again to limit the time spent travelling between home, the workplace and service areas. Accessibility will also be reinforced through the identification of growth centres where work opportunities and housing will be developed. The increase in accessibility achieved through the integration of land use and transportation, the creation of a polycentric city, and the creation of growth centres aim at increasing inhabitants' use of public transport, cycling and walking. Finally, the question of the creation of a social city is realised in A Plan for Growing Sydney through the enhancement of Sydney's liveability. This constitutes the third goal of the document: making Sydney "a great place to live with communities that are strong, healthy and well connected" (Department of Planning and Environment, 2015, p. 9). In A Plan for Sydney 2036 the issue of the social city is also raised in Direction H of the policy, which aims at "achieving equity, liveability and social inclusion" (Department of Planning and Environment, 2010, p. 197). The adoption of the compact city as the model for spatial planning, aims here at enhancing accessibility; liveability; urban containment; the integration of transport, infrastructure and land use planning; and the creation of a polycentric city.

However, the compact city model seeks to be an integrative model which can accommodate growth, while containing the urban footprint and maintaining environmental, recreational and agricultural spaces around cities (Westerink et al., 2013). One of the compact city objectives is therefore to maintain the distinction between urban and rural, and to protect natural or farmland areas on the periphery of cities, through urban containment. As seen earlier, James (2009) and Malcolm and Fahd (2009) illustrate how the implementation of the compact city, through the determination of growth centres, in the City of Cities strategy does not protect effectively peri-urban agricultural areas around Sydney because on one hand, these growth centers contain an important number of agricultural operations, and on the other hand 35% of housing will be built outside the growth centers potentially encroaching, this way, on agricultural lands. One element in A Plan for Sydney 2036 and A Plan for Growing Sydney suggests that the implementation of the compact city concept will not be effective in protecting farming. This example is the Campbelltown-MacArthur area. In July 2009, the government considered this area for further housing development, after having been approached by major landowners (Department of Planning and Environment, 2010). However in A Plan for Sydney 2036 the project was abandoned, and it was written in A Plan for Sydney 2036 that the "Government decided to suspend investigation of the area primarily due to existing adequate stocks of land available for housing in the South West Growth Centre, prohibitively

expensive infrastructure costs, and the high value of resources in the area" (Department of Planning and Environment, 2010, p. 162). However, in *A Plan for Growing Sydney* the Campbelltown-MacArthur area, which is a relatively important agricultural area, is again considered as a potential development area. The compact city approach seems therefore to be insufficient to protect farmlands in the long term. We can see here that while the compact city model seems to put emphasis urban containment, polycentric development of the city, accessibility and liveability, it does not seem to ensure the protection of peri-urban agricultural lands, as new developments are planned on lands considered as being of high value.

### **2.1.3.4 The protection of peri-urban agriculture and the sustainability agenda**

The second dimension of the strategies that needs to be scrutinised is the way they address issues related to the protection of peri-urban agriculture, and more broadly to sustainability, and how the protection of peri-urban agriculture is integrated into the sustainability agenda.

When it comes to the question of sustainability, the first thing that needs to be said is that the sustainability agenda is not clearly and consistently defined. Indeed, in *A Plan for Sydney 2036* the emphasis is on the necessity to tackle climate change and protect biodiversity, and the protection of lands at the fringe of the city is tackled as a separate issue. In *A Plan for Growing Sydney*, on the other hand, climate change is only rarely mentioned, and the emphasis is put instead on the promotion of the resilience of the city to environmental hazards, as well as the protection of biodiversity and the need to balance land uses at the urban fringe. What we can see here is that what constitutes the sustainability agenda is not clearly delimited, and one issue can be put forward in one strategy (climate change for example), and be dismissed or replaced in the next one. We can also see that the question of the protection of farmlands at the urban fringe is considered as a separate issue in *A Plan for Sydney 2036* while it is integrated into the sustainability agenda in the *Plan for Growing Sydney*. Therefore, the sustainability agenda seems to be a work in progress, and the preservation of farmlands at the fringe, are not always integrated into this agenda.

The issues that seem to be consistently tackled in the sustainability agenda are the question of the protection of biodiversity, and to a lesser extent water quality, air quality and waste management. We will consider here the example of the protection of biodiversity, in order to contrast the actions taken in terms of protection of biodiversity around

Sydney with the actions taken to protect peri-urban agriculture. The maintenance of the natural environment of Sydney is considered to be an important element in both metropolitan strategies, and is considered, in *A Plan for Growing Sydney*, as a contribution to the construction of Sydney as a ‘Global City’. The discourse on the environment reinforces the ‘Global City’ discourse here (“Sydney’s strong economy, skilled labour force, spectacular natural environment and relaxed lifestyle has made our city the envy of other cities around the world”) (Department of Planning and Environment, 2015, p. 4).

Moreover, as we saw earlier, the need to protect the natural environment in and around Sydney has been highlighted since the 1960s in Australia, and has been present in nearly every Metropolitan Strategy since then (Anderson and Jacobs, 1999; James, 2009). This perspective has more consistently been integrated into the sustainability agenda, and is also the subject of various policies and financial mechanisms which are consistent across the Metropolitan Strategies. The main elements evoked in the two strategies are: the Biodiversity Certification and the Biodiversity Banking Offset Scheme (see Table 2.2 below for definitions). Additionally, both strategies highlight the fact that policies and regulations are already in place to protect biodiversity through planning policies and local planning controls (Growth Centres Conservation Plan and the Hawkesbury–Nepean Catchment Action Plan in *A Plan for Sydney 2036*, and unnamed local policies and local planning controls in *A Plan for Growing Sydney*). Moreover, biodiversity is already the subject of regulation at the federal and state levels (Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act, and the Native Vegetation Act). We can therefore see that biodiversity issues are tackled at several levels through: legislation, assessment processes ensuring that biodiversity is taken into account in development projects, and market-based mechanisms that encourage the protection of the environment. However, even if biodiversity is consistently tackled in Metropolitan Strategies and various legislative texts, some argue that the protection of biodiversity is not secured in New South Wales. According to Perry (2016), the implementation of recommendations made by an independent panel in the NSW Biodiversity Legislation Review (Byron et al., 2014) will enable more land clearing, consequently threatening the protection of the biodiversity. He also explains that the ability to offset impacts on biodiversity by buying credits in the Biodiversity Banking Offset Scheme means that the protection of biodiversity at the local scale is not ensured. Our aim here is therefore not to say that the policies for the protection of biodiversity are fully effective in New South Wales, but rather to illustrate how in the Metropolitan Strategies, biodiversity is more systematically and consistently tackled than the protection of farmlands.

**TABLE 2.2:** Definitions of the Biodiversity Certification and the Biodiversity Banking Offset Scheme.

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Biodiversity Certification             | Provides: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• biodiversity assessments of lands to be developed</li> <li>• identification of options to offset the impact</li> </ul>  |
| Biodiversity Banking and Offset Scheme | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Market-based scheme where the negative impacts of development on biodiversity can be offset by improving, in perpetuity, the management of a similar ecological community on another site.</li> </ul> |

When it comes to the protection of peri-urban farmlands, both strategies recognise the importance of the agricultural industry in the Sydney Basin as a provider of fresh produce for the city, and as an employer of workers. They both acknowledge that promoting the development of a compact city by concentrating development on growth centres, and only having minor development outside growth centres, could contribute to protecting farmlands at the urban fringe. However, when it comes to measures that proactively protect farming, a gap exists between A Plan for Sydney 2036 and A Plan for Growing Sydney (see Table 2.3 below for a summary of the measures aiming at the protection of peri-urban farmlands and farming activities in the two strategies). The former includes an important number of measures of a diverse nature that should be adopted in order to protect farmlands, which have already been explored in the City of Cities: A Plan for Sydney’s Future Metropolitan Strategy. In the last Metropolitan Strategy (A Plan for Growing Sydney) most of those measures have disappeared and are replaced by two measures that remain relatively vague, whereas more concrete and immediate actions are absent. We can see that the measures proposed to protect peri-urban farmlands vary from one strategy to the next. Indeed, whereas the measures proposed in A Plan for Sydney 2036 were varied and offered to give a stronger status to farmlands, the measures in A Plan for Growing Sydney seem to be less substantial.

**TABLE 2.3:** Summary of the policies aiming at the preservation of peri-urban farmlands and farming activities in A Plan for Sydney 2036 and in A Plan for Growing Sydney.

| A Plan for Sydney 2036  | A Plan for Growing Sydney   |
|---|---|
| Agricultural policy for Sydney that "would provide guidance for decision-makers on all aspects of the food system", and "guide land use planning in order to provide more certainty for the growth of agriculture in Sydney" (DPE 2010, p. 164) | Strategic framework for the Metropolitan Rural Areas which will:<br>- Prevent "the adverse economic impacts on existing primary industry and productive agriculture"<br>- "Protect productive agricultural land to [...] by planning for the infrastructure and land use need of agricultural activity and providing appropriate buffers between different land uses to minimise conflicts" (DPE, 2015, p. 98-100). |
| Mapping agricultural activities for resource lands  |   |
| Identify place of regionally significant agriculture  |   |
| Promote agricultural activities positively in order to reduce land conflicts  |   |
| Provide intensive agriculture with specific areas of land for agribusiness  | Creating a data set on the demand and supply for agriculture and resource extraction industries will be explored  |
| Using state-owned land for agricultural production  |   |

When considering initiatives taken to raise Sydney to the rank of 'Global City', or even for the protection of biodiversity, the aspirational nature of the measures related to the protection of peri-urban farmlands is more striking. Indeed, when it comes to promoting Sydney as a 'Global City', the strategy is to set clear goals by stating the number of houses and jobs that should be created, and the support of the government for the development of those houses and jobs is made obvious. Strong legislation is already protecting biodiversity in Australia, and both strategies implement various mechanisms to protect the environment, and integrate it into land-use decisions. By contrast, the objectives concerning the protection of peri-urban farmlands remain vague and unquantified. Moreover, the measures that are planned change from one strategy to the next, showing the inconsistency of the integration of issues related to peri-urban farmlands in the Metropolitan Strategies.

Consequently, we can see that balancing residential development with the protection of farmland into the planning system, is yet to be done in the Sydney basin. Indeed, the protection of farmland at the urban fringe is not strongly integrated into the planning system in Sydney, which is mostly promoting the development of Sydney as a Global City. The question of sustainability – which has gained importance in the Metropolitan Strategies – does not always integrate the question of the protection of farmlands

in peri-urban areas, and the broader consideration of the food system. Consequently, farmlands at the fringe of Sydney are not protected, and the peri-urban is undergoing important changes in its structure and social composition (through the expansion of housing developments), posing new challenges to its management. This situation can be contrasted with the situation in other major cities around the world that integrate the food system into planning. Budge (2013) reminds us that cities like London, Toronto, Vancouver or Portland, among others, take into account the food system in their planning strategies and acknowledge that food has a role to play in urban planning by providing answers to some of the challenges faced by cities, such as community health, accessibility and affordability of food, food safety, climate change, the carbon footprint of food, food security etc.

The next section provides an overview of the challenges posed by peri-urban areas. We will first attempt to define what the 'peri-urban' is, and we will then tackle the question of the challenges posed to the maintenance of farmlands and farming activities in this mutating space.

### **2.1.4 The peri-urban challenge**

#### **2.1.4.1 "Suburbs in waiting" or third space**

The first question that needs to be answered when focusing on peri-urban areas is 'what are peri-urban areas'? The literature is in agreement that peri-urban spaces possess characteristics that distinguish them from both urban and rural environments. However, they can be defined in two ways: as "suburbs in waiting" that will eventually be urbanised (Bunker and Holloway, 2001, p. 13) or as third spaces (*tiers espace*) possessing their own characteristics, even if the delineations of these third spaces, which are heterogeneous and changing, can be challenged (Buxton and Low Choy, 2007; Low Choy and Buxton, 2013; Vanier, 2000). If understood as a third space, peri-urban areas are not spaces reserved to be urbanised, but rather spaces that possess their own particular functions (Allen, 2003; Gallent, 2006; Gallent and Shaw, 2007). For this reason, studying peri-urban spaces requires the researcher to "look beyond the conventional divide between 'urban' and 'rural'" (Ravetz et al., 2013, p. 14) and to focus on the peri-urban as a space in itself, even if it is a permanently changing place without fixed boundaries. From this attempt to define peri-urban areas, we can see that they can be described either as transitional spaces which are going to be progressively absorbed by the city, and which are therefore defined in relation to the city, or as third spaces with their own

characteristics and development.

**The processes : peri-urbanisation, rurbanisation, exurbanisation, counter-urbanisation**

The process of the creation of transitional or third spaces has been named and defined in different ways for the last several decades. The names given to the process include: periurbanisation, rurbanisation, exurbanisation, counter-urbanisation. Those terms are often used interchangeably, and are only differentiated by their academic origins. Hervouët (2001) and Ravetz et al. (2013) propose a compilation of the definitions given by the scholars who use these different terms (see Table 2.4). In summary, the four concepts describe the diffuse expansion of populations from urban areas to previously rural areas. However, a few differences can be acknowledged. Counter-urbanisation seems to be a process that is occurring beyond the area of influence of a city. Exurbanisation, on the other hand, is a phenomenon that occurs in close proximity to the city, and can be compared to suburbanisation. Peri-urbanisation and rurbanisation are in-between situations, in which the influence of the city and the rural characteristics of the area both play a role. The only difference between these two phenomena is that peri-urbanisation can lead to the creation of a third space, or a permanent landscape, whereas rurbanisation is only a transitory situation. In this work we will use the notion of peri-urbanisation because we study this space, not as transitory but as a space in itself with its own characteristics. One of the reasons for doing so is that agricultural areas on the fringes of cities have a potentially increasing role to play in terms of resilience, sustainability and food security of cities and the health and well-being of their population. If we consider the peri-urban as a transitory space waiting to be urbanised, we ignore the role peri-urban areas can play in terms of food security. Moreover, as seen in the introduction, the peri-urban local governments around Sydney have created a network (the Sydney Peri-Urban Network) which aims at raising awareness of the unique characteristics of the peri-urban. These local governments consider peri-urban environments as having a specific identity articulated around the mixture of rural and urban lands, rural residential developments at the fringe and further in the countryside, extensive and intensive agriculture, important biodiversity, and topographical diversity (Edge Land Planning, 2015). The peri-urban is defined here as a third space in its own right, and not as a transitional space waiting to be urbanised.

**TABLE 2.4:** Definitions of the concepts of peri-urbanisation, rurbanisation, exurbanisation and counter-urbanisation.

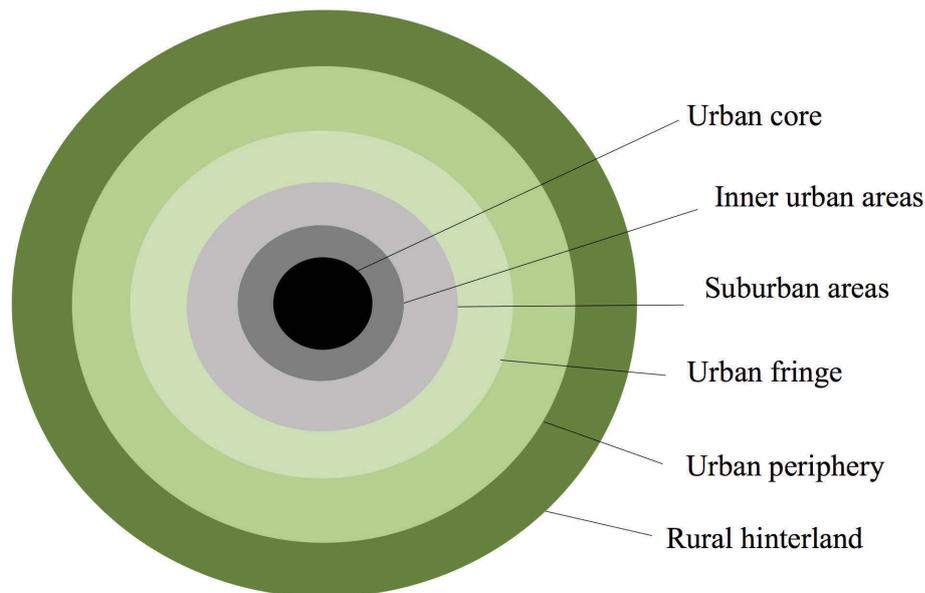
| Terms                | Description   |
|----------------------|---|
| Peri-urbanisation    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• rural space influenced by an urban space</li> <li>• not morphologically tied to urban space</li> <li>• changes in built environment</li> <li>• maintenance of agricultural activities</li> <li>• permanent or transitory phenomenon</li> </ul> |
| Rurbanisation        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• urban built environment in a mainly rural area (weak transformation of the rural landscape)</li> <li>• can exist without the presence of an urban space</li> <li>• transitory stage – later densification</li> </ul>                           |
| Exurbanisation       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• wealthy urban population leaving the city – exurban spaces can be compared to suburban spaces</li> </ul>   |
| Counter-urbanisation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• re-population of areas situated outside of urban influence</li> </ul>  |

### Geographical delimitation of the peri-urban

Having defined the process of peri-urbanisation, we now turn to the question of the geographical delimitation of the peri-urban, and what criteria are relevant to defining what the peri-urban is. A monocentric pattern, based on land use and land cover, can be used to distinguish the different areas from urban core to rural hinterland. Basing their investigation on an extensive bibliographic review, Ravetz et al. (2013) divide the ‘rural-urban region’ into five categories: the urban core, inner urban areas, suburban areas, the urban fringe, the urban periphery and the rural hinterland. The peri-urban encompasses the urban fringe (1) and the urban periphery (2) which are characterised as follows:

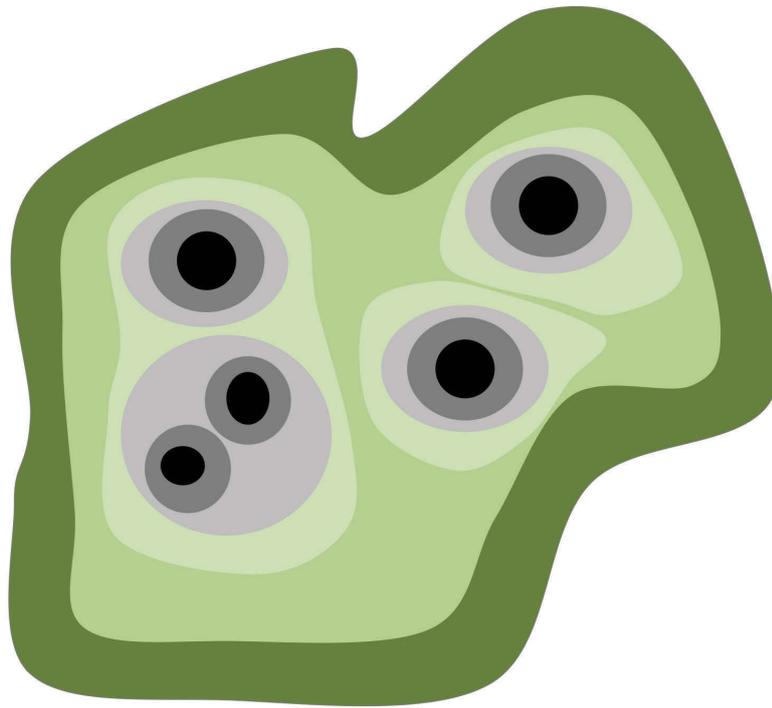
1. "A zone along the edges of the built-up area, which comprises a scattered pattern of lower density settlement areas, urban concentrations around transport hubs, together with large green open spaces, such as urban woodlands, farmland, golf courses and nature reserves"
2. "A zone surrounding the main built up areas, with a lower population density [...]. This can include smaller settlements, industrial areas and other urban land-uses within a matrix of functional agriculture." (Ravetz et al., 2013, p. 18)

To situate geographically those different areas, Ravetz et al. (2013) first use a mono-centric model that they call the ‘text-book model’ (see Figure 2.2 below), which can be considered as inaccurate because of the discontinuous nature of peri-urban areas (Daniels, 1990).



**FIGURE 2.2:** The monocentric model of peri-urban areas (adapted from Ravetz et al. (2013)).

They therefore develop a second version, which is a "poly-centric agglomeration of settlements with different sizes and patterns, surrounded by a rural hinterland with a complex boundary" that the authors describe as a ‘semi-realistic’ model (Ravetz et al., 2013, p. 19). In this model, peri-urban areas are associated with a multiplicity of urban centres with differentiated degrees of influence on those peri-urban areas (see Figure 2.3 below). Moreover, peri-urban areas are considered as existing around both major urban centers and around smaller settlements. This second conception of the peri-urban is the one we will adopt in our study, because it appears to be particularly relevant in the case of Wollondilly Shire. Indeed, the Shire is not situated immediately on the outskirts of Sydney and therefore does not directly accommodate Sydney’s population growth. However, this Shire shelters several smaller centres, such as Picton, Tahmoor, Thirlmere and Bargo, which are under pressure to accommodate a growing population.



**FIGURE 2.3:** The polycentric model of peri-urban areas (adapted from Ravetz et al. (2013)).

Those models define peri-urban areas mostly on the basis of land cover and land use. Peri-urban areas are therefore characterised by the extension of built-up areas in previously natural and agricultural lands, that is to say, urban encroachment. However, peri-urban spaces cannot be characterised only according to changes in land cover and use. It has been acknowledged in the literature that peri-urban areas are also characterised by changes in: the social fabric triggered by the urbanisation process, farming practices, and perceptions of what ‘rurality’ is in a peri-urban context.

### **Changes in social fabric**

The peri-urban is often described as a space where the social fabric has evolved considerably in recent times (Argent et al., 2011; Willis, 2007). The main factors of change identified have often been the influx of wealthy middle- to upper-class urbanites (Argent et al., 2011; Tonts and Greive, 2002), as well as the presence of "social-security dependent ex-suburban" people (Argent et al., 2011, p. 25) (Hugo and Bell, 1998). However, Argent et al. (2011) challenge the hypothesis that in-migration to peri-urban and rural areas

in Australia only involves ex-urbanites. They argue that in-migration in those areas also involves people from other non-metropolitan areas. They argue that in-migration is therefore due to counterurbanisation but also to population redistribution (Argent et al., 2011). Whether they come from metropolitan or non-metropolitan areas, Argent et al. (2011) acknowledge that those in-migrants come with different visions of the countryside and contribute to an increasingly diversified landscape. Willis (2007) provides a typology which accounts for the diversity of the in-migrants present in peri-urban spaces in the Australian context. However, her focus is mostly on ex-urbanites and consequently overlooks in-migrants coming from non-metropolitan areas. She identifies: i) former urbanites and retirees practising part-time or hobby farming; ii) conservationists; iii) urban economic refugees; iv) minimalisers; and v) sprawlers. Part-time or hobby farmers (i) practice what Willis (2007) calls picturesque farming, which is characterised by small holdings for olive groves, vineyards, flower farms, alpacas, heritage sheep and belted galloways. These hobby farmers can be city dwellers adopting a farming activity or farmers taking off-farm jobs while continuing to live on the farm. Conservationists (ii) have environmental protection goals and buy bush or farmland in order to protect the environment through the revegetation of timber plantations. Urban economic refugees (iii) move to peri-urban areas to have access to more affordable housing. Minimalisers (iv) are looking for an alternative, less materialistic and more self-sufficient lifestyle. Sprawlers (v) are participating in the extension of the suburban lifestyle, and move to peri-urban areas to have access to larger blocks than the ones they can find in the city.

This typology is a schematic representation of the diversity of people moving to peri-urban Australia. It shows that the traditional predominance of productive landscapes in a previously rural area is challenged by the arrival of stakeholders who value and inhabit the landscape differently, showing therefore the increased complexity of peri-urban society and its relationship to the landscape(s). This change in the social fabric is visible in our study area (Wollondilly Shire) where rural-residential style developments are a significant part of the growth in the area (Wollondilly Shire Council, 2011a). Changes in peri-urban areas are created not only by the arrival of urbanites, but also by modifications of agricultural activities and the roles of farmers in the peri-urban.

### **2.1.4.2 Peri-urban areas: between intensification and multi-functionality**

The nature of agricultural activities in the peri-urban has undergone significant change in the last decades, and has followed two contradictory paths. On one hand peri-urban environments are witnessing an intensification of agricultural activities trig-

gered by the impact of neoliberalism on the agricultural sector in Australia (Henderson, 2003; Taylor et al., 2017). On the other hand, a move toward a more multi-functional or post-productivist landscape can be seen in the peri-urban (Argent, 2002; Holmes, 2006; Wilson, 2001).

As seen earlier, since the 1970s agricultural policies in Australia have been influenced by a neoliberal approach, meaning that an "unsubsidized and highly competitive and export-focused agriculture is promoted as Australia's future in the global industry" (Taylor et al., 2017, p. 88). In practice this has meant an increasing number of intensive industrial farms, particularly poultry farms, which have "gained competitive viability through expansion and proximity to labour and markets" (Taylor et al., 2017, p. 90). At the other end of the spectrum, the progressive emergence of multi-functional or post-productivist landscapes can be observed, even if the extent of their existence in Australia is still debated (Argent, 2002; Holmes, 2006; Wilson, 2001). The concepts of post-productivism and multi-functionality describe the paradigm that followed the productivist paradigm in Great-Britain and Western Europe, as well as in Australia (Argent, 2002; Wilson, 2001). The 'productivist period' which started after the Second World War is characterised by the intensification of production, the concentration of farmlands in the hands of a few farmers, and the specialisation of agricultural activities (Argent, 2002). Post-productivism and multifunctionality are two closely related concepts which attempt to describe the changes that have occurred in agriculture and agricultural landscapes in recent decades.

Post-productivism is characterised by the extensification, diversification and dispersion of farmlands, as well as by the emergence in rural areas of new political and cultural values introduced by different stakeholders such as environmentalists and urban-based middle class immigrants (Argent, 2002). Multifunctionality is characterised by an extensification of farmlands, pluri-activity, which is close to the concept of diversification, changing societal values, which is a more encompassing way of expressing the idea of new political and cultural values, and finally disinvestment or conversion to non-farm uses, which is a new element specific to multi-functionality (Holmes, 2006) (Table 2.5).

**TABLE 2.5:** Definitions of post-productivist and multi-functionality (Argent, 2002; Holmes, 2006).

| Post productivism   | Multifunctionality                                  |
|---|---|
| <b>Extensification:</b> decreased use of land, capital and external inputs                | <b>Extensification</b>                              |
| <b>Dispersion:</b> greater equality in distribution of farmlands among farmers            |   |
| <b>Diversification:</b> increasing intra-regional heterogeneity in agricultural land uses | <b>Pluri-activity</b>                               |
|   | <b>Disinvestment or conversion to non-farm uses</b> |
| Emergence of <b>new political and cultural values</b>                                     | <b>Changing of societal values</b>                  |

Wilson (2001) adds one last dimension of the post-productivist landscape, which calls into question the traditional roles of farmers in rural landscapes, and follows from mutations in the social fabric and from broader societal and cultural changes. Indeed, he characterises farmers in the post-productivist era as having lost the central position they had in society in the productivist period, their privileged political place, their sense of economic security, and their positive image (from stewards of nature they became considered as its destroyers). In the Australian context, the loss of their positive image is particularly apparent. Initially, agricultural development in the outback was intimately linked to a positive narrative of the creation of the Australian nation state (Saltzman et al., 2011). In this narrative, agriculture and pastoralism were understood as opening up the continent, feeding the nation and creating the basis of an export industry (Saltzman et al., 2011). The settlers were considered here as "stoic pragmatic pioneers" trying to "subdue nature" (Hogan, 2003, p. 69). However, in the 1970s, a second narrative emerged that marked a shift in the way Australian agriculture was perceived. In this second narrative it is argued that agriculture as it has been practised in Australia caused major environmental damage such as land clearing, soil erosion, salinisation and degradation of waterways. In this narrative, Australian agriculture based on north European practices was not adapted to the Australian conditions and destroyed the native Australian environment (Saltzman et al., 2011). According to Alston (2004) the perception of farmers as not taking good care of the environment is due to Australians' "burgeoning environmental consciousness", and the rise of "environmental lobby groups, the strong landcare movement, and a powerful consumer lobby" (p. 38-39). This resulted, according to her, in a lack of sympathy in Australian society for the fate of farmers.

The existence in Australian landscapes of the so-called post-productivist or multi-functional paradigm is called into question by several scholars who explain that those two paradigms are macro-structural and scale insensitive, and therefore do not take into account the variety of the agricultural world (Argent, 2002). Indeed, Wilson (2001) argues that the concept of post-productivism assigns an overwhelming role to outside forces (policy, macro-economic factors) and overlooks the ‘within’ factors (the variety of opinions among farmers about environmental changes and the reasons why they adopt new practices). He argues that many farmers still have a productivist ethos and that the transition to post-productivism is progressive and is not the replacement of one paradigm by another.

This observation seems to be applicable to the peri-urban area of Sydney, where we can see the double movements of a deepening of the productivist ethos, through the intensification of the farming industry, and the emergence of post-productivism and multifunctionality, characterised by the emergence of new stakeholders in the peri-urban, the questioning of the dominant role of farmers in the peri-urban, and the progressive change in agricultural activities, particularly with the increasing diversification of farming operations.

Because of these substantial mutations, peri-urban landscapes became contested spaces, where different views of what the landscape should look like and what it should be used for compete. In the next section we will see how the peri-urban progressively becomes a space of conflicts, and how those conflicts revolve around the problem of defining what ‘rurality’ is in a peri-urban context, and more broadly, the identity, or the identities of, the peri-urban.

### **2.1.4.3 Competing discourses of rurality: a non-stabilised peri-urban identity**

As seen earlier, Sydney’s peri-urban farmlands are environments in mutation, due to various sets of pressures such as the impact of neoliberalism on Australian farming policies, the metropolitan planning policies which often encourage housing development, and the various social changes occurring in the peri-urban, such as the intensification of farming activities in combination with the creation of a multi-functional landscape, and the in-migration of new social groups. The increasing diversity of stakeholders in the peri-urban resulted in the multiplication of competing discourses about what the peri-urban is, and what kind of development is suitable within it, sometimes leading to the emergence of conflicts between groups. A growing body of literature is tackling the

question of conflicting discourses in the peri-urban and observes that those conflicting discourses are the reflection of different representations of what ‘rurality’ is, leading to different opinions about what these landscapes should look like, and which practices are appropriate in a peri-urban environment (Abrams and Gosnell, 2012; Foley and Scott, 2014; Scott, 2008; Trudeau, 2006; Walker and Fortmann, 2003). In this section, we will describe how peri-urban conflicts have been characterised in the literature.

In the literature on conflicts in the peri-urban environment, the development of rural residential uses in the peri-urban is often considered the main source of conflict between a variety of stakeholders. This phenomenon is often described as a process of the gentrification of the countryside, where professional urbanites buy properties in the peri-urban in order to flee the constraints of the city (Argent et al., 2011; Gallent, 2011; Scott, 2011; Smith, 2011; Shucksmith, 2011; Tonts and Greive, 2002). The first negative impact of the gentrification of the countryside is an increase in land values and house prices. The increase in prices means that lower income individuals or families cannot remain in, or move to, these areas (Argent et al., 2011; Smith, 2011). The increases in land and property prices means that the communities living in those areas become progressively socially homogeneous, and can become exclusionary (Scott, 2011; Shucksmith, 2011).

The second negative impact, which could be considered as contributing to the first one, is that newcomers often decide to live in the peri-urban in order to enjoy the amenities offered in a rural environment, such as landscape amenities and the calm and quiet. Consequently, they are often depicted as being opposed to further housing developments in order to conserve their amenities and the value of their properties (Bailoni et al., 2012; Smith, 2011; Tonts and Greive, 2002). The blockage of new developments in the name of the protection of the landscape or the environment contributes, in turn, to increases in housing prices.

The third negative impact of the arrival of newcomers in peri-urban landscapes can be seen in the opposition between a vision of the landscape as productive, and the landscape of consumption (Laliberte, 2012; Tonts and Greive, 2002). Indeed, newcomers are often depicted as valuing the landscape for its amenity values. Such attitudes may sometimes be incompatible with existing productive activities, such as farming. Indeed, several authors (Henderson, 2003; Taylor et al., 2017) describe the emergence of conflicts between farmers, and more particularly intensive farmers, such as poultry farmers, and non-farming landowners. The latter often consider farming activities as creating nuisances, such as noise, dust and odour, but also as not being part of the rural landscape. Farmers, on the other hand, often consider non-farming landowners as progressively

undermining the viability of their operations, and as undermining the productive nature of the landscape as a whole, by buying up agricultural lands and complaining about farming activities (Abrams and Gosnell, 2012). At the other end of the spectrum, non-farming landowners are sometimes perceived as preventing struggling farmers from selling parts of their land because they oppose the subdivision of lands in order to maintain their idea of a rural landscape (Abrams and Gosnell, 2012). Those conflicts, which often revolve around the question of rural gentrification, are sometimes framed in terms of "class conflict, social control and cultural frictions", in which new non-farming landowners are depicted as wealthy individuals taking land, and control over planning, from the hands of poorer long-time residents (Walker and Fortmann, 2003, p. 469). They are also sometimes described as ignorant and intolerant towards productive activities in the peri-urban (Walker and Fortmann, 2003). Finally, another type of tension has been described between planners and inhabitants. Scott (2008) and Foley and Scott (2014) describe how planners defend a conception of rurality based on aesthetics, where development has to be contained and must occur at the fringes of existing towns and villages, whereas inhabitants defend a conception of rurality based on lived space and housing development that is scattered through the rural landscape.

Overall, conflicts in the peri-urban often stem from competing discourses over the meaning of the landscape, and the definition of what 'rurality' is in a peri-urban context. These debates over the meaning of the landscape and the definition of 'rurality' can be seen as reflecting power relationships and often invoke questions of ownership of the landscape (Masuda and Garvin, 2008; Walker and Fortmann, 2003). That is to say, the conflict is about who defines what a landscape should look like, and which practices or types of development are considered legitimate. Therefore, such conflicts, whose outcomes decide which form of identity prevails, are about who belongs to and who is excluded from a landscape (Trudeau, 2006). Questions about the evolution of the peri-urban seem therefore to revolve around the question of how different groups assert their identities in a specific place/landscape. In this context, to analyse how the role given to peri-urban farmlands and farming activities in peri-urban Sydney has evolved, we chose to focus on the concepts of place and landscape in order to develop a politics of place/landscape identity framework.

## **2.2 Part 2: A politics of place/landscape identity framework**

### **2.2.1 Place and landscape**

As seen earlier, peri-urban environments are areas in mutation. They are undergoing rapid changes in their physical appearance, their social fabric, and in the nature and role of their agriculture. We saw in the previous section that these changes are creating conflicts in the peri-urban, which are centred on the notions of what peri-urban spaces are. That is to say, they are about what the peri-urban landscape should look like, and according to whom, and what practices are deemed acceptable, and by whom (Foley and Scott, 2014; Friedland, 2002; Walker and Fortmann, 2003). Competing discourses of rurality pose the problem of which group's identity is favoured over others in the peri-urban environment. In other words, who belongs and who is excluded (Trudeau, 2006).

There is an extensive literature on conflicts in the peri-urban (Bailoni et al., 2012; Henderson, 2003; Kennedy et al., 2016; Pacione, 2013; Taylor et al., 2017). Several studies of peri-urban conflicts use a 'politics of place' approach (Masuda and Garvin, 2008; Trudeau, 2006; Walker and Fortmann, 2003) which has been used in other contexts to describe, for example, the phenomenon of gentrification (Benson and Jackson, 2013; May, 1996) and the organisation of festivals (Jeong and Santos, 2004) among others. Other studies take a political ecology approach to study conflicts over resources in exurban areas, and in more remote areas (Nesbitt and Weiner, 2001; Walker and Fortmann, 2003). Conflict in peri-urban areas has also been approached from the perspective of competing discourses on 'rurality'. Such studies focus on a place-based discourse but do not overtly use a 'politics of place' approach (Foley and Scott, 2014; Scott, 2008).

Various approaches have been developed to tackle questions of place-based conflict, and more particularly peri-urban conflicts. However, we argue that landscape and place studies are the most appropriate approaches for examining peri-urban conflicts, as they focus on how places and landscapes can be fought over by different groups, which is what interests us here. However, as yet there is no established framework of politics place/landscape identity. Rather, the literature focuses on different, often specific, aspects of place or landscape. Consequently, an integrated framework for understanding the politics of place/landscape identity in a specific locale, which captures the diverse dimensions of place and landscape, represents a knowledge gap.

In this part of Chapter 2, we will develop a conceptual framework for describing the mechanisms of the politics of place/landscape identity. This framework will be based on a synthesis of the literature on place and landscape, and will be used as a framework to order and analyse the politics of place/landscape identity in Wollondilly Shire. To do so, we will first discuss the various conceptualisations of place and landscape in the existing literature. We will then discuss how identity has been treated in the literature on place and landscape. To continue, we will examine how existing models of place and/or landscape articulate and integrate the different dimensions of place and landscape identified in the literature. These models will then be used as a basis for an extended framework of the politics of place/landscape identity.

The concepts of place and landscape have been traditionally polarised and treated as ontologically different in the literature (Setten, 2006). While place captures lived experience, landscape centres on the visual, on the ways in which individuals look at the landscape from the outside. This distinction is present in some of the seminal works on place and landscape. In 'The interpretation of ordinary landscapes', a geographical essay by Meinig (1979), landscape is described as "more external and objective than our personal sense of place" and place as "experiential to a degree landscape is not" (p. 3). In this definition landscape refers mostly to physical, objective elements, whereas place is associated with the lived experiences of individuals. In 'Place and placelessness' (Relph, 1976), landscape is described as a means for a community to express the values and beliefs it holds for a place:

*the relationships between community and place is indeed a powerful one in which each reinforces the identity of the other, and in which the landscape is very much an expression of community held beliefs and values and of interpersonal involvements (Relph, 1976, p. 34).*

Here again, the physicality of landscapes is still underlined, since the landscape is the material expression of the lived experience (in place) of a community. The landscape is therefore an (external) reflection of people's relationships to place. This distinction between place and landscape is reproduced in more recent literature. For example, Jorgensen (2011) advocates the integration of landscape perception/preferences studies with place identity and place attachment studies. Landscape perceptions/preferences studies focus on the visual elements of the landscape preferred by individuals. The individual is, in this conception, an external observer. Jorgensen (2011) suggests integrating the concepts of landscape preferences and place identity/attachment studies in order to understand the relationships between (externalised) landscape preferences and more

internal experiences of place. Another example is Stedman (2003) who argues that landscape attributes (which are physical characteristics of the landscape) can contribute to the creation of place attachment. Here, landscape is considered to be the physical backdrop for the development of place identity/attachment. Thus, a distinction between the landscape as external and visual on the one hand, and place as internal and experiential on the other, persists, even in the recent literature. In addition, we can also note that there is a difference in scale between the concept of place and landscape. The concept of place is often studied at a variety of scales such as the neighbourhood, the home and the city and more rarely regions, countries or continents (Lewicka, 2011) whereas landscape, in landscape ecology for example, is often defined as a "kilometer-wide mosaic over which particular local ecosystem and land uses recur" (Botequilha-Leitão et al., 2006, p. 4), and has therefore a more definite scale. The distinctions between place and landscape, and more specifically the distinction between landscape as external and visual and place as internal and experiential is challenged by Setten (2006) who argues that it merely represents a simplification of the academic argument required to assert the distinctiveness of disciplines and approaches, rather than an ontological difference. The distinction between place and landscape is therefore the fruit of struggles between different spaces of knowledge. Dissecting the variety of conceptualisations of place and landscape could therefore shed light on the similarities between them.

In the next section, we look at the evolution of place and landscape conceptualisations, and at how the development of the two notions led to very similar conceptualisations of the politics of place/landscape.

### **2.2.1.1 Place: from an individual to a collective conceptualisation**

The concept of place was first used by human geographers in the 1960s. It acknowledges the subjective and differentiated relationships of individuals with places (Relph, 1976; Tuan, 1991). In this tradition, place was conceptualised holistically as an emotional, psychological and cultural phenomenon occurring between an individual and his/her special places. This concept was developed in reaction to the positivist conception of place as a repository or background for human actions, and in reaction to humans being understood through objective models of human behavior (Foote and Azaryahu, 2009; Williams, 2014). In developing the concept of place, human geographers were mostly using a phenomenological methodology they thought would shed light on the complexity of individuals' relationships to place and experiences in place (Relph, 1976; Tuan, 1991).

Beyond human geography, the notion of place has its roots in various fields such as environmental psychology and recreation, leisure and tourism studies. In environmental psychology, place shifted from being considered as a holistic emotional, psychological and cultural phenomenon, towards being seen as comprising different variables related to a sense of place (place attachment, place identity and place dependence/satisfaction) and as being related to the different processes (affect, cognition, behaviour) that trigger a relationship to place (Scannell and Gifford, 2010). In this conception, relationship to place is considered to be the combination of different processes (cognitive, affective and behavioural) undergone by an individual in relation to a place. Quantitative methods measuring the prevalence of different types of relationships to place and the factors that induce them are developed to better understand these processes (e.g. Jorgensen and Stedman, 2001; Williams and Vaske, 2003). In parallel qualitative methods based on interpretive or discursive approaches, and focusing on understanding the meaning given to places by individuals and groups continue to develop (Williams, 2014). These methods, particularly the discursive approach, are based on a different understanding of the relationship between individuals/groups and places, that we are now going to explore.

The conceptualisations of place used by human geographers and environmental psychologists concentrate on the relationships individuals create with their special places. These individualised conceptualisations of place have been criticised in the literature on the grounds that "while an individual can apply imagination to create a personal sense of place, much of what a person knows about place, or feels about place, or does in places, is initially mediated by others" (Stokowski, 2002, p. 372). In other words, our relationship to place is always collective before individual, because it is created through communication with others. This limitation was readily acknowledged in the geographical field in the 1980s and 1990s (Massey, 1994) and later on, during the 2000s by researchers in other fields, such as environmental psychology (Manzo, 2003), social psychology (Dixon and Durrheim, 2000), sociology (Benson and Jackson, 2013) and recreation studies (Stokowski, 2002). Consequently, a conceptualisation of place as a collective construct, with an overt political dimension, has been progressively advocated in different disciplines.

During the 1980s, critical geographers developed a conceptualisation of place as a socio-political construct, in which individuals and groups perceive place differently depending on different factors such as gender, ethnicity, sexual preference and social class (Cresswell, 1996; Hayden, 1995; Massey, 1994). In this understanding of place, the

divisions that exist in the physical space are intertwined with the social structure of a society (Cresswell, 1996). A place is therefore considered as structured by power relationships and the struggles that take place between different social groups. For critical geographers, place reflects the ideologies of dominant groups as well as the contestation and resistance of other groups to the dominant ideologies. Place is therefore where multiple and evolving identities interact, and groups actively create place through their appropriation and reappropriation of a place (Massey, 1994). Later, researchers in other disciplines, such as social psychology, sociology, and recreational studies, also stressed the need to consider the collective and political dimensions of the construction of place (Benson and Jackson, 2013; Dixon and Durrheim, 2000; Stokowski, 2002). For example, Dixon and Durrheim (2000) argue that the individualistic approach traditionally taken in place studies "obscures [...] the collective nature of the relations between persons, identities and material settings" (p. 29). Instead, they argue for the adoption of a discursive approach in which place identity is considered to be created collectively "through talk" which often results in groups "claiming territorial entitlements or affirming socio-spatial ideals" (Dixon and Durrheim, 2000, pp. 32-33). Here again, we can see that the emphasis is on the collective nature of place-making, and on its ensuing political dimension.

The mechanisms through which these collective place identities are created and challenged vary according to the authors. For Dixon and Durrheim (2000), and Stokowski (2002), the discursive dimension of place-making seems to be predominant. Indeed, Dixon and Durrheim (2000) insist on the fact that it is through discursive actions that the relationship of a group with a place, and the exclusion of others, is justified. Following the same line of argument, Stokowski (2002) argues that it is through language that the meaning of places is constructed: "People actively create meaningful places through conversation and interaction with others" (p. 372). These conversations and interactions are then "formalised through use into coherent language structures, and appear to peoples as narratives, myths, fables and the like" (Stokowski, 2002, p. 372). These narratives, myths and fables are then used to include or exclude individuals or groups from a place. For these authors, the discursive dimension is an essential feature of place-making.

To the discursive dimension Benson and Jackson (2013) add a 'practice' dimension. They argue that the creation of place is a "dynamic" and "performative" process in which symbolic power is claimed through discursive practice, but also through everyday spatial practices (p. 796). The importance of considering together the role of discursive and spatial practices in the process of place-making is also emphasised by Di Masso and Dixon (2015), who consider place-making as made of:

*Spatial arrangements (including geographical locations, physical objects and spatial boundaries), embodied practices, and discursive constructions (i.e., socially organised and oriented patterns of language use) of environment and people-place relations* (Di Masso and Dixon, 2015, p. 49).

According to Di Masso and Dixon (2015) these assemblages are dynamic "and permanently create, reproduce and modify human-environment relations" (p. 49). In this conceptualisation of place-making, spatial and discursive practices are intertwined in assemblages that are constantly modifying themselves. Place-making is therefore not only the fruit of discursive practices, but also the result of the mingling of spatial and discursive practices.

To summarise, place was first conceptualised by human geographers and environmental psychologists as the relationship individuals have with their special places. This conceptualisation of place was subsequently seen to be overlooking the collective and political dimensions of place, since place is permanently produced, reproduced, contested and challenged through the spatial and discursive practices of different social groups. This second conceptualisation of place is of critical relevance when studying peri-urban environments. As explained earlier, the peri-urban is characterised by conflicts between various groups over the meaning of the landscape, the way the landscape should look, and the practices considered legitimate. Therefore, conceptualising the peri-urban as a place permanently challenged through spatial and discursive practices appears to be relevant to shedding light on what is at stake in these areas.

Like place, landscape has been the subject of several conceptualisations. Whereas place can be considered to have evolved from an individual conceptualisation into one that is a collective and political conceptualisation, landscape can be considered to have evolved from a visual (and external) conceptualisation to one that is more embedded and political.

### **2.2.1.2 Landscape: from a visual to an embedded and political conceptualisation**

Like the concept of place, the concept of landscape is polysemous. It finds its etymological origins in the word *landschaft* which refers to the "feudal polities of customary law, land control and communal occupation" (Dubow, 2009, p. 124). *Landschaft* was used in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in Germanic languages to refer to paintings of natural scenes (Olwig, 1996). Therefore, the landscape has been defined both as the space in which we live and as the space that we observe, or look at from a

distance. However, the conceptualisation of landscape as the gaze of an individual on an environment he/she is external to seems to be the dominant definition of landscape. This is often even considered, as seen earlier, to be the difference between place and landscape: place refers to lived experience and landscape to external observation (Setten, 2006). We will now see how the conceptualisation of the landscape as something observed from the outside has been used in landscape studies. We will then also see that another conceptualisation of landscape, stemming from the first conceptualisation of landscapes as feudal polities, also exists in the literature and is close to the conceptualisation of place as a collective socio-political construct.

Two research schools seem to align with this conceptualisation of landscape as something observed from the outside. The first conceptualisation emerged from environmental psychology and aesthetics, among other disciplines, and focuses on identifying which elements of the landscape are preferred by individuals. These kinds of studies, often called landscape preferences or landscape perceptions studies are an empirical field of landscape aesthetics studies (Jorgensen, 2011). They focus on the perceptions an observer has of a specific landscape and of its physical attributes or characteristics, such as preferred settings, landscape elements, spatial configurations, land forms, land use patterns and visual attributes (Arnberger and Eder, 2011; Coeterier, 1996; Herzog et al., 2000; Kalivoda et al., 2014; Strumse, 1994). In this conception, a landscape is understood as being composed of distinct elements which are rated as more or less positive by an observer, who is seen as a static spectator receiving and processing information from the landscape and responding to it (Zube et al., 1982; Zube, 1987).

Various attempts have been made to explain human preferences for certain types of landscapes. Researchers first adopted an evolutionary approach, arguing that landscape preferences could be explained by human evolution. For example, Orians (1980) and Appleton (1975) respectively developed a savannah theory and a prospect-refuge theory. Orians (1980) argues that preferences of human beings for sparsely treed areas, with water bodies (savannah-like landscapes) stem from the fact that the first humans lived in savannah areas. Appleton (1975) prospect-refuge theory argues that respondents prefer landscapes where they can see without being seen. This evolutionary approach has been complemented by a second approach focusing on how the values individuals hold for the environment, or the images they have of the relationship between humans and nature, influence their landscape preferences.

Several authors have attempted to link landscape preferences to values. For example, Soliva and Hunziker (2009) explore how individuals' conservation and biodiversity values

correlate with their landscape preferences. Similarly, Howley (2011) and Howley et al. (2012) argue that environmental value orientations (multifunctional values, agricultural productivist values and environmental apathy) contribute to individuals' landscape preferences. Finally, the concept of 'image of nature' (van den Berg et al., 2006; De Groot and van den Born, 2003) has been used to explain how individuals' landscape preferences are in part determined by the images they have of nature (arcadian nature, for example) and their images of the appropriate relationship between humans and nature (dominion or guardianship, for example). As stated earlier, this conceptualisation of landscape is based on the idea of the individual as an external observer receiving information from the landscape and responding to it according to their values, images of nature, or evolution.

The second school also adopts the idea that a landscape is appreciated from the outside by an observer. However, this school puts more weight on the representational dimension of the landscape as a way of seeing, and on the analysis of visual representations and texts rather than on physical landscapes. Landscape is considered here as a representation of dominant classes' views of the world, through visual representations and texts (Cosgrove, 1998). The landscape becomes an ideological tool that the dominant class employs to naturalise the dominant way of seeing, knowing and being. Landscape is considered as representing the worldview of the powerful. Therefore, the representational dimension of the landscape is a source of, and a reflection of, political power. Indeed, landscapes are considered as being moulded to correspond to the perception that the elite in a society has of its landscape, overlooking potential conflicts or contestations over its meaning. It therefore reflects their power in the elements they choose to show and enhance. For example, a feminist interpretation of the landscape sees it as "a penetrating masculine gaze", showing how visual landscapes are gendered (Setten, 2003, p. 138).

These two conceptualisations of the landscape rely on the idea of landscape as inherently visual and observed from the outside. In the first conceptualisation though, the focus is on how individuals establish preferences for real landscapes, which are influenced by their values or images of nature or evolution, whereas in the second conceptualisation the focus is on how visual representations of landscape or text favour a certain "way of seeing" the world. These two conceptualisations are very different, but their common point is that they strongly focus on the visual aspect of landscape and overlook its lived and political dimensions.

In the conceptualisation of landscape as visual, the lived and political dimensions are not explored. In the first case, the focus is on identifying how values influence landscape preferences, but it does not explore how these different values are embedded in a local

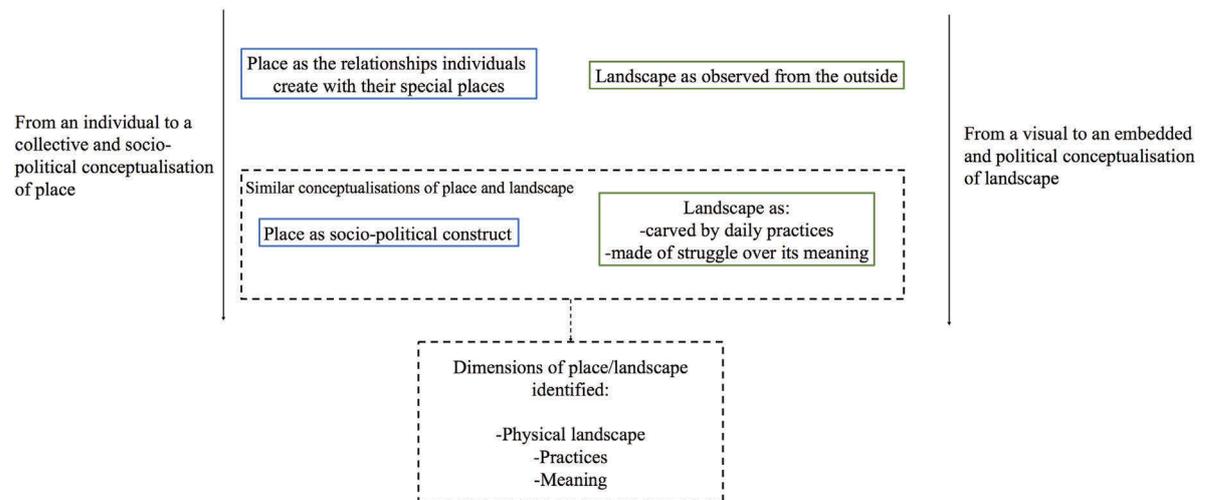
context and can potentially create conflicts between groups. In the second case, the landscape is considered to be an artefact representing the point of view of dominant groups. It therefore removes the potential for other groups to challenge or resist this dominant group's point of view. Finally, the externality of the individual, always considered as an observer, prevents his/her integration in a local context. This conceptualisation therefore ignores the relationships that shape the landscape.

Another, radically different conceptualisation of landscape has strong connections with the conceptualisation of place as a political construct. This conceptualisation of landscape has its roots in a German-Nordic tradition (Olwig, 1996; Setten, 2006) and a strand of Anglo-Saxon literature (Mitchell, 1996, 2003). According to Olwig (1996), in the German-Nordic tradition, the *landschaft* is a legal and political entity in which customary laws are enacted through people's daily practices, and it is therefore a reflection of a polity. The landscape is considered to be an embodied place where people live and practise their activities (Setten, 2006), and claim belonging through the landscape they have created through daily practices. This landscape is more than just the expression of a polity; it is the expression of "the dominant group(s) within any polity" (Gailing and Leibenath, 2017, p. 338), which can be contested and resisted (Setten, 2006). The power relationships inscribed in the landscape are described this way by Mels (2016): "Landscape [...] was not just a cultural representation but the material expression of the struggle over justice, polity and the peoples' cry and demand for a place of representation" (p. 418). In this conceptualisation, landscape is a place of political struggle where different groups attempt to assert their right to be represented in the landscape. The materiality of landscape (created through daily practices) reflects the power relationships between various groups in a society. The meaning given to landscape is the place where the dominant view of the landscape is asserted and the exclusion of some groups from the landscape is expressed. Mitchell (1996) summarises this idea as follows: "Language is powerful (or harmful) to the degree that it represents the power to do harm. And that power is written in the sticks and stones of our landscapes" (p. 96). The meaning attributed to the landscape is an expression of the exclusion of some groups from the landscape. At the same time, the physical landscape (carved by daily practices) creates the concrete conditions required for this exclusion to occur.

This last conceptualisation of landscape has many commonalities with the conceptualisation of place as a socio-political construct (Cresswell, 1996; Dixon and Durrheim, 2000; Massey, 1994; Stokowski, 2002). Here, the landscape is not considered as being observed from the outside, but rather as being carved by daily practices, and being

subject to contestation and conflicts over its meanings.

So far, we have seen that the conceptualisation of place has evolved from being understood as the relationships individuals create with their specific places, to being considered as a socio-political construct. Similarly, several conceptions of landscape exist; the first ones focus on the visual aspect of the landscape, observed from the outside, or conceive of landscape as representing the viewpoint of the powerful. The later ones focus on the idea of landscape as carved by daily practices, and as being subject to conflicts and contestations over its meaning. The definitions of place as a socio-political construct, and of landscape as being carved by daily practices and subject to conflicts and contestation, bear many commonalities and can therefore be considered together. These conceptualisations of landscape/place as being carved by practices and made of potential conflicts over its meaning resonate with the problems encountered in peri-urban areas where conflicts are crystallised around different conceptions of 'rurality' and with it, different views on what the landscape should look like and what practices are legitimate in the landscape. We will therefore adopt this conceptualisation of place/landscape to look at the politics of place in peri-urban Sydney (see Figure 2.4 below for a summary of the different conceptualisations of place and landscape and the different dimensions of the place/landscape conceptualisation that we will adopt in this study).



**FIGURE 2.4:** Chronology of the conceptualisations of place/landscape, and dimensions of the notion of place/landscape conceptualisation adopted in the study.

In blue are the different conceptualisations of place that go from an individual to a collective and socio-political conceptualisation of place. In green are the different conceptualisations of landscape that go from a visual to an embedded and political conceptualisation. In the first dotted frame are the conceptualisations of place and landscape that we will adopt in this study. In the second dotted frame, linked to the first one by a dotted arrow, are the different dimensions of place/landscape identified in these conceptualisations of place and landscape.

The dimension (of place and landscape) that has not been tackled yet is the notion of identity. This notion is essential to our work, as conflicts in the peri-urban are often based on the question of the ownership of the landscape, and therefore on the question of who belongs and who is excluded (Trudeau, 2006; Walker and Fortmann, 2003).

### 2.2.1.3 The question of identity in place and landscape studies

In this section, we examine how the literature on place and landscape addresses the question of identity.

#### Place identity

When considering the notion of place, Lewicka (2008) explains that the notion of identity in relation to place can be understood in two ways. One way is the ‘genius loci’, which emphasises the uniqueness of a place as defined by its particular characteristics (Lewicka, 2008). Identity would therefore reside in the concrete and distinctive features

of a place. Gustafson (2001) offers a definition of the relationship between identity and place which could be considered as close to the idea of *genius loci*. In his definition of place, individuals and groups attribute meaning to a place according to the physical features that make it different from another place, or that enable someone to categorise a place. In this conceptualisation, it is the attributes of a place which determine its meaning for individuals.

Another characterisation of the relationship between place and identity considers place identity as a feature of a person. The focus is therefore on how places contribute to the creation of a person's identity (Hauge, 2007; Lewicka, 2008; Twigger-Ross and Uzzell, 1996). This conception of place identity is closer to the concept of identity as it is understood in psychology, that is to say, as an individual's sense of self. The term place identity was first coined by Proshansky et al. (1983) who define it as a "pot-pourri of memories, conceptions, interpretations, ideas, and related feelings about specific physical settings, as well as types of settings" (p. 60). According to Proshansky et al. (1983) place identity is a substructure of self-identity, in the same way as gender, social class (Hauge, 2007) or social identity (Twigger-Ross and Uzzell, 1996). However, the conceptualisation of place identity developed by Proshansky et al. (1983) is considered by several authors as weak theoretically (Dixon and Durrheim, 2000; Hauge, 2007) and the definition of place identity as a substructure of self-identity is also challenged by some authors (Hauge, 2007; Twigger-Ross and Uzzell, 1996) who consider place as supporting all aspects of identity.

To explain how place supports all aspects of identity, two identity theories have been used in the literature on place identity: social identity theory and identity process theory (IPT) (Hauge, 2007). The social identity theory developed by Tajfel (1974) aims at understanding the conditions needed for an individual to consider himself or herself as part of a group. Tajfel (1974) defines social identity as "that part of an individual's self-concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership of a social group (or groups) together with the emotional significance attached to that membership" (p. 69). Creating a feeling of membership of a group is underlined by three cognitive processes (Ellemers, 2010): social categorisation, which consists in considering oneself and others as belonging to various social categories; social comparison, which consists in assigning to the in-group a value relative to other groups, and therefore, creating a feeling of distinctiveness; and social identification, which consists in having an understanding of who we are in relation to others. Group members aim at maintaining or gaining a positive social identity by identifying other groups, and valuing more positively the in-group,

in order to distinguish themselves from the members of other groups. This theory has been used in several place identity studies (e.g. Bonaiuto et al., 1996), however its focus is mainly on intergroup relationships and consequently it overlooks the processes of creation of identity, which are, in this theory a 'black box' (Breakwell, 2010).

In order to address this weakness Breakwell (1986) developed the Identity Process Theory (IPT), which aims at describing the different processes and principles that determine the creation of identity. Identity Process Theory is considered to be an integrative theory of how individuals or groups maintain their social identities, particularly when they are threatened (Breakwell, 1986; Jaspal and Yampolsky, 2011). According to this theory, identity is considered to be influenced by social structures (interpersonal networks, group and social-category memberships, and intergroup relationships) and social processes (education, rhetoric, propaganda, polemic, persuasion) (Breakwell, 1986, 2010). Identity processes are driven by two universal processes: assimilation-accommodation, which is the integration by individuals of new elements in their identity, and the evaluation process, which is the process by which individuals evaluate elements by giving them a value and a meaning. These processes are supported by four principles: i) distinctiveness; ii) continuity; iii) self-esteem; and iv) self-efficacy (Breakwell, 1986). When considered in relation to the idea of place identity, distinctiveness can be defined as how a place allows someone to distinguish himself or herself from others; continuity can be defined as how places play the role of referent of past selves and actions and then give a sense of continuity to individuals; self-esteem can be defined as how a place allows someone to have a positive or negative conception of himself/herself; and self-efficacy can be defined as how the environment meets individuals' situational demands and enhances their ability to undertake certain tasks. IPT has been used by several authors in place studies (Downey et al., 2017; Speller and Twigger-Ross, 2002; Twigger-Ross and Uzzell, 1996) and remains, to date, the main theory used to shed light on individuals' and groups' place identities.

### **Landscape identity**

The contribution of landscape to identity has been acknowledged in academia, as well as in policy. Indeed, the European Landscape Convention describes landscapes as contributing "to the formation of local cultures" and as consolidating the "European identity" (Council of Europe, 2000, p. 1). In this policy document, landscapes are described as cultural artefacts contributing to the creation of groups' identities. In academic research,

the link between landscape and identity is also acknowledged. Greider and Garkovich (1994), for example, argue that "the physical environment is transformed into landscapes that are reflections of how we define ourselves" (p. 2). More recently, Wheeler (2014), working in a mining village (Askam-in-Furness, Cumbria, England), explained that a part of the collective identity in the village was built on the memories of the "arduous, dangerous industry of iron-ore mining" (p. 32). The ruins of the mining landscape act as reminders of this identity, which is then "perpetuated and reiterated" through social remembering (Wheeler, 2014, p. 32). Finally, Carolino (2010) argues that landscapes are "mobilized by social actors for identity constructions" (p. 655).

Stobbelaar and Pedroli (2011), in their review of these conceptualisations, distinguish four types of landscape-identity relationships, divided along two axes: the spatial-existential and the personal-cultural. The 'spatial' landscape identity is relatively close to the 'genius loci' discussed earlier. It captures the specificities of the physical features of the landscape. The spatial dimension of landscape identity can be apprehended at the personal or cultural level: the personal level captures the features in a landscape that enable an individual to recognise the area and orientate itself within it; and the cultural focuses on the features of the landscape that are recognisable for everyone, and which distinguish one landscape from another (Kaligarič and Ivajnsič, 2014; Owen, 2005). Following this conceptualisation of landscape identity, Landscape Character Assessment is used in the United Kingdom in order to identify each landscape's unique characteristic (Swanwick, 2002).

The other conception of landscape identity described by Stobbelaar and Pedroli (2011) is the existential landscape identity. In this conceptualisation, landscapes are distinguished from each other, not in terms of their physical features, but rather in terms of their special meanings for individuals (personal) or groups (cultural). Landscapes may have played a role in a person's life or they may have affected groups' feelings of identity. This conception of landscape identity is similar to the definition of place identity as a feature of a person presented earlier. It is similar to the extent that Stobbelaar and Pedroli (2011) present identity process theory (described earlier as being used to understand place identity) as a way to grasp the personal-existential landscape identity. An important point is that IPT is only used to describe individual and not social (cultural) landscape identity. However, Breakwell (2014b) argues that the distinction between individual and social identity does not hold in identity process theory as "social identities are seen to become core components of personal identity" (p. 25). This is supported by Jaspal and Yampolsky (2011) who explain that identity process theory can also be used

to describe group identity.

When considering the literature on place and the literature on landscape identity, we can identify two ways place and landscape relate to the question of identity. Firstly, each place or landscape has specific characteristics that make it distinct from other places or landscapes (*genius loci*). Secondly, places and landscapes can play a role in the development of social identity through the four principles of self-esteem, self-efficacy, continuity and distinctiveness. This distinction between two different types of place identity is also acknowledged by Fresque-Baxter and Armitage (2012) who argue that the distinctiveness of a place can be of two types: the place can be considered as distinct from others, or the place can be considered as contributing to the creation of an individual's distinct identity. In our work, we will always consider these two types of relationship between place/landscape and identity.

So far, we have given a succinct overview of the literature on place/landscape and how the conceptualisations of place and landscape as socio-political constructs progressively emerged in both the place literature and the landscape literature. We have also seen how, to understand the creation of place and landscape, it is necessary to look at the practices that carve the landscape/place, and at conflicts over the meanings of the landscape/place. The conceptualisation of place and landscape as a socio-political construct is essential for understanding conflicts in peri-urban areas. Indeed, the politics of place/landscape stresses the importance of focusing on the meanings attributed to place by different groups, and how these meanings are enacted in the landscape through practices. We have also seen how place/landscape can play a role in the creation of social identity and influence the ways in which social groups feel included or excluded from a specific landscape/place. However, we do not know the exact nature of the relationships between practices, meanings and identities and the physical landscape/place in the context of the politics of place/landscape. The literature cited above hints at the relationships that may exist between the different dimensions, but does not give a comprehensive account of these relationships. The next section describes the potential interconnections between the physical landscape, practices, meanings/representations and identities, by exploring several models or frameworks tackling the question of human beings' relationships to place/landscape.

### **2.2.2 Place and landscape models: interconnections**

Existing models indicate several potential relationships between the various dimensions of place/landscape identified earlier (physical landscape, practices, meaning

and identity), and the integration of some of those dimensions into the broader power relationships existing within society. In this section we will therefore look at how these models can help us better understand the politics of place/landscape identity. In earlier sections we showed that place and landscape can be considered to be conceptually similar. Hence, we will look at models focusing on both landscape and place.

According to several models of place/landscape, an individual's or group's relationship to a place/landscape – place attachment or landscape identity – is based on the meaning they attribute to the physical place/landscape (Greider and Garkovich, 1994; Stedman, 2003). Stedman (2003), for example, argues that "physical features do not produce sense of place directly, but influence the symbolic meanings of the landscape, which are in turn associated with evaluations such as [place] attachment" (p. 674). Greider and Garkovich (1994) affirm that the meaning given to the landscape by individuals or groups reflects their identities. In both cases, the relationship to place/landscape, whether it is called sense of place or landscape identity, is created through the attribution of meaning to the physical landscape. However, in Stedman (2003)'s case, the physical attributes of the place/landscape influence the meaning given to the place/landscape, whereas for Greider and Garkovich (1994), it is the values by which individuals and groups define themselves, rather than the physical attributes of the landscape, that influence the meaning given to the landscape.

Greider and Garkovich (1994) go one step further than Stedman (2003). They integrate the process of meaning making into a broader political frame by arguing that there are competing discourses about the meaning of the landscape. This political dimension of the process of meaning making is unpacked by Harner (2001) and Larsen (2004) who explain that the nature of the relationship created with a place (place identity in this case) varies according to the position of a group in society. Place identity is said to be hegemonic when the meaning a group attributes to the landscape is accepted as legitimate by other groups, including oppressed groups. Place identity is said to be resistant when a group challenges the dominant understanding of the landscape, and emergent when the meaning and control of the landscape are renegotiated between groups (Larsen, 2004).

In the models of place/landscape we have considered so far, the relationships between groups and a place/landscape are created through a process of meaning making, which is embedded (for some) in the broader power relationships existing within a society. This gives us an indication of how the physical and representational dimensions are linked. However, these models do not overtly consider the notion of practices, which have

been described in the literature as part of the process of constructing a relationship with place/landscape. In addition, for the models that tackle the question of identity (Greider and Garkovich, 1994; Harner, 2001), identity is considered to emerge directly from the meaning attributed by groups to the landscape, except for Larsen (2004) who explains that identity is created through the process of differentiating an in-group and an out-group. However, even in Larsen (2004)'s study the features of identity and its relationships with other dimensions are not detailed.

A model created by Stephenson (2008) addresses one of the limitations of the above model by including the notion of practices as a dimension to consider when looking at the landscape. Stephenson (2008) considers that the relationships individuals or groups create with the landscape are the result of interactions between: "forms" (natural and cultural landscape features), "practices" (human practices and natural processes) and "relationships" between people, and between people and place. These "relationships" can be understood as processes of meaning making that encompass stories, myths and memories. In addition, this model challenges another aspect of previous models' conceptualisation of people's relationships to place: their uni-directional nature. Indeed, the previous models consider that a relationship to place is the result of the attribution of meaning to the physical landscape/place. In contrast, Stephenson (2008) argues that relationships to landscape are created through two-way relationships between the physical landscape, practices and meaning. The relationship to landscape emerges from the interactions between forms, practices and relationships. In Stephenson (2008)'s model the different dimensions are interlinked, and influence each other.

**TABLE 2.6:** Summary of the different dimensions of place and landscape and their relationships as described in various place or landscape models.

Red cells indicate that the model includes the dimension. White cells indicate that the model does not include the dimension.

|                                      | Stedman<br>(2003)   | Greider and<br>Garkovich<br>(1994) | Harner<br>(2001)    | Larsen<br>(2004)    | Stephenson<br>(2008) |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|----------------------|
| Physical<br>landscape                |                     |                                    |                     |                     |                      |
| Practices                            |                     |                                    |                     |                     |                      |
| Meaning/<br>representation           |                     |                                    |                     |                     |                      |
| Identity                             |                     |                                    |                     |                     |                      |
| Politics of<br>place                 |                     |                                    |                     |                     |                      |
| Uni-directional<br>or bi-directional | Uni-<br>directional | Uni-<br>directional                | Uni-<br>directional | Uni-<br>directional | Bi-<br>directional   |

The models reviewed conceptualise the nature of the interactions between different dimensions of place/landscape (physical landscape, practices, identity, meaning), and the question of the politics of place more specifically, by integrating the various dimensions of place in the broader power relationships existing in society (see Table 2.6 above). These models therefore provide the beginnings of an answer to our question about how the different dimensions of the politics of place are articulated. However, we saw that the models conceptualise the interactions between some of the dimensions of place/landscape differently. Indeed, some models consider the connections between different dimensions to be uni-directional, whereas others consider them to be bi-directional. Moreover, the nature and content of identity is not considered, as identity, when considered, is often seen as being the direct result of the process of meaning making, except in the case of (Larsen, 2004).

In the next sections we will see how the literature on social representations, social practices and the identity process theory can contribute to clarifying whether the connections between the different dimensions of place/landscape are uni-directional or bi-directional. We will also see how the literature can contribute to the better integration of the notion of identity in the politics of place/landscape.

### **2.2.3 Practices, representations and physical landscape: uni- or bi-directional connection?**

In Stephenson (2008)'s model, the interactions between practices, meaning and the physical landscape are the basis of the creation of a relationship to the landscape. In the literature on social representations and social practices, studies which address the relationships between meaning (or representations) and practices have adopted a similar position (Abric, 1994; Schatzki, 1996; Shove et al., 2012). Abric (1994) argues against Marxist sociology, which posits that the conditions of production (practices) determine ideologies (representations). Abric (1994) defends the idea that the subject is active, and that cultural, normative and value-related factors, as well as factors related to the subject's activity, determine his/her practices. In this case, representations – that is, the ways in which meaning is formed through categories in the mind and shared with others through language (Hall, 1997) – play a role in determining practices. However, Abric (1994) also acknowledges that even if representations can determine practices, those representations may have been partly determined by older pre-existing practices. This means that practices and social representations are co-dependent and create each other. A similar position is adopted in the literature on social practices. Shove et al. (2012) argue that activities are partly determined by rules and meanings, and conversely, rules and meanings are reproduced in actions. Therefore, practices and meanings (or representations) are co-dependent.

We now know that practices and meaning influence each other. However, we do not know the circumstances in which meaning influences practices and vice versa. Abric (1994) attempts to give us an answer by arguing that representations determine practices when the reference to the collective memory to justify practices is strong, and when subjects have some autonomy in relation to external constraints. On the other hand, under certain external material or social constraints new practices can influence social representations.

We see here that practices and representations are co-dependent, with one being able to influence the other and vice versa. We also see that representations influence practices when individuals or groups are not subject to external pressures. For example, a representation of the types of activities that are legitimate in the peri-urban landscape can influence the practices occurring in the landscape. Conversely, practices are more likely to influence representations when subjects are under external pressures (for example, changes in the physical landscape of the peri-urban). In our case study, the

notion of practices will include a diverse range of elements. These elements include all planning practices that have an impact on the landscape. They also include normal farming practices, the adaptive strategies and the informal or formal arrangements which farmers adopt to improve their situations in the peri-urban. The notion of arrangements refers to "informal agreements, compromises, and adaptations" or "explicit arrangements based on rules negotiated and established by the different actors to gain access to various resources" (Robineau, 2015, p. 323). These strategies and arrangements are not practices per se, but they contain a set of practices. For example, the adoption of a biodiversity offset scheme by a farmer is an adaptive strategy. But this adaptive strategy triggers changes in practices, such as the adoption of conservation practices on the farm, and therefore changes to daily activities. We will therefore consider all of these elements as practices, as they all encompass practices.

#### **2.2.4 Integrating the notion of identity: social representations and identity**

In some of the models discussed above, identity is considered to be the direct result of the representations groups have of the physical landscape. As a result, these models do not acknowledge the nature and content of identity. However, when we looked at the literature focusing on landscape and place identity, we saw that conceptualisations of identity existed that could shed light on the relationship between landscape/place and identity. In this section, we look at how identity can be better integrated into place/landscape models.

The identity function of social representations has been acknowledged in the literature. For example Durkheim (1898), whose work was a precursor of the notion of 'social representations', introduces the notion of 'collective representations'. He writes that "what collective representations are translating is the way the group is thinking itself in its relations with the objects that are affecting it"<sup>2</sup> (Durkheim, 1898, p. 16)(translation L-E Ruoso). Jodelet (1989), in her study of madness in a rural locale, shows how inhabitants created social representations which enabled them to differentiate their group from the 'mads', demonstrating how representations can play a role in the creation of a distinct identity. Finally, it has been acknowledged in the social psychology literature that social representations and identity processes more particularly, are linked (Breakwell, 1993, 2010, 2014a; Jaspal and Yampolsky, 2011). We will now explore how social psychologists

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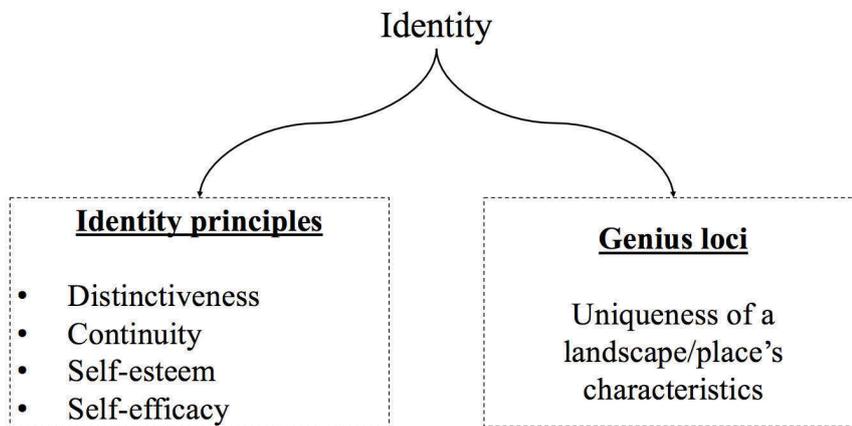
<sup>2</sup>"Ce que les representations collectives traduisent, c'est la façon dont le groupe se pense dans ses rapports avec les objets qui l'affecte"

describe the different ways in which social representations and identity processes are connected.

First of all, social representations can be employed by the members of a group to define the characteristics of their group, and the characteristics of the out-group, in order to be able to justify the behaviour of the members of their group, and to anticipate interactions between groups. The members of a group attribute to themselves positive characteristics they attribute negative characteristics to the other group in order to maintain a positive social identity. Therefore, social representations play a role in the determination and maintenance of in-group/out-group distinctions and the maintenance of positive social identities. For example, Jaspal (2013) argues that British Sikhs reproduce Islamophobic social representations in order to paint Islam negatively, and to differentiate between Sikhism and Islam. Therefore, in this context, social representations are used to protect in-group identity by portraying an out-group in negative terms. Secondly, social representations can have a purpose at the intragroup level. They can "foster common consciousness among members which need not be associated with the intergroup context" (Breakwell, 1993, p. 4). They can therefore contribute to defining a group's specific characteristics and reinforcing its internal social identity. Social representations can therefore be considered as serving inter- and intra- group interests (Breakwell, 2010). In addition, we can argue that the social identity of an individual will also influence the social representations he/she will adopt (Breakwell, 1993, 2010). According to Breakwell (1993) a person's social identity will affect his or her acceptance or rejection of a social representation, his or her exposure to a representation (members of groups are more exposed to representations defending their groups' interests), and the extent of the use of the social representation. We saw here that the social identity of individuals will be reinforced through the adoption of specific social representations. But it is also observed that social representations can challenge the identity structure of an individual and lead to a change in his/her identity structure. Breakwell (2014a) takes the example of smoking to explain how social representations can lead to changes in identity structure. She explains that the changes that have occurred in the representation of smoking (from positive or less negative connotations to negative connotations) influences the role smoking (or having stopped smoking) plays in a person's identity. Social representations therefore have the potential to reinforce or modify a person's identity structure.

The literature on social representations and the social psychology literature both argue that a connection exists between social representations and identity, more specifically a bi-directional connection (individuals adopt social representations which reinforce

their social identity, but changes in social representations can also influence individuals' social identity). Therefore, our postulate is that there is an intermediate step between the representational dimension of landscape and the emergence of place identity, which is identity. In the literature on place and landscape identity, identity is defined not only as a feature of a person, but also as involving the physical characteristics of a place/landscape. Therefore, we define identity as including the four identity principles (Breakwell, 1986) and the genius loci, which refers to the uniqueness of the physical features of a place/landscape (see Figure 2.5 below). We will see that both these conceptualisations of identity are necessary to understand the construction of place identities in Wollondilly Shire.

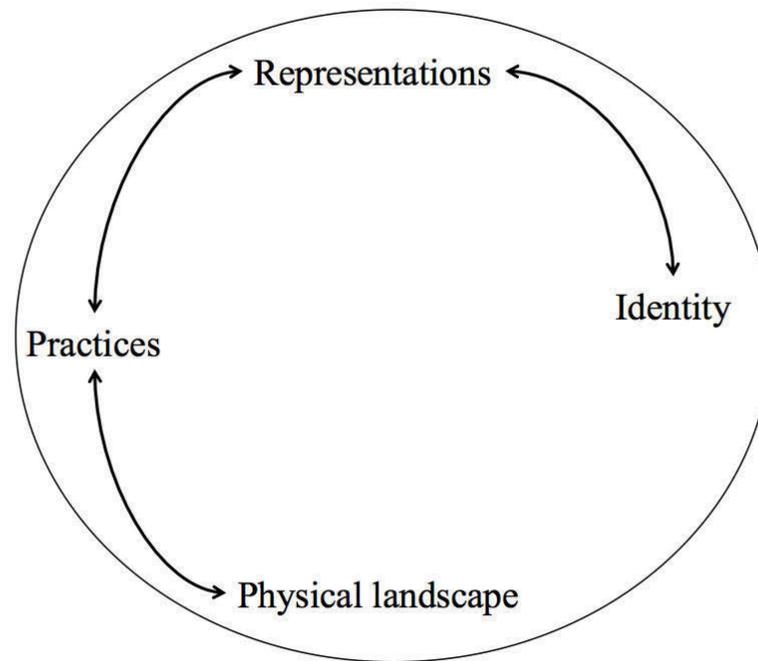


**FIGURE 2.5:** Conceptualisations of identity as a feature of a person (identity principles) and as the physical characteristics of a place (genius loci).

### 2.2.5 Synthesis: a framework of the politics of place/landscape identity

The politics of place can thus be considered as emerging from the interplay between the physical landscape, practices, meaning and identity dimensions. As seen earlier, the relationships between the different dimensions of the politics of place/landscape identity are bi-directional (see Figure 2.6 below). Groups can develop a representation of the physical landscape and the appropriate practices in the landscape that reinforces their existing identity and therefore their place identity. Conversely, external pressures in the physical landscape can lead groups to change their practices. This has the potential to trigger changes in representation and eventually in identity, modifying the nature a

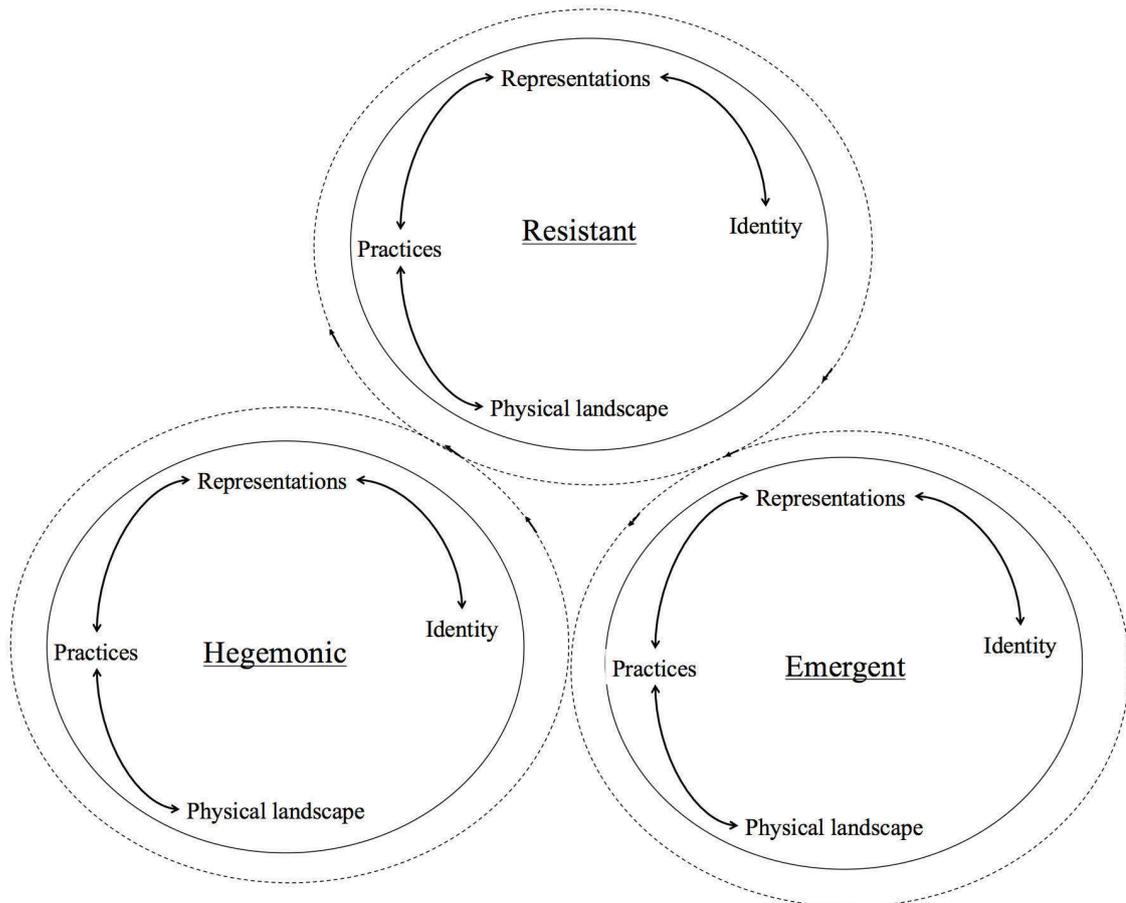
group's place identity.



**FIGURE 2.6:** Dimensions of politics of place/landscape identity.

The four dimensions of the politics of place/landscape identity are themselves embedded into three moments of the politics of place identity: hegemony, resistance and emergence, as illustrated in the Figure 2.7 below. The hegemonic place identity refers to the moment where one group has control over the landscape and is able to attribute a meaning to the landscape that is accepted as legitimate by other groups in society. A place identity is said to be resistant when a group challenges the dominant understanding of the landscape and offers another interpretation of it. Finally, a place identity can be considered as emergent when control over the landscape, and the meaning given to the landscape, are renegotiated between groups. The framework is dynamic, as the three moments of the politics of place are "momentary outcomes in an ongoing dialectic of identity formation" (Larsen, 2004, p. 957). The relationships between the three moments are not described in detail by Larsen (2004). However, we can understand from his case study that hegemonic and resistant place identities exist concurrently. Indeed, groups with a hegemonic place identity are in control of the landscape and its meaning. However, Larsen (2004) explains that a hegemonic place identity cannot exhaust all

human practice, energy and intention, meaning that a hegemonic place identity is not all encompassing. Resistant place identities can therefore exist concurrently with hegemonic place identities. However, a characteristic of resistant place identities in Larsen (2004)'s case study is that they do not have access to the "means" (in his case study "means" refers to the means of production; in our case study it would refer to the ability to modify the physical landscape through planning practices or other practices). This means that resistant place identities construct an alternative meaning of the landscape, but are not necessarily able to gain control over the landscape. The meaning they attribute to the landscape is therefore not necessarily influencing the appearance and development of the landscape. Moreover, in Larsen (2004)'s case study, resistant place identity tends to promote inaction and resignation, discouraging any type of action. Finally, emergent place identities can only be constructed when leadership structures emerge within the community that lead to a renegotiation of the meaning and control over the landscape. Therefore, emergent place identities appear to be a response to hegemonic and resistant place identities. In Larsen (2004)'s case study the construction of an emergent place identity was the result of grassroots collective action. In our case study, we will see that indications of an emergent place identity were visible in farmers' arrangements and adaptive strategies, which were individual actions. As hegemonic, resistant and emergent place identities always exist in relation to each other, arrows are used in Figure 2.7 below to represent this dynamic relationship. We will now illustrate our framework in a case study of Wollondilly Shire, a peri-urban local government area in the Greater Sydney Basin, Australia.



**FIGURE 2.7:** Politics of place/landscape identity framework. Each cycle, which is made of the different dimensions of landscape and place, represents a moment of the politics of place/landscape identity. The three moments are related by arrows, as they exist in relation to each other.

## METHODOLOGY

### 3.1 A few words about the author

I am a social scientist with scholarly interest on the relationships between human societies and their natural and cultivated environments from a trans-disciplinary perspective.

My masters' thesis, undertaken in France, focused on how local stakeholders perceived the ecosystem services provided by peri-urban agricultural landscapes, surrounding the Thau Lagoon (South of France). The aim of this work was to gather qualitative data on stakeholder-perceived benefits and translate these into maps, with a view to integrate them to the planning process. One of the omissions of this work was that it did not take into account the power relationships that could influence the integration of this information into planning processes.

Consequently, when I started a PhD, a year later, at the Institute for Sustainable Futures in Sydney (Australia), I was strongly motivated to integrate this power dimension. The concepts of 'politics of place' and 'politics of landscape' progressively emerged as relevant to look at power dimensions in peri-urban areas. This is because the discourse on rurality in peri-urban areas is increasingly articulated around the question of "what the landscape should look like?" And "who and what belongs to the landscape?"

In the Australian context, where peri-urban agriculture is facing hardship due to the nearly fully unfolded liberalisation of agricultural policy, combined with intense housing development, undertaking a critical enquiry into the mechanisms of domination was my

obvious choice. However, have carefully designed my research to avoid depicting farmers as having no agency. Firstly because farmers do have some agency, and secondly because doing so would be, as Gibson-Graham put it, giving too much power to the neoliberal order. For this reason, I chose to also look at all the initiatives taken by farmers that could act as signs of a potential renegotiation of the role of farming in peri-urban areas.

## 3.2 A constructionist approach

For this study, we adopted a constructionist approach as defined by Crotty (1998):

*It is the view that all knowledge and therefore all meaningful reality as such, is contingent upon human practices, being constructed in and out of interaction between human beings and their world, and developed and transmitted within an essentially social context (p. 42).*

The first characteristic of constructionism that is worth stressing is that meaning is considered a construct. That is to say, the world and its objects are not considered to have meaning unless there is a conscious human being engaging with them. Therefore, meaning is created by human beings when they interact with the world. The idea of interaction in the world is important because, as Crotty (1998) stresses, construction of meaning does not mean creation of meaning. Creating meaning implies that meaning would emerge from the human mind without interacting with the world. Constructing meaning implies that meaning emerges from human beings' engagement in the world, and the world and its objects are "partners in the generation of meaning" (Crotty, 1998, p. 44). Therefore, objects - even if they can be "in themselves meaningless" - are important actors in the meaning-making process (Crotty, 1998, p. 44).

The second important characteristic of constructionism, as defined by Crotty (1998), is that the process of meaning making in which human beings engage is always embedded in a "historical and social perspective" (p. 54). The way we make sense of the world is informed by the culture we are born in. According to Crotty (1998), "our culture brings things into view for us and endows them with meaning" (p. 54). Meaning-making is therefore not an individual process, but rather a collective one. The way we see the world is partly determined by the group(s) to which we belong. This leads us to the third important point made by Crotty (1998), which is that adopting a constructionist approach leads us to take a critical stance.

Constructionism acknowledges that individuals are shaped by their cultures, meaning

that culture determines or at least influences their vision of the world. This view of meaning making as a collective process immediately leads to the question of what the purpose of this process is in society at large, and particularly the power structures that this collective process of meaning making supports (Crotty, 1998).

In our study we focus on how competing identities, representations and practices in a peri-urban area are articulated between different social groups. We will also attempt to determine which groups have the power to determine the evolution of the peri-urban landscape, and which groups do not. We will therefore focus on how meanings are constructed by various social groups, and how those meanings are reflected, or not reflected, in the landscape according to a group's position in society. In our politics of place/landscape identity framework, place and landscape are conceptualised as socio-political constructs that reflect groups' competing meanings and practices, which are embedded in power relationships. This conceptualisation of place and landscape is therefore in step with a constructionist epistemology. In the next section we will see how a constructionist epistemology is embodied in critical enquiry.

### **3.3 A critical enquiry**

According to Crotty (1998) a critical enquiry is a form of research that aims at challenging rather than only understanding. In this section we look at how critical enquiry evolved from a Marxian approach which emphasises economic forces, particularly the means of production, to become an approach which also focuses on superstructures, that is to say, on the cultural elements that shape a society, which is the approach that we will adopt in this study.

In the tradition of critical enquiry Marx is a prominent figure. His analysis of society can be described as economic determinism. Indeed, for Marx, the groups who own the means of production have the power to shape the consciousness of the society they are living in (Crotty, 1998). All the other forces that might exist, which Marx calls superstructures, such as political or legal forces, cultural practices, are considered as deriving from the social relations of production (Crotty, 1998; Moore, 1993, 1996).

The economic determinism of Marxism has been challenged in Marxian scholarship itself. Marxian scholars have progressively focused on superstructures or, in other words, on the legal, political and cultural forces that contribute to shaping society. Focusing more specifically on the relationships between human beings and their environments, which is the subject that interests us, Moore (1993, 1996) explains that Marxians' eco-

conomic determinism can lead them to overlook the other factors that contribute to a better understanding of the relationships between human societies and their environmental resources, and more particularly the conflicts over environmental resources in human societies. Taking a Gramscian perspective, Moore (1996) stresses that superstructures contribute to material transformation, and he therefore insists on the importance of considering cultural meanings as "constitutive forces" and acknowledges that "symbolic struggles effect material transformations" (p. 127). In other words, he explains that "struggles over land and environmental resources are simultaneously struggles over cultural meanings" (Moore, 1993, p. 383). In this conceptualisation of the relationships between human societies and environmental resources, the focus is on the interrelations between the material and symbolic worlds, and how each one has an influence on the others.

Our study is in line with a critical enquiry approach, and more particularly Gramsci's approach as developed by Moore (1993, 1996). Indeed, our aim is to show how dominant and resistant place-based identities, representations and practices are articulated in a peri-urban context. Our focus is therefore on the power relationships in place, and on how they are contested and resisted. Our approach is aligned with Moore's approach (Moore, 1993, 1996) because we focus on the intricacies of the symbolic and material worlds at the local scale, and try to shed light on how struggles over the meaning of the peri-urban are also struggles over environmental resources. In our case, the environmental resource we will be focusing on is the peri-urban landscape. We will see how different representations of peri-urban lands are leading communities to consider certain types of practices and development of the land to be legitimate, while depicting others as inappropriate.

This conceptualisation of the relationships between human societies and the environment as not fully determined by external forces allows us some space to consider the agency of individuals or groups in place. This does not mean that external forces (in our case, the impacts of neoliberal agricultural policies and urban planning on peri-urban farming) are considered as not having a role; instead they are considered as constraining rather than determining structures (Moore, 1996). This leads us to the possibility of going beyond critical enquiry, which focuses on mechanisms of domination and oppression – hegemonic and resistant place-based identities – and looking at the potential for creating an emergent place-based identity.

### **3.4 Beyond critical enquiry: looking for possible futures**

Critical enquiry focuses on the mechanisms of domination and oppression. Gibson-Graham (2008) argues that rather than "confirming what we already know, that the world is a place of domination and oppression", the goal of theory could be to "help us see openings, to provide a space of freedom and possibility" (p. 619). For Gibson-Graham (2006) there has been a tendency in research to "represent economy as a space of invariant logics and automatic unfolding that offered no field for intervention" (p. 21). They point out that human societies are always considered as being determined by influential economic forces such as colonialism, imperialism, globalisation or post-socialism. In this context, little space is left for agency and the possibility for individuals and groups to enact different economic possibilities. To address this lack, Gibson-Graham (2006) proposes to "deny these forces a fundamental, structural or universal reality" and to think about them as "contingent outcomes", in order to leave a space for other economic possibilities to be identified and to develop themselves (p. 31). According to Gibson-Graham (2014), thinking about structural economic forces in terms of contingent outcomes and looking for the variety of economies that already exist is a way to transform "faint glimmers of hope into prefigurative elements of a becoming economy" (p. 151). This means that rather than reading for "dominance" they read for "difference" (Gibson-Graham, 2008, p. 623). By adopting this approach, we are able to move beyond critical enquiry by not looking at why it is impossible to move forward and trigger change at the local scale, but rather by looking at how it is possible to do so.

When considering the politics of place/landscape identity framework presented in the literature review, it becomes clear that the study of hegemonic and resistant place identities is embedded in a critical enquiry approach, where the aim is to describe how dominant place identities are created through the articulation of a specific identity supported by representations, which define the types of practices judged appropriate and the appearance the landscape should take. Dominant place identities determine what practices and appearances are deemed legitimate at the expense of others. This constitutes a process of inclusion/exclusion. In response to this, resistant place identities focus on how marginalised groups create a different place identity with which they can reassert the legitimacy of their presence and their activities in the landscape. We are clearly focusing here on the logics of dominance that constitute the social world. However, there is one more dimension to the model, a dimension which focuses on

emergent place identities. When we look at emergent place identities, we are focusing on the potential renegotiations that can occur between place-based stakeholders in order to create a different place identity. Whereas Gibson-Graham (2006) focuses mostly on possibilities for enacting alternative economies, when we look at emergent place identities we will consider alternative practices (not only economic ones) which can contribute to renegotiating the dominant representations and identities in the peri-urban. Among these changes in practices, some are economic, but others focus on other aspects such as renegotiating the social and spatial relationships between groups in the peri-urban. These changes in practices will be interpreted as indications of potential renegotiations of representations, leading to a more inclusive place identity. Even if the focus is not necessarily always on the idea of creating alternative economies, the approach proposed by Gibson-Graham (2006) seems relevant to our study because it enables us to think about human beings as having agency, and as being able to create alternatives to dominant representations and identities. These alternatives are often hidden because they are considered weak or irrelevant. Gibson-Graham (2014) calls for a focus on these alternatives, and for a recognition of their potential for articulating various futures.

### **3.5 Case study approach**

For this study we chose a case study approach. This approach appears to be appropriate for several reasons. Firstly, we are investigating a contemporary phenomenon within its real world context, which is one of the defining characteristic of a case study (Yin, 2009). Secondly, we aim at developing a detailed understanding of the "complexities of a given situation" by adopting a holistic approach and focusing on processes and relationships rather than on isolated factors, outcomes and results. This is a second characteristic of the case study (Denscombe, 1998, p. 36). And finally, our aim is to understand how various relationships to place unfold in the peri-urban. We are therefore, to a certain extent, focusing on the lived experiences of individuals and groups, in our case farmers, and a case study approach can help us capture these lived experiences (Hardwick, 2009).

Our unit of analysis for this study is a particular peri-urban environment (Wollondilly Shire), with a focus on the politics of place identity, more particularly the role given to productive land and farming activities in dominant, resistant and emergent place identities. This unit of analysis has been chosen because peri-urban areas are undergoing

changes triggered by the phenomena presented in Chapter 2 Part 1. Because of these changes, the identity of peri-urban areas is destabilised and fought over by different groups who have different understandings of what the landscape should look like, and of which practices are acceptable. We decided to focus on the role given to productive land and farming activities in the process of the redefinition of the peri-urban, because peri-urban farming has a role to play regarding the resilience, sustainability and food security of Sydney and the health and well-being of its population, and its importance is being progressively undermined by the dominant representations of the peri-urban, and by changes to the material landscape.

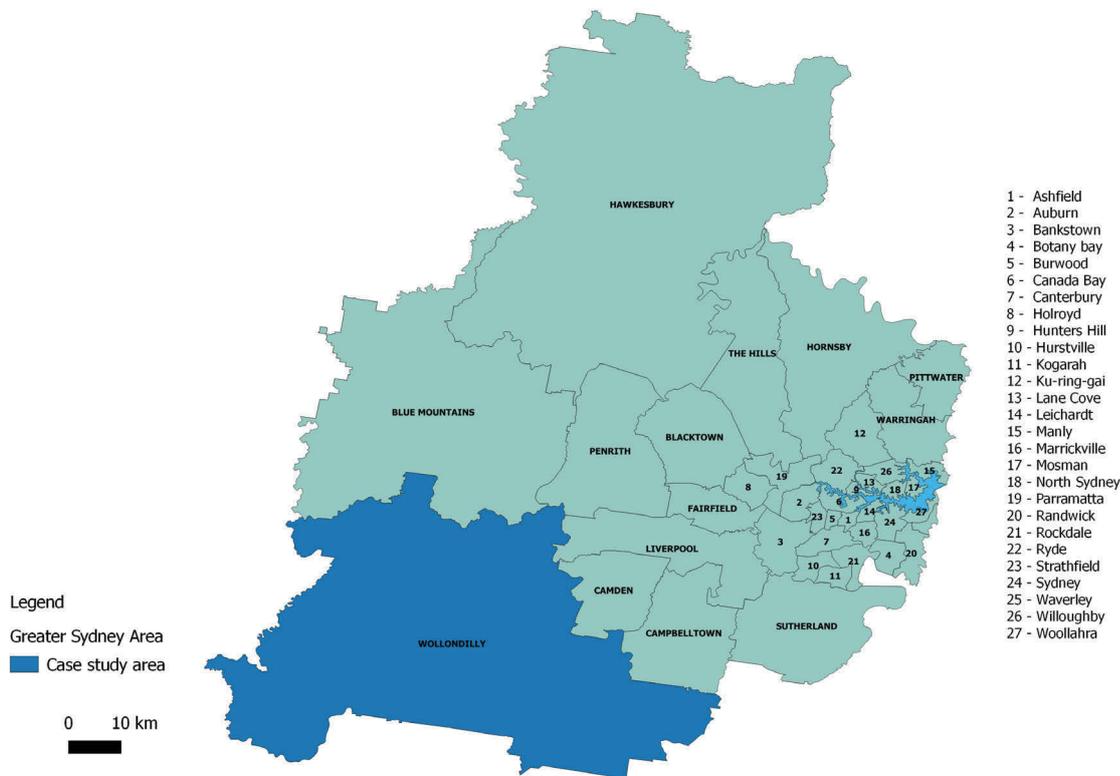
To analyse the politics of placeidentity in the peri-urban, we will use the politics of place/landscape identity framework developed earlier. This framework enables us to identify different moments of the politics of place (hegemony, resistance and emergence) as well as different dimensions that constitute a place identity (material landscape, practices, representations and identity - four identity principles or *genius loci* -). This politics of place identity framework is going to inform our research, and help us answer our research questions, which have already been presented in the introduction:

1. What are the dominant place identities in Wollondilly Shire? What is the role given to productive landscape in these dominant place identities?
2. How much "leeway" do farmers have to make changes leading to an emergent place identity that recasts the role of productive landscapes?

We chose Wollondilly Shire as our case study area. Wollondilly Shire is situated in the South West of the Sydney metropolitan area (Figure 3.1 below). It was an ideal location because, while it is undergoing some pressures induced by the phenomenon of peri-urbanisation and the broader context of the liberalisation of the farming industry, agriculture remains relatively important in the area. It represents 11% of the total agricultural value of the Greater Sydney Basin in 2010/2011, against 5.8% and 3.6% for the neighbouring shires of Camden and Campbelltown (Macarthur Regional Organisation of Councils, 2016a). The main farming activity in the Shire in 2010/2011 was livestock farming, which represented 54.6% of the total agricultural value produced in the Shire. Livestock slaughterings was followed by vegetable farming which represented 20.1% of the total agricultural value produced in the Shire (Macarthur Regional Organisation of Councils, 2016a). Other relatively significant activities were dairy farming, egg production and flower growing which accounted for 7.2%, 6.1% and 3% respectively of the Shire's agricultural value (Macarthur Regional Organisation of Councils, 2016a).

Other agricultural activities in the area include: fruit, nuts, hay, cereals, grapes and wool production, but they are less important (Macarthur Regional Organisation of Councils, 2016a). Livestock slaughterings, vegetable farming, dairy farming, egg production and flower growing (and nurseries) in Wollondilly Shire respectively represented 14.3%, 9.9%, 40.9%, 8.3%, and 4.7% of the total value of agricultural production in the Greater Sydney Basin in 2010/11 (Macarthur Regional Organisation of Councils, 2016a).

We consider the Shire to be a typical instance or representative case of the pressures farming faces in the peri-urban, and at the same time, agricultural activities have remained sufficiently important to be part of the debate on the identity of Wollondilly Shire. This is another reason why we chose Wollondilly Shire as a case study (Denscombe, 1998; Yin, 2009). For example, in the Growth Management Strategy, which is the strategic document created at the local level (Wollondilly Shire) which defines the local government's planning orientations, the Shire is described as a "rural living" shire which accommodates housing development while maintaining its agricultural activities (Wollondilly Shire Council, 2011a). The preservation of agricultural activities is therefore considered as a part of the "rural living" identity of the Shire.



**FIGURE 3.1:** Case study area. [Incorporates or developed using Administrative Boundaries, PSMA Australia Limited licensed by the Commonwealth of Australia under Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International licence (CC BY 4.0)]

## 3.6 Methods

A case study approach enables and encourages the use of several methods of data collection, which leads to greater reliability of the results due to the process of triangulation, as we will explain later (Denscombe, 1998; Hardwick, 2009; Yin, 2009). According to Yin (2009) the main methods of data collection used in a case study are: documentation, archival records, interviews, direct observation, participant-observation, and physical artefacts. For this study interviews and documentation appeared to be the most appropriate methods of data collection, considering the type of information we were interested in.

Our aim in this study is to understand how dominant, resistant and emergent place identities are expressed in the peri-urban, and to identify the roles attributed to productive lands and farming activities in these place identities. We therefore needed to

understand the representations various stakeholders had of the peri-urban, and also how the material landscape was changing through various practices. We therefore needed to get access to both stakeholders' representations, and more factual information about the evolution of the landscape. Semi-structured interviews appeared to be a suitable data collection method because it enables different stakeholders, and more particularly farmers, to express their perceptions and reflections on their relationships to the land, their roles in the peri-urban and their views on the evolution of the physical landscape in the area. Two main groups of interviewees were identified: farmers and planners/managers. The farmers were essential to this study because it focuses on the roles given to productive landscapes and farming activities in peri-urban place identities. Farmers were therefore the primary parties involved. The second group identified were the planners and managers working on questions of planning and agriculture at the local and state levels. This second group was also identified as essential because planners and managers are the ones who witness the changes happening in the area.

For the aspect of the research which focused on more factual information; the interviews were not enough, because they are verbal reports that are subject to "bias, poor recall and poor or inaccurate articulations" (Yin, 2009, p. 113). Therefore, document analysis was also used to confirm, nuance or complement the information given by planners and farmers during the interviews. Document analysis was also used to gather additional data on the peri-urban identity promoted in official documents, through specific representations of the landscapes, and specific planning practices in Wollondilly Shire.

### **3.6.1 Interviews**

For the farmers, we designed three iterative rounds of semi-structured interviews. The first two rounds of interviews focused on the evolution of the physical landscape, and the ways farmers were reacting to it, whereas the third round of interviews focused on their perceptions and reflections about their relationships to the land, and their role in the peri-urban. The main objective of the first round of interviews was to obtain a broad understanding of the constraints imposed on farmers by changes in the peri-urban area. These first interviews were centred on the identification, by farmers, of the elements of change in the landscape (e.g. the increasing number of houses or the complaints of neighbours), but also more general events that made farming more difficult in the peri-urban (e.g. the deregulation of the dairy industry and major supermarkets' duopoly). The first round of interviews also focused on the way farmers dealt with those changes (e.g.

the implementation of farmers' markets to counter the major supermarkets' duopoly). We prepared for each interviewee a timeline on an A1 sheet of paper, starting in 1970. Each interviewee was given Post-It Notes (small pieces of paper with an adhesive strip on the back) in three colours: pink for negative changes, yellow for neutral changes, and blue for positive changes or positive initiatives taken by the farmers themselves. Each element of change and the way farmers dealt with those changes was written on a post-it (a blue for positive changes or initiatives, a pink for negative changes and a yellow for neutral changes). Three spatial scales were used by farmers: macro-changes, local changes, and farm-level changes. The macro-changes identified by farmers were mostly related to changes in the economy, and were mostly negative. They included increases in imported produce or cost pressures. The local changes were issues such as urbanisation, increases in land prices, problems with newcomers, and the negative environmental impacts of hobby farmers and the horse industry. Other themes that were mentioned less frequently in these first interviews, but which were tackled more consistently in later interviews, included the diminution of the supply of farming equipment in the area, and a reduction in the number of like-minded farmers. Some positive changes were cited, such as the creation of farmers' markets. Finally, several themes appeared not to be relevant for our study because they did not directly concern farming (bad internet, bad roads, no traffic lights) or because they were only mentioned by one farmer and were not considered by that farmer as essential (contractor prices). The elements identified at the third scale (the farm scale) were mostly positive. They were often related to: the advantages of being close to the city (e.g. ability to source products), the changes in practices that gave an advantage to the farmers (e.g. creating dams and becoming drought proof, adopting integrated pest management), or the link of the family to the farm (e.g. succession planning, family history on the farm). Other elements remained more anecdotal and were therefore discarded.

The second round of interviews focused on delving into more details on one specific element identified during the first interview that was of particular significance for the interviewee, and on understanding the social representation the interviewee had of this element. The elements chosen by farmers were: constraints (complaints of neighbours or land values), positive adaptation to those constraints (farmers' markets) or positive elements for the future of the farm (succession planning).

In the third round, interviews were semi-structured and the approach taken was predominantly phenomenological. Whereas in the two first interviews the farmers identified changes, the third interview was centred on their personal trajectories, their personal

experiences of being farmers, and how they saw the future of their farms. To tackle these types of questions a phenomenological approach seemed appropriate, because it focuses on a detailed account of the interviewee's experience, and the ways he/she is making sense of this experience (Smith et al., 2009).

For the planners and managers one round of interviews was conducted. The focus was on the evolution of the peri-urban landscape, the changes they had identified since they started working in the area, the main issues they identified in relation to the continuation of peri-urban farming, and how they were seeing the future of farming in the Shire.

### **3.6.2 Document analysis**

For the document analysis, we focused on planning documents at the metropolitan and local levels which determine the planning orientations for the next twenty years or so. At the metropolitan scale we focused on the two last metropolitan strategies: the Metropolitan Plan for Sydney 2036 (Department of Planning and Environment, 2010) and A Plan for Growing Sydney (Department of Planning and Environment, 2015). At the local scale, we focused on the Growth Management Strategy (Wollondilly Shire Council, 2011a) and to a lesser extent on the Local Environmental Plan (Wollondilly Shire Council, 2011b). The main objective here was to identify how housing development and the preservation of farming activities were articulated in planning documents at the local and metropolitan scales. For the local planning document (Growth Management Strategy) we also looked at how the identity of the Shire was described, what role was given to productive lands and farming activities in the construction of this identity, and what type of spatial development the identity of the Shire was associated with.

In order to get more insights on the articulation of housing development and the preservation of agricultural areas in the Shire, we also looked at rezoning proposals. Rezoning proposals are requests for changing the zone in which a plot of land is situated. In the case of Wollondilly Shire, proposals often ask for a plot zoned rural to be changed to a residential, industrial or business zone. The rezoning process, called Gateway process, involves several stakeholders: the applicants, the council, the general population, and the state government; and is made of several steps which are described in Table 3.1 below.

**TABLE 3.1:** The Gateway process.

| Steps of the Gateway Process                   | Description   |
|--|---|
| The planning proposal                          | A planning proposal is prepared by the council or another relevant authority, often after having received and accepted a proposal made by a landowners (often through a consulting company)           |
| Initial consultation (specific to Wollondilly) | In Wollondilly, the Council does an initial (non statutory) consultation where members of the community can make submissions  |
| Gateway  | The Minister (or a delegate) approves or refuses a planning proposal -gateway decision - and establishes conditions (e.g. additional studies need to be provided, agencies need to be consulted etc.) |
| Community Consultation                         | The proposal goes through a public exhibition where members of the community make submissions and can request a public hearing  |
| Assessment                                     | The public submissions are reviewed and the Parliamentary Counsel prepares the LEP (Local Environmental Plan)   |
| The making of the LEP                          | After approval of the Minister (or a delegate), the LEP is published  |

During the analysis, most of the rezoning proposals were at the stage of the Gateway, meaning that an applicant had submitted a planning proposal, and this proposal had been accepted by Council who conducted an initial consultation and prepared a planning proposal. This planning proposal was then sent to the Department of Planning and Environment for the Minister to approve or refuse the proposal. At the time of the analysis, all the proposals had been approved through the Gateway. As a consequence, we had access to the documents covering the three first steps of the Gateway process: the initial planning proposal developed by the landowner or a consultant, the minutes of the Report of planning and economy to the ordinary meeting of Council where the Council took a decision regarding the planning proposal, the planning proposal developed by the Council, the submissions of members of the community to the planning proposal, and the

different documents provided by the Department of Planning and Environment to inform the Gateway decision, including the planning team report, the panel recommendation and the Gateway decision. The totality of these documents were not available for each rezoning proposal, and a summary of the documents used for each rezoning proposal is provided in the Annex.

Since the moment of the analysis, the status of the planning proposals has evolved and a document published by the Wollondilly Shire Council on the 28th of November 2017 on the Status of Planning Proposals (Wollondilly Shire Council, 2017), showed us that: 9 proposals analysed were completed, 13 were currently undergoing specialist studies, public exhibition and revision, one had been rejected because mining resources were identified on the site (Application 3 in the Annex), and one had been withdrawn because the applicants did not have sufficient funds to pay for additional studies and continue the process (Application 18 in the Annex). This illustrates the fact that our analysis does not give a final picture of the rezoning that will occur in Wollondilly, but rather gives us indications about how housing development and the preservation of agricultural lands and activities are articulated in planning practices.

Each proposal needs to consider several parameters such as their consistency with local policy (Growth Management Strategy) and metropolitan and sub-regional strategies. The applicants also need to look at the consistency of their proposal with various ministerial directions and State Environmental Planning Policies (SEPP). Finally they need to consider the environmental, social and economic impacts of the proposal. The rezoning proposals were an important part of our data because they enabled us to gain insights into how housing development and the preservation of agricultural landscapes were dealt with at the local scale. More precisely, it provided new insights about how the peri-urban identity promoted by the council in its Growth Management Strategy was reflected (or not) in its planning practices and consequently, in the material landscape of the Shire. In addition, they enabled us to provide context to the information given by farmers and planners in their interviews.

## **3.7 Data collection**

### **3.7.1 Interviews**

Farmers were initially recruited at various industry events, or through the advice of planners at the local scale. We then used a snowball sampling process to increase our

sample (Morgan, 2008). Following this process, 15 farmers (11 men and four women) were recruited. They included two heterosexual couples. We completed a total of 24 interviews eight of which focused on the first step, six on the second step, and 11 on the last step. Their participation in the three steps of the study was variable as not all farmers were able to participate in all three rounds of interviews (see Table 3.2 below). This variability in participation was expected, considering that having three interviews was relatively time consuming.

The interviews were between 45 minutes and two hours long, and some farmers were interviewed several times. Interviewing farmers several times enabled us to reach a greater depth of insight than would have been possible in a single interview. However, because farmers are often time-poor, the participation of farmers was made as flexible as possible (from one to three interviews per farmer). We stopped the interviews when we reached thematic saturation (Saumure and Given, 2008).

**TABLE 3.2:** Participation of farmers for each interview.

|               | Interview 1 | Interview 2 | Interview 3 |
|---------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Participant A | 1h28        | 53min       | 2h08        |
| Participant B | 1h25        |             | 1h36        |
| Participant C | 53min       | 1h08        | 40min       |
| Participant D |             |             |             |
| Participant E | 1h20        | 1h35        | 49min       |
| Participant F | 1h10        |             | 1h14        |
| Participant G | 1h          |             |             |
| Participant H | 1h30        |             | 1h27        |
| Participant I |             |             |             |
| Participant J | 45min       | 1h33        |             |
| Participant K | 1h12        |             | 1h09        |
| Participant L |             |             | 1h          |
| Participant M |             |             | 1h24        |
| Participant N |             |             | 1h23        |
| Participant O |             |             | 50min       |

We also conducted seven interviews with eight planners and managers (two interviewees were interviewed together) at the local and state levels, focusing on questions about planning and agriculture in Wollondilly Shire. The planners and managers were not interviewed as representatives of their institutions, but rather as individual experts on planning processes and agricultural questions in the Sydney Basin. For this reason, we decided not to cite the names of the institutions that they were working in. These interviews lasted between 45 minutes and one-and-a-half hours. The interviews with the farmers and planners were recorded and transcribed, with the exception of two interviewees who did not wish to be recorded.

### **3.7.2 Document analysis**

For the document analysis, all the documents were publicly available online. The Plan for Growing Sydney was downloaded at the following address:

<http://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/>

The Metropolitan Plan for Sydney 2036 was found at this address: <http://apo.org.au/>

The Growth Management Strategy for the Wollondilly Shire was found at this address:

<http://wollondilly.nsw.gov.au/>

The Local Environmental Plan for the Wollondilly Shire was found at this address:

<http://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/>

And finally, the rezoning proposals were found at this address:

<http://leptracking.planning.nsw.gov.au/>

## **3.8 Analysis**

### **3.8.1 Analysis of farmers' interviews**

The process of analysing the interviews with farmers was iterative, and started during the data collection phase, when the interviews were being recorded and transcribed.

Taking notes and recording thoughts during the fieldwork can aid analysis (Waller et al., 2016). The process of note taking, known as memoing, helps stimulate ideas about the meaning of the data, questions about the data, and theoretical or conceptual ideas that could apply to the data (van den Hoonaard and van den Hoonaard, 2008). For Dey (1993), the process of reading and memoing is part of the process of interpreting data, and is the "ground for a more systematic and thorough analysis" (Dey, 1993, p. 93). It is

therefore a first step in the analytical process. The notes focused on the data collection phase. They contributed to the refinement of the interview schedule or helped in the preparation of follow-up questions for the next round of interviews (van den Hoonaard and van den Hoonaard, 2008). In addition, these notes helped to identify links between the data and the literature, or between the data and the place identity framework which informed the research. The interview data also directed us toward new readings, which in turn informed our understanding of the interview data. According to Waller et al. (2016) establishing a dialogue between the data and the existing literature is of utmost importance during the data collection and analysis process. During the process of data collection, we also started transcribing the interviews. Transcribing the data was important because, according to Waller et al. (2016), it enables the researcher to become familiar with the data, and to grasp nuances in the meaning, which would be more difficult if the transcriptions were performed by someone else.

After this period of data collection, memoing and transcribing, we began to create categories and codes. The process of creating categories and codes is often described as either inductive or deductive, and qualitative research is often characterised by its inductive coding (Patton, 2002). However, it is acknowledged that researchers often use both inductive and deductive coding in the creation of categories and codes (O'Neil Green, 2008; Fereday and Muir-Cochrane, 2006). Indeed, researchers are not a blank slate, and they always read data while having in mind what they are looking for, and what they know - from the literature, from the theoretical framework they use, from previous research projects, and from personal intuition (Ayres, 2008). According to Dey (1993) "the process of finding a focus for the analysis, and reading and annotating the data, leads on naturally to the creation of categories" (p. 99). These categories are more preliminary than exhaustive (Dey, 1993), more heuristic than analytic (Ayres, 2008). They may be modified during the coding process. In the case of the interviews with farmers, we began coding by defining broad categories. These categories were partially categories of the place identity framework that we identified as present in the interviews through reading and transcription (i.e. identity processes: continuity, distinctiveness, self-esteem and self-efficacy, practices, representations). More inductive categories emerged directly from reading and transcribing the interviews. They were informed by the research goals and the questions asked during the interviews (changes at the macro level and local scale changes).

After the identification of broad categories, we started a process of line-by-line coding (Benaquisto, 2008). Some of the codes that emerged from the data were included in the

categories we identified from the preliminary reading of the transcripts, that is to say, identity processes, practices, representations, and macro-scale and local-scale changes. Since those categories were relatively broad, data relating to diverse phenomena were included. Some categories will prove to be relevant, whereas others will be re-categorised or discarded in later stages. However, these categories were too broad and too conceptual to be fully relevant at that stage of the coding. For this reason, we also created a list of independent codes, which better represented the richness of the data, and more importantly, stayed closer to the data. Fifty-one independent codes were identified. They were as diverse as: care for the land, diversification, farmers' markets, farming as a passion, and farming as a specific lifestyle. At the end of this first round of coding, we had broad categories made up of codes related to various phenomena, and a long list of codes that were not linked to a category. This step can therefore be considered as an initial phase of data exploration and analysis.

The next step of data analysis consisted of ordering these categories and codes by dividing some broad categories into sub-categories and codes, and by grouping codes into sub-categories, to give a structure to the numerous codes developed in the previous round. To do so, we wrote the codes on Post-It Notes and clustered them according to their similarities in order to create higher level categories. This also enabled us to identify and discard the codes that were anecdotal, or not related to the research goals. Mapping has often been used in the process of data analysis. Concept maps or cognitive maps have often been used in order to visually represent an interviewee's system of belief, and to understand how he/she is connecting ideas or concepts (Brightman, 2003; Daley, 2004; Jones, 1985; Kinchin et al., 2010). In this case, we used the mapping method as a way to increase our understanding of the data by putting the independent codes in broader categories, and by putting the codes from broader categories into more precise subcategories. To give an example, we had two open codes (diversification and farmers' markets), as well as one of the broad category 'practices' (leasing) identified earlier, which all became part of one category called 'expansion/diversification', which focused on the practices adopted by farmers to cope with changes in the peri-urban landscape. Finally, some of the codes were too generic and needed to be divided into smaller codes. For example, we had independent open code named politics of farming. This code focused on farmers' collective organisation (or lack of organisation). This code actually encompassed very diverse quotes which referred to different phenomena, such as the fact that the membership of NSW Farmers was dropping, that ethnic barriers were preventing farmers from organising themselves, or that they were only gathering

when there was an immediate threat and they did not have a long-term organisation. We therefore divided the code 'politics of farming' into different codes, and politics of farming became a category.

Another important contribution of this mapping exercise was that it enabled the establishment of relationships between various categories (Waller et al., 2016). For example, during the mapping exercise the link was made between the different types of relationships farmers had to farming and to their farms (farming as a challenge, as a lifestyle or as a heritage) and the ways farmers viewed the future of their farms, and the adaptive strategies they adopted to maintain farm viability.

The next step of the analysis aimed at identifying whether the categories and sub-categories created during the mapping process could be part of the framework of place identity that was guiding the research. We also wanted to go back to the transcripts in order to identify elements that might have been overlooked during the first round of coding. We therefore started a second round of coding which took a more deductive approach. To do so, we used the pre-determined overarching categories and sub-categories, derived from the place identity framework used for this research (politics of place: emergent, hegemonic, resistant; identity processes: continuity, distinctiveness, self-esteem, self-efficacy; practices; representations; physical landscapes) as well as elements of changes at the landscape and farm scale, which are not directly part of the place identity framework, but are important to the research. These elements of changes at the landscape and farm scale encompass many of the elements that were under the macro-change and local-change categories in the previous round of coding. Our first goal was to understand how the categories created through the process of mapping could become a part of the place identity framework. For example, the various representations of farming evoked earlier (farming as a challenge, a lifestyle, a heritage) were integrated into the broader categories of identity principles. Indeed, heritage reflects the continuity principle, whereas challenge and lifestyle reflect self-efficacy. Other codes, as yet unassigned, were included in a category. For example, an independent code called "inscription of the work in the land" became attached to the identity principle of self-esteem and its name was changed to "seeing the farm as your own creation". To give another example, independent codes linked to what farmers do to maintain their incomes such as farmers' markets, agritourism, and leasing land became part of the broader "practices" category of the framework. In addition, new codes were progressively added to the categories during the process of rereading the transcripts. Finally, there were also some categories created during the 'Post-It' phase that could not be integrated into the politics of place/landscape identity framework, but

were essential to the understanding of farmers' place identities. Those categories were added to the analysis as new categories. One example is the question of how farmers saw the future of their farms, which was identified during the 'Post-It' phase but did not fit into a category of the politics of place/landscape identity framework: all the elements related to this question (expansion of the farm, disinvestment, leasing or selling the land) were grouped together in an independent category called "future of the farm". One could argue that these elements could have been integrated into the "continuity" category. However, the "continuity" category focuses more on the representation farmers have of their relationship to their farm (whether they see it as intrinsically connected to the family history or as a personal asset) and how this influences, for some, their day to day practices, whereas the category of the "future of the farm" focuses more on how they perceive the concrete future of their farm (are they going to lease their land, sell their land, transfer it to their children, buy land in another area etc). However, we will demonstrate in Chapter 7 that the category of "continuity" and the "future of the farm" are strongly inter-connected.

One further step completed the analysis. This final step consisted of starting to write in order to make sense of those codes and categories and to better understand how they were to be articulated in order to answer to my research questions. Waller et al. (2016) argue that it is impossible to separate analysis from writing, because it is through the writing process that the argument emerges. The process of writing is also considered to be a process of sense making (Kamler, 2014). Through the writing process the argument progressively unfolded. Moreover, the writing process also enabled us to identify elements that we missed during the coding process and that appeared to be important elements during the writing process. This led to a third round of coding.

Through the writing process, we made connections between various categories, which until then had remained distinct and unrelated categories. The third round of coding therefore aimed at articulating the relationships between the different categories identified during my second round of coding. For example, in the second round of coding, the different dimensions of the place identity framework (physical landscape, practices, representations, identity principles) were considered as distinct elements, whereas the overarching dimensions of hegemonic, emergent and resistant place identity were not fully used. During the third round of coding, connections were made between different dimensions. For example, in the second round of coding, resistant place identity contained only a single code: "limited political voice" (which was previously called "politics of farming"). During the third round of coding we started to see that different practices,

representations, identity principles and physical elements were contributing to farmers' resistant place identity. We therefore put various elements of the four dimensions under the umbrella of resistant identity, while uncovering the relationships between the four elements. After this third round of coding, analytical connections were made between the categories, which enabled us to develop the arguments in writing.

### **3.8.2 Analysis of planners' and managers' interviews and document analysis**

The planners' and managers' interviews were less central to this research project, since they were mostly used to confirm or complement our understanding of the sayings of farmers. For these interviews and for the results of the document analysis, we adopted an inductive approach, in which open codes were identified in the text. These open codes were then used in the analysis to confirm, re-inform or refine the analysis of the farmers' interviews and the document analysis.

For the document analysis, our initial assumption was that policy is shaped by "power struggles between different interests" where "particular thoughts, ideas, knowledge and practices become accepted, marginalised or silenced" (Richardson, 2000, p. 55). We also assumed that these discourses were "connected with particular spatial ideas, policies, practices and lived spaces" (Richardson, 2000, p. 55). Therefore, we aimed at critically analysing our documents for three reasons: to see which conceptualisation of the peri-urban was promoted in planning documents in Wollondilly Shire; to see which idea about spatial development prevailed; and to see how the legitimacy of this idea was challenged or reinforced in rezoning proposals. To do so, we looked at which kind of conceptualisation of the peri-urban was presented as legitimate in the rezoning proposals, and how some elements of the landscape were overlooked and others were promoted.

As presented earlier, we analysed the Growth Management Strategy, the Local Environmental Plan, along with 24 rezoning proposals. When looking at the Growth Management Strategy we focused our attention on the way the Shire was represented in the documents, and on how housing development and the preservation of agricultural and natural landscapes were articulated spatially. To do so, we did a content analysis based on systematic reading and note taking, which enabled us to identify the relevant elements of the text and analyse them. For the Local Environmental Plan, we were mostly interested in looking at the uses that were authorised in the different zones, and how these could potentially create conflicts between different stakeholders. We therefore

used a content analysis based on systematic reading and note taking.

Finally, we considered the rezoning proposals. As explained earlier, we collected 50 rezoning proposals on the internet, as they were publicly available. Of those 50 rezoning proposals, 10 were discarded because they did not concern the rezoning of rural lands. Of the 40 remaining proposals we analysed 24. We chose the 24 rezoning proposals in a manner which ensured that they reflected the range and variety of proposals in terms of: the zone in which the land was initially placed (different types of agricultural zoning), the new zoning requested in the proposal (different residential zoning, industrial or commercial zoning), the size of the development, its location, and whether or not it was in a Growth Area (Growth Areas are areas defined by Council as being able to accommodate development). The 24 rezoning proposals were therefore chosen because together, they covered all the above rezoning.

For the analysis, we created an Excel spreadsheet. The first columns focused on information that enabled us to identify the rezoning proposal (name of the proposal, description, date of determination, type of rezoning, acceptance or refusal at the gateway process, size of the rezoning). The other columns focused on the type of information we were looking for in order to critically analyse the data. The types of information included: how the proponents described the land to be rezoned; whether the proposal was consistent with various planning documents and policies at the local, metropolitan and regional scales; whether the proposal was consistent with the vision of the Shire that was promoted in the Growth Management Strategy; the submissions made by the public in response to the rezoning proposal; and the gateway process at the state level, where the state government assesses whether a proposal can proceed. During the process of analysis of the documents, we were not looking at whether the information was factual or objective, but rather at whether it gave us insights into the ways different discourses took place within planning processes, and whether they legitimised specific forms of development.

## **3.9 Assessing quality**

### **3.9.1 Triangulation**

One of the main limitations of case study research is that it has sometimes been described as unscientific because of its reliance on soft data. One way to overcome this difficulty is to use mixed methods, as well as a variety of methods (documents, interviews,

observations etc.), in order to make triangulation possible (Denscombe, 1998; Yin, 2009). According to Patton (1999), triangulation does not come only from triangulation of methods, but also from triangulation of sources, analyst triangulation and theory/perspective triangulation. In this study we did not use mixed methods, but relied on two types of triangulation.

First, we ensured triangulation of methods by using both semi-structured interviews and document analysis. Triangulation was important here because interviews are verbal accounts which are subject to various biases. Therefore, complementing these verbal accounts with document analysis was a way to reinforce or obtain a more nuanced understanding of the accounts of the interviewees. However, the documents were also analysed for their inherent values as tangible evidence of power struggles inside the planning system.

The second type of triangulation used in this study was the triangulation of sources within the same research method. We triangulated sources both in the semi-structured interviews and in the document analysis. For the semi-structured interviews, we interviewed both planners and farmers on the same subject (productive lands and farming activities in the peri-urban environment). Having the perspectives of both planners and farmers was important because it enabled us to check whether one group corroborated what the other group said, or enabled us to gain a more nuanced understanding of what the other group said. In addition, within the group of farmers, we interviewed farmers with very different characteristics, and very different viewpoints on peri-urban farming. This meant that inside the same group, we had access to a diversity of opinions, and this diversity is visible in the results, particularly in the last results chapter, where we draw distinctions between various groups of farmers. We then triangulated the sources in the document analysis by choosing both planning documents and the rezoning proposals. The rezoning proposals provided insights into whether representations of the peri-urban promoted in the planning documents were translated into practice. These diverse sources were important because they enabled a more comprehensive understanding of how peri-urban farmlands are dealt with in the planning process.

### **3.9.2 Generalisation**

The second limitation of the case study approach is the lack of representativeness of the results, which means that they cannot be used to draw general conclusions. Indeed, a case study is often considered as too embedded in a single situation to be representative. Moreover, the lack of control over the factors that impact on the situation, as well as the

arbitrary nature of some boundaries (for example those which determine who is included and who is excluded from the study) is also considered as preventing generalisability (Denscombe, 1998). These limitations can be addressed by making links between the findings of the case study, and broader questions and issues raised in the literature about the problem studied (Hardwick, 2009). In this study, and more particularly in the discussion section, we make connections between our findings and findings in the literature in order to embed our results in a broader context. In this case, we can consider our case study on an equal footing with experimental research in which the results can be generalisable to theoretical propositions, but not to every situation (Yin, 2009).

### **3.9.3 Negative cases and chain of evidence**

Two more criteria can help assess the quality of the analysis, and the reliability of the information: negative cases and the chain of evidence (Patton, 1999; Yin, 2009).

Searching for negative cases means looking for instances where the data does not follow the pattern and trends identified in the analysis. These instances can be an exception to the rule, or they can change the rule. In this study, we always looked at the diversity of views expressed by stakeholders, leading sometimes to the elaboration of complex typologies to represent this variety. But when results were more homogeneous, we looked for divergent responses from stakeholders in order to obtain a more nuanced understanding of the findings.

Maintaining the chain of evidence means that an external observer can "follow the derivation of any evidence from initial research questions to ultimate case study conclusions" (Yin, 2009, p. 127). With the detailed account we gave of our epistemology (constructionist), theoretical perspective (a critical approach and then a focus on possibilities), approach (case study), methods (semi-structured interviews and document analysis) and analysis, we made it possible for the reader to "follow the derivation of any evidence from initial research questions to ultimate case study conclusion" (Yin, 2009, p. 127).

## **3.10 Ethical considerations**

We will explain here how the consent of participants was sought, how we handled the data, how we ensured the anonymity and confidentiality of stakeholders, and finally, how we endeavoured to represent the stakeholders truthfully.

Firstly, the ethics protocol was approved by the HREC (Human Research Ethics Committee) of the University of Technology Sydney (UTS HREC REF NO. 2015000177). Secondly, prior to the interviews consent was sought by having a consent form signed by the participants. The participants were aware of the subject of the study, and the types of questions they would be asked. They were also aware that they could withdraw from the study at any time, and that if they had any concerns they could contact our supervisors or the university. They were also provided with an information sheet that they could keep with them.

Thirdly, the data were handled in a way that ensured stakeholders' anonymity and confidentiality. Interview files and transcripts were stored in a password-protected and encrypted external hard drive as well as in a password-protected and encrypted internal hard drive. All personal identifiers were removed from the material and numbers or letters were assigned to the participants. The paper-based records were stored in a locked filing cabinet. Fourthly, anonymity and confidentiality were guaranteed to participants in the thesis manuscript and any related publications. The participants were always presented in very general terms to make sure that they were not identifiable. For the farmers, since we were dealing with a small connected community, some elements which, if suppressed, would diminish the richness of the account, made some stakeholders potentially identifiable at the local scale (Damianakis and Woodford, 2012). When we identified such cases, the stakeholders were contacted, and the parts of the texts where they were potentially re-identifiable were sent to them in order to get their consent. For the planners and managers, we ensured participants' anonymity and confidentiality by not citing the institutions they were working in, or their positions within the institutions. Since the participants were not speaking on behalf of their institutions, but rather as individual experts on planning processes and agricultural questions in the Sydney Basin, not naming their institutions was not perceived as problematic. Finally, through thorough and rigorous analysis we aimed at giving a voice to the diversity of the stakeholders interviewed and at representing them truthfully.



## HEGEMONIC PLACE IDENTITIES IN WOLLONDILLY SHIRE

**P**racticing agriculture in peri-urban Sydney is difficult due to two phenomena: liberalisation of the agricultural sector (Alston, 2004; Dibden and Cocklin, 2005; Lawrence, 1999; Pritchard, 2005a,b; Vanclay, 2003), and the urban sprawl encouraged by the hegemonic neoliberal project of the ‘Global City’ in Sydney, which gives little consideration to other rationalities of planning (Murdoch, 2000), such as the protection of peri-urban agricultural lands (Budge, 2013; James, 2009; McGuirk, 2004).

As a consequence, peri-urban areas are spaces between rural and urban, which are undergoing changes in land uses. These changes include the sealing of soils for residential or industrial purposes (Foley and Scott, 2014) and changes to the social fabric with the arrival of urban-oriented inhabitants in the peri-urban (Argent et al., 2011; Willis, 2007). As a consequence, the dominance of agricultural activities in the landscape and of farmers in social and political life is being challenged (Wilson, 2001), and competing discourses of rurality are emerging (Foley and Scott, 2014; Friedland, 2002; Scott, 2008), leading to conflicts over the appearance of the landscape and the practices considered as legitimate in the peri-urban (Walker and Fortmann, 2003). These conflicts are often embedded in questions of identity and belonging, or in other words, in the question of who owns the landscape, and consequently who is included and represented in the landscape and who is excluded from it (Laliberte, 2012; Trudeau, 2006; Walker and Fortmann, 2003).

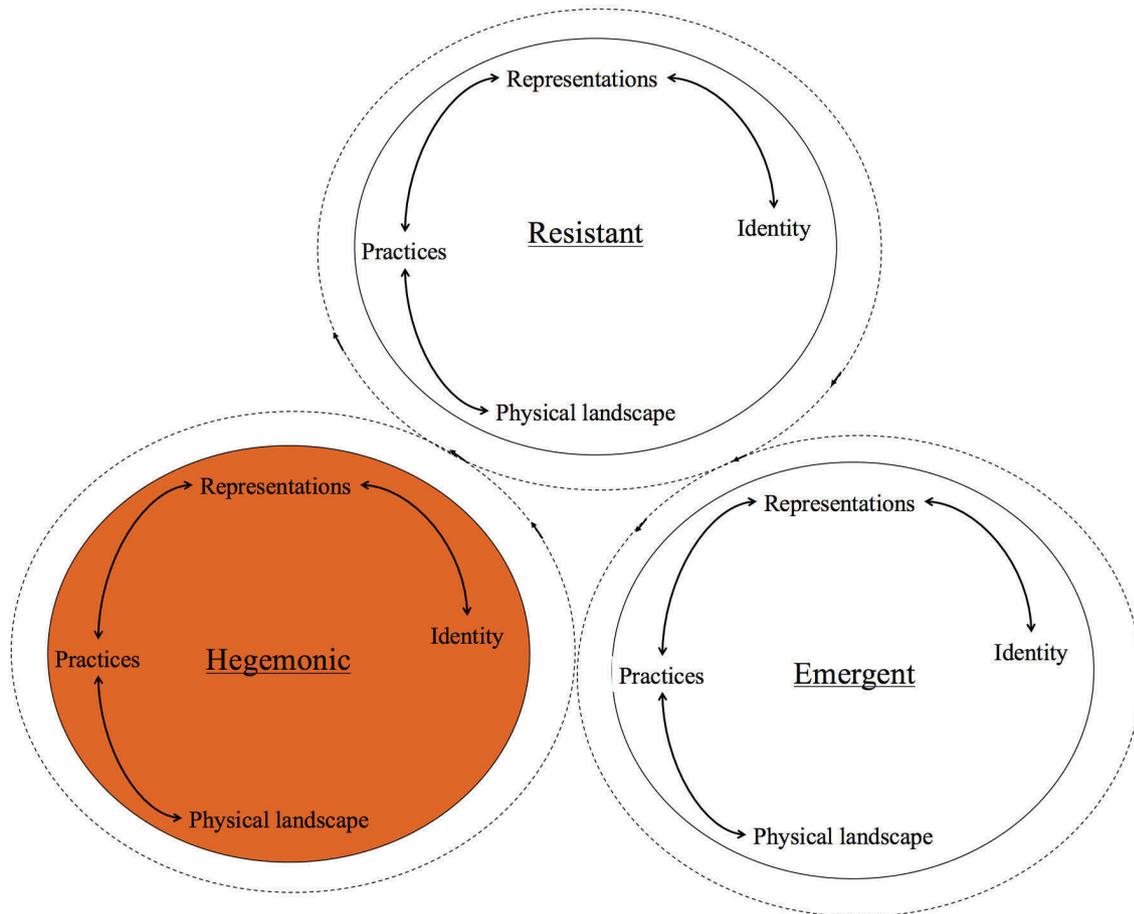
In this chapter, we will look at how the role of farmlands and farming activities is progressively challenged in the peri-urban by two hegemonic place identities. In some of the studies that examine hegemonic (or dominant) place identities only one such identity was identified in each case (Harner, 2001; Larsen, 2004). However, other studies identify the existence of competing dominant (or hegemonic) representations or discourses. Laliberte (2012) in her study of community identities in Great Barrington (Massachusetts, USA) identifies two dominant local discourses driven by two community identities. When considering more global discourses on environment and development, Adger et al. (2001) found that two or more dominant discourses influence policies and actions at the global scale. In this case study we identified not one but two representations of the landscape which competed for influence. These two representations are considered to be hegemonic because they both influence the appearance and development of the material landscape. However, their influence is visible in different parts of Wollondilly Shire (the location of this case study). The first hegemonic place identity exerts its influence by dictating the type of development occurring at the fringes of towns and villages, whereas the second influences development in the rural areas of the Shire. In Wollondilly Shire, we argue that the two hegemonic place identities are:

1. The first hegemonic place identity, promoted by the Wollondilly Shire Council, is articulated around a representation of peri-urban rurality through the concept of "rural living", which is considered to define the identity of the Shire. "Rural living" promotes an inclusive rurality that combines housing development and the protection of agriculture, and offers the compact city concept, promoting a sharp distinction between city and country as the spatial tool for maintaining the balance between the two. However, we will see that in rezoning proposals (planning practices), the compact city concept is often used by landowners to define housing development as 'in place' and farming activities as 'out of place' in the peri-urban, thereby marginalising agricultural activities. This conceptualisation of farming activities as 'out of place' in the peri-urban is reinforced by the dominance of a "rationality of planning" (Murdoch, 2000, p.509) tied to the necessity to cater for forecast demand for new housing, and the weakness of a counter-argument aiming at protecting farmlands.

2. The second hegemonic place identity, which competes with the first one, is also based on the idea of "rural living", but the defendants of this second hegemonic place identity consider it to mean the development of low density residential development scattered through rural areas. This type of development can be referred to as the hybridisation of rural areas (Murdoch and Lowe, 2003). This second hegemonic place identity

is made visible in the landscape through the development of spatial dynamics that undermine the city–country divide defended by the council. Like the first hegemonic identity, it does not give strong consideration to farming, and contributes to its further marginalisation in the peri-urban landscape.

Using the politics of place/landscape identity framework, we see how two hegemonic place identities defend two peri-urban identities, and how they both exclude farming. They do so by defending representations and practices that undermine the role of farming in the peri-urban landscape (Figure 4.1). Those two contradictory place identities are considered to be competing hegemonic identities because they both help to shape the physical landscape, and the practices and representations of different areas of the Shire.



**FIGURE 4.1:** Politics of place identity framework. In orange, the hegemonic moment, which is the moment we focus on in this chapter.

For this chapter, we analysed the Wollondilly Growth Management Strategy - the main policy document that presents the council's vision for the Shire - along with the Local Environmental Plan, which regulates land use in the Shire, and 24 rezoning proposals made during 2011-2016 (for a description of the process of rezoning see the Methodology chapter). We also used elements of the 24 in-depth interviews conducted with 15 farmers, and the seven in-depth interviews with eight planners and managers at the state and local levels.

We chose to focus on policy documents because they provide indications of "how policy knowledge and rationalities are shaped by power struggles within the policy process" (Richardson, 2000, p. 54). Looking at policy documents therefore enabled us to have a better understanding of how rationalities of planning were articulated and contested. In particular we looked into land use zoning and rezoning proposals, firstly because to date, zoning remains the main tool used in Australia to control the development of land (Sinclair and Bunker, 2007), and secondly, because "land-use zoning ordinances are normative prescriptions about how land in a particular segment of space may be used, who should be present, and how it should appear" and therefore are "an important aspect in the construction of landscapes in contexts of human settlement" (Trudeau, 2006, pp. 422-423). We also explored the construction of rurality by the Wollondilly Shire population, through the submissions made to the council regarding rezoning proposals, and through interviews with farmers and planners. The emergence of competing discourses of rurality among residents in peri-urban areas (Foley and Scott, 2014; Friedland, 2002; Scott, 2008), and the creation of conflicting environmental imaginaries and their impact on material practices (Nesbitt and Weiner, 2001), are also essential aspects of the politics of place.

The chapter unfolds as follows. Firstly, it examines the representation of rurality based on the city-country divide promoted by the Wollondilly Shire Council (first hegemonic place identity). We then examine how in planning practices (rezoning proposals) housing development is considered as 'in place', whereas the preservation of agricultural lands is framed as 'out of place'. This categorisation is reinforced by the dominant rationality of planning that is tied to forecasts of housing demand, and the weakness of a counter-argument promoting the protection of farmlands. We then look at how the second hegemonic place identity unfolds through specific spatial dynamics which undermine the rurality promoted by the council, and which challenge (again) the legitimacy of the presence of agriculture in the peri-urban landscape.

## **4.1 Rural living: an inclusive representation of rural-ity**

The Growth Management Strategy (GMS) is the main policy document in the Wollondilly Shire Council (Wollondilly Shire Council, 2011a). Its aim is to give direction on what types of growth are deemed suitable for Wollondilly Shire, and to establish a vision for the sustainable development of the area. It also aims to explain how the objectives of the Metropolitan Strategy are to be implemented at the local scale (DPE, 2010).

The GMS , produced in 2011, states that the Shire "need[s] growth but it has to be the right kind of growth in the right locations" (Wollondilly Shire Council, 2011a, p. 6). Wollondilly Shire Council is planning to accommodate 7500 new houses over the next 20 or 25 years (Wollondilly Shire Council, 2011a). How to manage growth is considered to be the main challenge the Shire is facing and, according to the document, questions of growth are related to broader questions about the Shire: the environment, the economy, the assets and infrastructure, the community, the operations of Council, and finally, the identity and character of the Shire. This last element is important, because the question of identity is often linked to the question of what the landscape should look like (Walker and Fortmann, 2003), and who should be included or excluded from the landscape (Trudeau, 2006), and it often plays an important role in the politics of place in changing environments.

The document goes on to describe more precisely what this identity and character are by defining Wollondilly as a "rural living" shire. This concept indicates the desired identity and the character of the Shire, and consequently how growth and development should be managed to respect the "rural living" vision ("All land use proposals need to be compatible with the concept and vision of "rural living") (Wollondilly Shire Council, 2011a, p. 9).

### **4.1.1 Rural living as a vision for housing development and protection of farming**

The concept of "rural living", as developed by the Wollondilly Shire Council, has nine characteristics, three of which relate to the type of spatial development promoted by the council (Table 4.1). These three characteristics focus on the importance of maintaining a clear (and aesthetically harmonious) demarcation between city and country. Several

policies of the GMS are directly linked to the implementation of this vision of spatial development (Table 4.1). Housing policies, and policies on the integration of growth with infrastructure, promote: the development of housing in proximity to towns and villages, the identification of growth areas, and higher densities close to the towns and villages (see Figure 4.2 below for a visual representation of development at the fringes of towns and villages in Wollondilly Shire).



**FIGURE 4.2:** Housing development at the fringe of Picton, Wollondilly Shire, NSW, Australia. [Google Earth (May 5, 2016), Wollondilly Shire, Australia. Google 2017. [Retrieved July 17, 2017]].

The conceptualisation of "rural living" is based on the importance of maintaining a sharp distinction between city and country by concentrating development in proximity to the existing towns and villages, and it echoes the compact city concept used at the metropolitan scale in the three last Metropolitan Strategies. Housing development is therefore considered to be in keeping with "rural living" if it respects the precept of the compact city and favours the (aesthetically harmonious) development of housing around existing towns and villages. The identity of the peri-urban promoted by the council is based on the idea of *genius loci* presented earlier (in Chapter 2 Part 2), in which the identity of a place is considered to reside in its unique and distinctive material features. Indeed, the concept of "rural living" aims at defining the identity of the Shire on the basis of its physical characteristics, and more particularly on the basis of the sharp distinction between city and country, which could contribute to distinguishing Wollondilly Shire

from suburban shires and, in this way, assert its distinctiveness.

**TABLE 4.1:** Characteristics of "rural living" and policies related to spatial development in Wollondilly Shire (Wollondilly Shire Council, 2011a).

|                     |  |   |
|---------------------|--|---|
| Rural Living Vision | Rural Setting and Character            | The rural setting is obvious, with <b>farmland and natural areas located between separate towns and villages</b> connected by rural-type oads (p. 17)   |
|                     | Towns and Villages                     | <b>Separate towns and villages</b> (and particularly their centres) are focal points which provide opportunities – , working, shopping, business, leisure, civic events, community facilities, education, and social interactions (p. 17)   |
|                     | Buildings and Development              | <b>New development aims to be sympathetic to the existing form and traditional character of our built environment</b> which is an integral part of our townscapes, rural landscapes and cultural heritage (p. 17)   |
| Policies            | Housing Policies                       | <b>Dwelling densities</b> , where possible and environmentally acceptable, <b>should be higher in proximity to centers and lower on the edges of towns</b> (on the "rural fringe") (p. 52)<br>Council will focus on the <b>majority of new housing being located within or immediately adjacent to its existing towns and villages.</b> (p.52)                        |
|                     | Integrating Growth with Infrastructure | Council will encourage sustainable growth which <b>supports our existing towns and villages</b> , and makes the provision of services and infrastructure more efficient and viable – this means a greater emphasis on <b>concentrating on new housing in and around our existing population centres</b> (p.52)  |
|                     |  | Dispersed population growth will be discouraged in favour of <b>growth in, or adjacent to, existing population centres</b> (p.52)<br><b>The focus for population growth will be in two key growth centres</b> , being the Picton/Tirlmere/Tahmoor Area (PTT) area and the Bargo Area. Appropriate smaller growth opportunities are identified for other towns (p. 10) |

The notion of "viable agriculture" (Table 4.2) is another characteristic of "rural living" which requires consideration when determining the balance between housing development and the protection of agriculture in the Shire. When considering viable agriculture, the GMS states that agriculture in the Shire should be considered as a legitimate activity that belongs to the cultural landscape of the Shire. Productive lands are therefore seen as an integral part of the vision of rurality defended by the council.

Two policies refer to the protection of viable agriculture. The first one focuses on the protection of lands with a specific economic, environmental and cultural value. The second policy explains that rural and resource lands (of which farmlands are a part) will be protected by preventing "incremental growth" contributing to "land fragmentation" in the Shire (Wollondilly Shire Council, 2011a, p. 11). Whereas the first policy remains vague and does not give details on how the values of rural and resource lands will be assessed, the second policy seems to consider that the protection of rural and resource lands will be achieved by preventing dispersed housing development and land fragmentation. It is therefore considered that rural and resource lands will be protected through the application of the compact city paradigm, under which development in proximity to towns and cities is preferred to dispersed development.

**TABLE 4.2:** Characteristics of "rural living" and policies related to the preservation of the agricultural landscape in Wollondilly Shire (Wollondilly Shire Council, 2011a).

|                     |                          |  |
|---------------------|--------------------------|--|
| Rural Living vision | Viable agriculture       | <b>Agriculture and associated industries continue to be a , productive sustainable and visible</b> part of our economy, our community and our landscape (p15).   |
| Policies            | Rural and Resource Lands | Council acknowledges and will <b>seek to protect the special economic, environmental and cultural values of Shire’s lands</b> which comprise waterways, drinking water, catchments, biodiversity, mineral resources, <b>agricultural lands</b> , aboriginal heritage and European rural landscapes (p. 11) |
|                     |                          | <b>Council does not support incremental growth involving increased dwelling entitlements and/or rural lands fragmentation in dispersed rural areas.</b> Council is however committed to, maintaining where possible and practicable, existing dwelling and subdivision entitlements in rural areas (p. 11) |

The identity of the Shire, its distinctiveness, is based on a representation of rurality promoted through the concept of "rural living" that is intended to be inclusive, by enabling both housing development and the protection of farmlands. Indeed, housing development and the protection of farmlands are seen as compatible, and both are seen as part of the Shire’s rural landscape. The model of spatial development adopted in order to reconcile housing development and the protection of farmlands is the compact city paradigm. This paradigm, which promotes the city–country divide, is therefore considered to be an encompassing concept which can apply to the physical landscape of the shire, the inclusive nature of the rurality promoted by the council, that is a rurality that can accommodate housing development while preserving agricultural lands.

We will see in the next section that in rezoning proposals the compact city concept is often used by landowners to legitimise housing development and dismiss agricultural activities by presenting them as 'out of place'. Therefore, we will see how the compact city paradigm, which was thought to be a way to reconcile housing development and the preservation of productive lands, seems to be used by landowners to promote one over the other. Using the politics of place/landscape identity framework, the next section examines how the identity of the Shire, based on a representation of rurality that distinguishes sharply between city and country, is translated (or not) into practices (rezoning proposals).

#### **4.1.2 Housing development as 'in place'**

In the 24 rezoning proposals analysed, the compact city concept and its aesthetic dimension seem to be mostly used by landowners to legitimise and naturalise (that is, to consider as normal and natural) housing developments in the peri-urban landscape. Housing developments are often presented by landowners as being in keeping with "rural living" because they respect various aspects of the compact city. In addition, these developments are also considered as 'in place' because they possess certain aesthetic characteristics, which contribute to making the compact city aesthetically harmonious. This results in naturalising housing development while overlooking the fact that housing development is the outcome of a specific representation of rurality which is actually value driven. As explained by Trudeau (2006) zonings are constructions made of "particular constellations of meaning, aesthetics, values and social prescriptions that become naturalized" (p. 421). This means that the values that underpin the development of rezoning proposals are not expressed explicitly, and the type of development occurring in the landscape is considered to be natural and necessary. We will see in this section how rezoning applicants use the concept of the compact city, and the aesthetics attached to it, to naturalise housing developments in the landscape and construct them as 'in place'.

Most rezoning proposals assert the legitimacy of a housing development on the grounds that it is situated near the existing town, and is therefore a contained development, maintaining the distinction between city and country. Many rezoning proposals assert that the housing development will be: "adjoining the existing town", "contiguous to existing residential development", "in keeping with adjoining [residential] land uses", and will therefore contribute to creating a "consolidated urban area" that "[does] not contribute toward dispersed population growth". It is notable that the proposed housing developments are always in keeping with only some of the adjoining land uses, as one

proposal highlights: "The proposal represents a logical rezoning of the subject site for low density purposes in keeping with land adjoining the site to the north". The proposal claims that the development is in keeping with residential development existing on some of the adjoining land, but not in keeping with existing environmental or agricultural uses on other adjoining land. This type of justification reflects an urban-centred point of view, favoured by the compact city concept which considers development in proximity to existing town and villages as the adequate type of development. Therefore, a housing development can potentially be justified as long as it is contiguous with an existing residential development. On several occasions, the housing development on adjoining lands did not exist but was only planned. However, the legitimacy of the rezoning proposal is asserted in that it is contiguous to future housing development areas. Several development proposals stated that "the site will not be an isolated residential development when the development of the land to the west occurs" or "the site is situated directly adjacent to the future eastern urban release area of Picton".

Another element emphasised in rezoning applications is that the land to be developed will create an "edge to the city", by creating a fixed boundary or a transition between city and country. Only three applications out of 24 consider that the rezoning of the land will contribute to the creation of a firm boundary between urban and rural areas. One application states that "to the west the site is bound by higher land that then falls towards the Sydney Drinking Water Catchment and to the south and east the site is bound by roadways that will provide a physical distinction between the rural-urban interface". Another explains that "the planning proposal helps identify the village's limits through the reservation of the corridor for the Appin By-pass creating an edge to the village and a limit to future development to the west". A third one offers that: "it is constrained geographically at the eastern edge by the Nepean River, which would form a physical barrier to urban sprawl". In these three proposals, the applicants try to show that the development they proposed responds to an already existing and 'natural' edge to the village such as a roadway, a river or a topographical feature, implying that the development would therefore be a natural way forward. In most of the other applications, the argument is that the rezoning would create an adequate transition (rather than a boundary) between the towns (residential zoning) and the rural/natural areas (rural or environmental zoning). For example, a development in Bargo which would be E4 Environmental Living (low-impact residential development in areas with special ecological, scientific or aesthetic values), is proposed as a transition between residential (R2 Low Density Residential) and natural areas (E2 Environmental Conservation). Sometimes

the transition is justified, not in terms of a type of use which would be an adequate transition between two other uses (Environmental Conservation as a transition between residential and rural), but in terms of the density of the development proposed. Two such proposals argue that the lower density they proposed on the development site (R5 Large Lot Residential), would constitute a transition between developments described in one application as "suburban" (meaning denser), and rural (RU2) or environmental areas (E2). The transition provided by the proposed land use zoning or density of housing development in rezoning applications are often presented as an "appropriate visual transition at the edge of township", "a logical visual catchment boundary", or even a "necessary transitional buffer". The use of words such as "appropriate", "logical" or "necessary" highlight the normative intent in the rhetoric of the applicants, who presented the developments as the only and best pathway. We can see that housing developments, because they adjoin existing or future developments and constitute an adequate boundary/transition between different uses, are considered as 'in place' and legitimate in the landscape of Wollondilly Shire.

To further legitimise the rezoning of land, several applications explained how the housing development on the land will be aesthetically integrated with the landscape. This integration of the development with the landscape is often measured in terms of its similarity to already existing developments in the area. The maintenance of the continuity between different developments is sometimes described as being "in keeping with the adjoining residential character" without further explanation. However, in other cases, the idea of continuity is justified on the basis that the development proposes the same residential zoning, and similar densities, to those existing in already developed sites. These proposals claim that through the maintenance of the same types of residential zoning and densities, the development would be in keeping with the "existing character" or "village atmosphere" of a town or village, the character of the "urban-rural interface", the "adjoining residential character", or the "rural setting". The location of the development in proximity to existing (or planned) housing development and its coherence with the "atmosphere" are often used by applicants to describe their proposed rezoning as a "logical rezoning" or as a "logical progression", emphasising the idea that this type of development was a natural and legitimate development in the area, and that it is therefore consistent with the rurality defended by the council.

In this section we have described how the compact city concept and the aesthetics attached to it have been used to legitimise housing development in the Wollondilly Shire. The ideas of consolidating the existing towns and villages, of creating a distinction

between the urban and the rural through a boundary or transition, and of aesthetically integrating a development in the landscape, are used in rezoning applications to naturalise housing development and define it as ‘in place’. Asserting the legitimacy of housing developments on these grounds is likely to encourage continuous housing development, pushing the edge of towns and villages always further into the countryside. This can be illustrated by the fact that nine rezoning proposals out of the 24 studied are situated in zones that were not identified as being within the potential growth areas identified in the Growth Management Strategy. In the next section, we will look at how productive landscapes are often presented as being ‘out of place’ in rezoning proposals, contributing therefore to undermining the legitimacy of farming activities in the landscape of Wollondilly Shire.

### **4.1.3 Productive landscapes as ‘out of place’**

While housing development is considered to be ‘in place’ in the landscape of Wollondilly Shire, agricultural lands are often represented as ‘out of place’ for a number of reasons. This section will look at how the productive dimension of the lands is dismissed by landowners in the rezoning proposals.

The arguments used to dismiss agricultural uses in rezoning proposals are of different nature. The first type of arguments used are that agricultural activities on the land to be rezoned would have a negative impact on an existing industry (flour mill); or that the rezoning is of very small scale and therefore will not have any impact. The second type of arguments used focus on the question of the agricultural use of the land. It is often argued that the land could not support a viable operation because it is: too small, of low agricultural value, likely to create conflicts (or is already creating conflicts) with adjoining residential uses, or a combination of those arguments. In addition, it is argued, in some applications, that the land is ‘underutilised’. The low intensity of the agricultural use of the land is often used as an additional argument in favour of the rezoning of rural land to residential uses. Finally, some applications explain that there is a need for further investigation regarding the loss of agricultural land, while one application does not give any consideration to the loss of agricultural lands.

#### **4.1.3.1 Agriculture as non-viable**

Whether the land to be rezoned is a few hectares or over 100 hectares, and whether it supports a commercial agricultural activity or low intensity farming (hobby

farming), it is always described as non-viable in rezoning proposals, because it is too small, non-productive or likely to create conflicts.

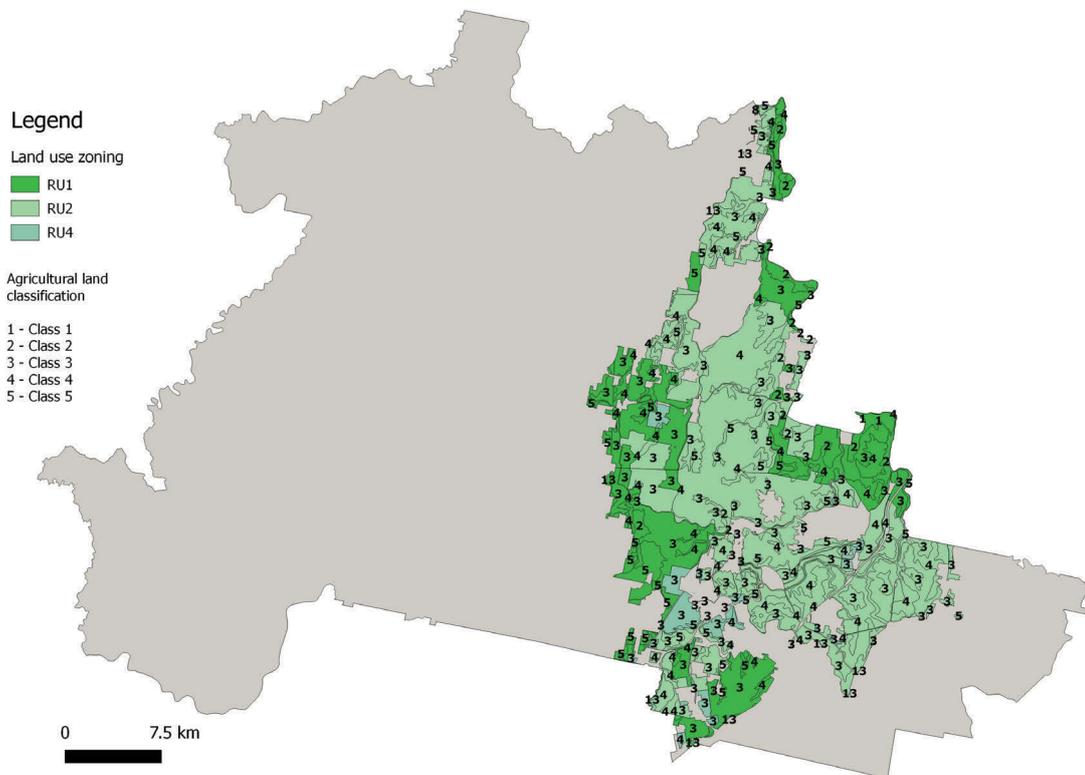
In five of the cases analysed, it is argued that the land is not viable for agricultural activities because it is too small. The size of the lands considered as too small varies between five hectares and over 100 hectares. Indeed, one application argues that a 111-hectare plot of land used for grazing is too small "to operate as a viable agricultural holding", and there is no opportunity to expand, preventing it from being a viable operation. This argument can be challenged, as Malcolm and Fahd (2009), in a study of vegetable farming in the Greater Sydney area, found that the average size of outdoor field, greenhouse and outdoor hydroponic vegetable planting was 1.9 hectares. Therefore, small pieces of land may not be viable for extensive farming, but can be viable for certain types of intensive farming, such as vegetable farming. This seems to indicate that the farming is only considered as viable on large consolidated land holdings.

In five applications, the alleged poor quality of the land is used to justify a request for a zoning change. These applications refer to the Agricultural Land Classification of the Department of Primary Industry (Hulme et al., 2002). Four of these five applications, explain that the land is classified as class 3; class 3 and 4; and class 4 and 5, which means that they are considered as having a relatively low productivity<sup>1</sup>. The fifth proposal, states only that the land was not "prime agricultural land". Prime agricultural lands remain undefined here, but the assumption is that the applicant is referring to the fact that the State Environmental Planning Policy on Rural Lands does not consider land in Wollondilly Shire to be "significant agricultural land". In these five applications, it is often argued that the areas of land in question are too small to be viable for extensive use, and that they could not be cultivated more intensively because the soil is too poor and intensification would impact on residential uses. However, the map below (Figure 4.3) demonstrates that an important part of lands zoned rural in the Shire (RU1 - Primary production, RU2 - Rural Landscape, and RU4 - Primary production small lots) belong to

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<sup>1</sup>Class 1 lands are defined as: "Arable land suited to continuous cultivation for uses such as intensive horticulture and field crops. Constraints to sustained high levels of production are absent or minor". Class 2 lands are defined as: "Arable land suited to regular cultivation for uses such as intensive horticulture and field crops. Constraints to sustained levels of production are minor to moderate". Class 3 lands are defined as: "Land suited to cropping but not continuous cultivation. Production risks are managed through: a pasture phase, conservation tillage and/or fallowing. Constraints to sustained levels of production are moderate." Class 4 lands are defined as: "Land suited to grazing but not cultivation. Agriculture is based on native pastures and/or improved pastures established using minimum tillage techniques. Overall level of production is comparatively low due to major environmental constraints." Class 5 lands are defined as: "Land not suited for agriculture or only light grazing. Agricultural production, if any, is low due to major environmental constraints." (Hulme et al., 2002, p. 5)

the classes 3, 4 and 5. Yet Wollondilly Shire has been an agricultural area for a long time, and the Sydney Basin more generally is recognised as a source of agricultural production in the Sydney basin. It could therefore be argued that considering only the agricultural capability of the land to define whether it is viable is an insufficient or largely irrelevant justification for rezoning. The lack of relevance of a soil-based analysis to determine agriculturally significant farmlands in the Sydney basin has been demonstrated by Docking and Sreekumar (2008) who explain that many farming operations in the Sydney basin are situated on class 3.



**FIGURE 4.3:** Map of land zoned rural (RU1, RU2 and RU4) and the Agricultural Land Classification of the Department of Primary Industries (Class 1,2,3,4 and 5) in the Wollondilly Shire. [Incorporates or developed using Land Zoning (LZN), State Government of NSW and Department of Planning and Environment and NSW Agricultural Land Classification Data - Sydney, Department of Primary Industries]

In ten rezoning proposals, the issue of the negative impact of agricultural activities on adjoining residential uses (potential or existing), and the land use conflicts they can generate, is tackled. In some applications, it is stated that the land is unlikely to be used for agricultural purposes in the future due to its proximity to residential areas and the "typical rural/urban conflicts" that agriculture generates. The presence of residential uses in proximity to the lands that are the subject of the rezoning application is considered in several applications as constraining or limiting the potential of the land to be used for agriculture, and agriculture, particularly intensive livestock production, is considered as having a "negative impact" on residential uses. The question of conflicts between agricultural and residential uses is particularly significant in two rezoning applications, in which existing agricultural uses (tomato farming and duck raising and cattle grazing operations) are considered as having "limited commercial activity" because of their location in proximity to residential areas, and the conflicts that creates. In this case agriculture is presented as 'out of place' because it is not considered as fitting in an environment dominated by residential uses. Therefore, agricultural uses (or the potential for introducing agricultural uses) need to be removed from the landscape.

Finally, five applications explain that the land has "limited agricultural potential" or "limited potential for other rural purposes" without giving any justification for this.

##### **4.1.3.2 "Use it otherwise you lose it"**

The last argument used in rezoning applications to justify the rezoning of farmlands concerns only lands which are not currently commercially farmed, or which are not the subject of substantial agricultural activities. The underutilisation of the land for agricultural purposes is often cited as one of the reasons why land should be rezoned. Several applications describe the land as "vacant", or as already used for de facto rural residential purposes. Others explain that the land is used for residential purposes as well as for some farming activities. However, those farming activities are always considered as non-significant, and as not constituting the main use of the land. Indeed, those agricultural uses are described as: "low intensity", "limited", "passive agriculture", "rural lifestyle", or as not being "significant viable productive agriculture". The underutilisation of the land for agricultural purposes on a commercial scale is used in several applications as an argument to justify the rezoning of the land from agricultural to residential. For example, it is argued in one proposal that since the land is not used for agricultural purposes, its rezoning would have no "impact upon food security". Using the same reasoning, it is explained in another rezoning proposal that 38% of land zoned for rural purposes is

unutilised, and that therefore the rezoning of the land would have no measurable impact on the availability of productive land in Wollondilly Shire. Finally, another applicant asserts that "the opportunity for the use of the site for rural and resource land has been available for many years" and had not been pursued, legitimising the rezoning of the land. This seems to be in accordance with the words of a planner who explained that: "the things that sort of protect agriculture is not really that the zone is there to protect it, it's the activity that's happening there, so it's making sure, you use it otherwise you lose it". Here we can see that the lands to be rezoned are always considered as non-productive, non-viable, a source of existing or potential conflicts or underutilised. Farming is therefore represented as a nuisance, and the lands to be rezoned are represented as not able to support farming. Through rezoning proposals, farming is considered as an unsuitable, 'out of place' land use in the Shire. For a summary of the arguments used in the rezoning proposals to depict agricultural lands as 'out of place' see Table 4.3 below.

**TABLE 4.3:** Arguments used in rezoning proposals to depict agricultural lands as ‘out of place’ in the Wollondilly Shire.

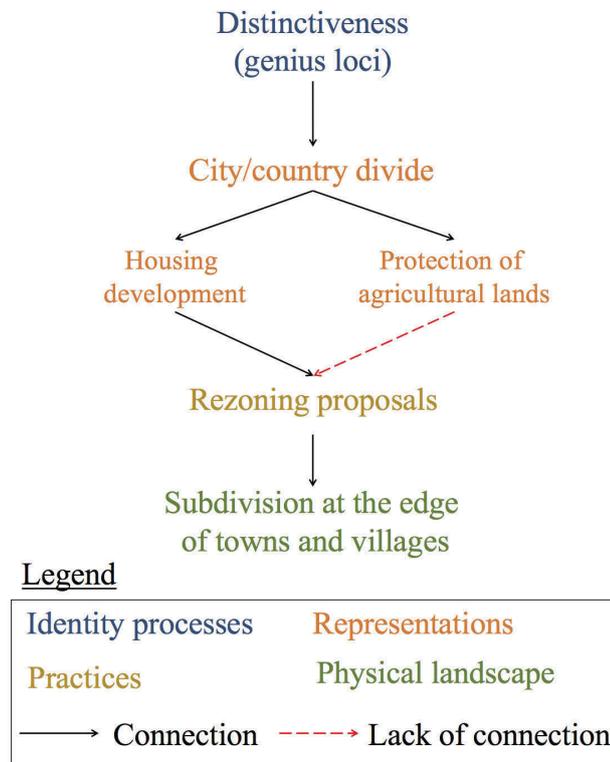
|        | Further investig. required | Small develop. | Would impact existing use | Underutil. | Non-viable      |           |                      |                               |
|--------|----------------------------|----------------|---------------------------|------------|-----------------|-----------|----------------------|-------------------------------|
|        |                            |                |                           |            | No reason given | Too small | Poor quality of land | Conflicts with resident. uses |
| App.29 |                            |                |                           |            |                 |           |                      |                               |
| App.36 |                            |                |                           |            |                 |           |                      |                               |
| App.5  |                            |                |                           |            |                 |           |                      |                               |
| App.37 |                            |                |                           |            |                 |           |                      |                               |
| App.13 |                            |                |                           |            |                 |           |                      |                               |
| App.9  |                            |                |                           |            |                 |           |                      |                               |
| App.20 |                            |                |                           |            |                 |           |                      |                               |
| App.16 |                            |                |                           |            |                 |           |                      |                               |
| App.25 |                            |                |                           |            |                 |           |                      |                               |
| App.26 |                            |                |                           |            |                 |           |                      |                               |
| App.34 |                            |                |                           |            |                 |           |                      |                               |
| App.30 |                            |                |                           |            |                 |           |                      |                               |
| App.17 |                            |                |                           |            |                 |           |                      |                               |
| App.18 |                            |                |                           |            |                 |           |                      |                               |
| App.7  |                            |                |                           |            |                 |           |                      |                               |
| App.33 |                            |                |                           |            |                 |           |                      |                               |
| App.22 |                            |                |                           |            |                 |           |                      |                               |
| App.35 |                            |                |                           |            |                 |           |                      |                               |
| App.10 |                            |                |                           |            |                 |           |                      |                               |
| App.11 |                            |                |                           |            |                 |           |                      |                               |
| App.3  |                            |                |                           |            |                 |           |                      |                               |
| App.28 |                            |                |                           |            |                 |           |                      |                               |
| App.14 |                            |                |                           |            |                 |           |                      |                               |
| App.31 |                            |                |                           |            |                 |           |                      |                               |

The category in blue refers to the need for further investigation. The categories in orange refer to the nature of the housing development. The category in pink refers to the argument of the underutilisation of the land. The categories in green refer to the arguments given to define the land as non-viable.

Further investig. required = Further investigation required; Small develop. = Small development; Underutil. = Underutilisation

If we consider our politics of place/landscape identify framework, we can see that the identity of the Wollondilly Shire Council is based on its distinctiveness. As illustrated in Figure 4.4 below, this distinctiveness is based on the representation of the peri-urban Shire as maintaining a sharp distinction between city and country, in contrast with more suburban shires where urban sprawl is occurring. This distinction between city and

country is intended to protect agricultural lands while offering opportunities for housing development. However, we saw that the representation of the Shire promoted by the council was not being put into practice. Instead, housing development is promoted by landowners in rezoning proposals, while farming is considered as a nuisance. This leads to the rapid development of housing on the edges of the towns and villages of the Shire. In the literature review, we saw that the relationships between the different dimensions of the model were two-way relationships: identity processes influence representations, which influence practices, which influence the appearance of the physical landscape and vice versa. Here, a hybrid configuration exists whereby a specific identity is built on a specific representation, but this representation does not manage to translate into practices and therefore does not impact the physical landscape. Instead, in rezoning proposals (planning practices), only one part of the representation (housing development) is used by landowners, whereas the other aspect (the protection of agricultural lands) is dismissed, creating a situation where identity and representations do not influence practices.



**FIGURE 4.4:** Representation of the first hegemonic place identity in the Wollondilly Shire.

In the next section we explain why the place identity promoted by the council and the representation attached to it are not reflected in planning practices. We argue that housing development is considered as 'in place' and agriculture as 'out of place' because providing housing, based on forecast demand for housing, is the dominant rationality of planning in the Sydney Basin. A counter-argument that would consider the protection of farmlands is still emerging, and does not benefit from techniques, which would allow it to exist in planning processes. When considering the politics of place/landscape identity framework, the next section will focus on explaining the link between planning practices (rezoning proposals) and representations, and why the link is only made with one aspect of the representation (housing development) and not the other (the protection of agricultural lands).

#### **4.1.4 Housing demand forecasts as the dominant rationality of planning?**

In this section we will show that the provision of housing, supported by housing forecasts, appears to be the main driver of policy at the metropolitan and local scales, whereas the discourse on sustainability and more particularly on the protection of peri-urban farmlands is still emerging and does not benefit from an associated technique that could enable this discourse to be incorporated in planning practices. Taking the example of planning for housing in the UK, Murdoch (2000) explains that "techniques of forecasting are used to guide planning allocations" in order "to draw future households into current decision-making processes", at all levels of government (pp. 505-507). Forecast housing demand therefore drives the decision-making process in terms of housing provision. In contrast, one association (the Council for the Protection of Rural England) claims that housing forecast are decontextualised and should be integrated into the spatial context. To defend this idea, the association develops a counter-argument around the idea of sustainable development, and associates it with a specific technique: the capability study, which aims at raising "the profile of spatial complexity" (Murdoch, 2000, p. 509). This counter-argument is progressively receiving more recognition by the government, and it follows that two competing rationalities and their associated techniques have become part of the planning process. In the scenario described by Murdoch (2000), one rationality of planning is developed through the institutional channel (housing development through housing forecasts) and an alternative (and oppositional) one (sustainable development through capability studies) is developed outside the institutional channel, before being

integrated into decision-making in planning.

In the Wollondilly case study, the situation is slightly different. Planning documents at the metropolitan and local scales develop an inclusive discourse which attempts to integrate various rationalities: development of housing and sustainability (even though the sustainability discourse is not clear and consistent). However, they only apply an associated technique for the housing development discourse (housing forecasts), leaving the sustainability discourse, and more particularly the discourse on the protection of peri-urban farmlands, without an associated technique.

We will illustrate this point by explaining how housing developments, through housing forecasts, are given priority in planning practices (rezoning proposals). To do so, we will first look at how, in metropolitan and local planning documents (Metropolitan Strategies and Growth Management Strategy), the discourse on housing development is associated with housing forecasts, whereas the discourse on the protection of peri-urban agricultural land does not have an associated technique. Then we will look at the way planning practices are influenced by housing forecasts. To do so, we will look at the information used to take the gateway decision at the state level <sup>2</sup>.

#### **4.1.4.1 The dominance of a housing development discourse tied to housing forecasts**

As seen in the literature review, the main objective of the last two Metropolitan Strategies is the creation of Sydney as a 'Global City'. According to these strategies the way to reach this 'Global City' status is to encourage global business investment, and to create housing and job opportunities for the ever-growing population of Sydney. The plan for accommodating this growing population is based on housing forecasts: A Plan for Sydney 2036 states that 770,000 houses need to be built before 2036, and A Plan for Growing Sydney that 664,000 houses need to be built before 2034. According to one planner interviewed, the housing forecasts, based on population projections, drive the planning in the Metropolitan Strategies: "the population data is a bit of a driver for understanding and replanning the city". This first rationality of planning, based on the need to accommodate a growing population is put in perspective, in the Metropolitan Strategies, with the application of another rationality of planning based on sustainability, and on the need to preserve Sydney's natural and cultivated environments. However,

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<sup>2</sup>Once the rezoning proposal has been accepted by the council, the proposal is sent to the state government's Department of Planning and Environment where it goes through a gateway process during which it is decided whether the Minister is in favor of proceeding with the rezoning or not - gateway decision-

as seen in the literature review, the sustainability agenda is not defined clearly and consistently, meaning that the topics that are on the agenda vary from one strategy to the other. The question of the protection of peri-urban farmlands, which is the one that is of interest here, is not consistently tackled by the Metropolitan Strategies, and the measures proposed vary between strategies, with the only permanent feature being the creation of the compact city, which it is claimed will protect farmlands by promoting contained development around existing centres. As we can see here, housing development is associated with housing forecasts, whereas peri-urban agricultural lands do not seem to benefit from an associated technique, or set of techniques. One of the planners interviewed referred to this issue in explaining that while housing development is supported by arguments based on numbers (housing forecasts), no calculations have been done of the number of farmlands that need to be preserved in the Sydney basin: "in terms of strong evidence to show how much agricultural land we need to protect [...] a lot of the information put forward [...] hasn't sort of demonstrated how much land [...] we need and what type of land [...] we need."

This priority given to housing development through housing forecasts in the Metropolitan Strategies influences Wollondilly Shire, where providing for housing development based on housing forecasts, is the dominant rationality of planning. Indeed, the GMS states that the Shire will need to accommodate an extra 7500 houses between 2011 and the mid-2030s, following the spatial model of the compact city. In contrast, no technique exists that promotes the protection of farmlands, whereas the protection of farmlands is on the agenda of the GMS (Viable agriculture is the second characteristic of the "rural living" vision). Instead, the GMS assumes that existing planning instruments (such as land use zoning, minimum lot size and dwellings entitlements) and development control plans are effectively protecting farming. Indeed, it is explained that one strategy to maintain and develop rural industry will be: "continuing to ensure that Wollondilly's planning instruments and development control plans support and encourage the retention and development of rural industries and agri-tourism" (Wollondilly Shire Council, 2011a, p. 76). Other goals are set to promote farming, such as creating an Agricultural Industry Development Strategy and promoting local food, but those goals aim at attracting rural industries to the area, rather than at influencing planning practices. Finally, the GMS raises the possibility of reserving lands for agriculture by implementing agri-business parks and agricultural industry clusters, but this remains, for now, aspirational. The dominant influence of housing forecasts in planning was illustrated by one planner who explained that the GMS of Wollondilly Shire Council is based on housing growth, and

only indirectly protects farmlands. Indeed, it identifies where housing growth is going to happen, and therefore only "inadvertently" defines which zones will remain rural.

#### **4.1.4.2 Rezoning proposals: housing development vs. protection of farmlands, an uphill battle**

When looking at the Department of Planning and Environment's assessments of rezoning proposals, we can see how housing forecasts dominate the decision-making process. In contrast, the absence of techniques tied to the discourse on the protection of farmlands is made more obvious. To illustrate this point, we will look more specifically at how rezoning proposals are approved by the Department of Planning and Environment despite the fact that they are inconsistent with the S117 Direction 1.2 Rural Zones<sup>3</sup>. This direction aims at protecting "the agricultural production value of rural land", and needs to be considered before approving rezoning proposals. We will see the grounds on which the Department of Planning and Environment accepts a proposal despite its inconsistency with the S117 Direction 1.2 Rural Zones. We will then demonstrate that the Department of Planning and Environment's approval of rezoning proposals despite the fact that they are inconsistent with the S117 Direction 1.2 Rural Zones is occurring because of the drive for housing development that is based on housing forecasts.

The S117 Direction 1.2 Rural Zones states that "the objective of this direction is to protect the agricultural production value of rural land", and that the relevant planning authority must ensure that a planning proposal does: "(a) not rezone land from a rural zone to a residential, business, industrial, village or tourist zone. (b) not contain provisions that will increase the permissible density of land within a rural zone (other than land within an existing town or village)."

However, it is also stated that a planning proposal:

*may be inconsistent with the term of this direction if the relevant planning authority can satisfy the Director-General of the Department of Planning (or an officer of the Department nominated by the Director-General) that the provisions of the planning proposal that are inconsistent are: (a) justified by a strategy which: (i) gives consideration to the objectives of this direction, (ii) identifies the land which is the subject of the planning proposal (if the planning proposal relates to a particular site or sites), and (iii) is approved by the Director-General of the Department of Planning, or (b) justified by a study prepared in support of the planning proposal which gives consideration to the objectives of this direc-*

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<sup>3</sup>section 117(2) of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979.

*tion, or (c) in accordance with the relevant Regional Strategy or Sub-Regional Strategy prepared by the Department of Planning which gives consideration to the objective of this direction, or (d) is of minor significance.*

Out of the 24 rezoning proposals studied, three do not contain the recommendation of the gateway decision, or the decision made concerning the S117 Direction 1.2 Rural Zones. In two cases, further consultation with the Department of Primary Industries, or additional studies, were required. In the 19 remaining cases, the Department approved the inconsistency with the S117 Direction 1.2 Rural Lands because: it was aligned to the Draft South West Sub-Regional Strategy (nine cases), it was of minor significance (six cases), or both (four cases). Among those nineteen rezoning proposals nine used additional arguments to justify the inconsistency of the rezoning with the S117 Direction 1.2 Rural Lands. They claim that: (1) the land would not be used for agricultural purposes in the future due to its proximity to urban areas, (2) the land proposed for rezoning could not be used for agricultural purposes as it would create conflicts with adjoining residential uses, (3) the development of the land would be consistent with existing developments, (4) the development of the land would create new housing opportunities, (5) the land could not be used for agricultural purposes because of remnant vegetation, (6) a buffer zone would be created between residential developments and agricultural uses, (7) the land to be rezoned has limited agricultural value and, (8) the development of the land would not contribute to the fragmentation of agricultural lands. Finally, in three gateway decisions, the Department of Planning and Environment asked the council to consult the Department of Primary Industries to make sure that the development did not create conflicts with agricultural activities. For a summary of the arguments used by the Department of Planning and Environment to justify its approval of the rezoning proposals despite the proposals being inconsistent with the S117 Direction 1.2 Rural Zones, see Table 4.4 below <sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>In the 24 rezoning proposals we looked at the arguments used in the Gateway Determination, but also in the Planning Team Report and the Panel Recommendation (which precede the Gateway determination). Sometimes, the argument used in the Planning Team Report, the Panel Recommendation and the Gateway Determination are not exactly the same, but they never contradict each other. The table below makes a summary of all the arguments used in the Gateway Determination, the Planning Team Report and the Panel Recommendation.

**TABLE 4.4:** Arguments used by the Department of Planning and Environment to justify its approval of the rezoning proposals despite the proposals being inconsistent with the S117 Direction 1.2 Rural Zones.

|        | Strategy | Minor signific. | Close to urban areas | Conflicts | Consistent with existing develop. | Housing opportun. | Vegetation | Buffer | Limited agricult. value | No fragm. of agricult. land | Consulting DPI |
|--------|----------|-----------------|----------------------|-----------|-----------------------------------|-------------------|------------|--------|-------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------|
| App.26 | Blue     |                 |                      |           |                                   |                   |            |        |                         |                             |                |
| App.36 | Blue     |                 |                      |           |                                   |                   |            |        |                         |                             |                |
| App.33 | Blue     |                 |                      |           |                                   |                   |            |        |                         |                             |                |
| App.10 | Blue     |                 |                      |           |                                   |                   |            |        |                         |                             |                |
| App.31 | Blue     |                 |                      |           |                                   |                   |            |        |                         |                             |                |
| App.35 | Blue     |                 |                      |           |                                   |                   |            |        |                         |                             |                |
| App.25 | Blue     |                 |                      |           |                                   |                   |            |        |                         |                             | Green          |
| App.20 | Blue     |                 | Orange               |           |                                   |                   |            |        |                         |                             | Green          |
| App.30 | Blue     |                 |                      |           |                                   |                   |            | Orange | Orange                  |                             | Green          |
| App.3  |          | Blue            |                      |           |                                   |                   |            |        |                         |                             |                |
| App.13 |          | Blue            |                      |           |                                   |                   |            |        |                         |                             |                |
| App.34 |          | Blue            |                      |           |                                   |                   |            |        |                         |                             |                |
| App.37 |          | Blue            |                      |           | Orange                            |                   |            |        |                         | Orange                      |                |
| App.14 |          | Blue            | Orange               | Orange    |                                   |                   |            |        |                         |                             |                |
| App.7  |          | Blue            | Orange               | Orange    |                                   |                   |            |        | Orange                  |                             |                |
| App.22 | Blue     | Blue            | Orange               |           |                                   |                   |            |        |                         |                             |                |
| App.29 | Blue     | Blue            | Orange               |           |                                   |                   | Orange     |        |                         |                             |                |
| App.16 | Blue     | Blue            |                      |           |                                   | Orange            |            |        |                         |                             |                |
| App.17 | Blue     | Blue            |                      |           |                                   | Orange            |            |        |                         |                             |                |

The categories in blue refer to the arguments related to the most common arguments used to justify the approval of rezonings. The categories in orange refer to other type of arguments used less systematically to justify the approval of rezonings. The category in green refers to the need for additional information through the consultation of the DPI.

Minor signific. = Minor significance; Consistent with existing develop. = Consistent with existing development; Housing opportun. = Housing opportunity; Limited agricult. value = Limited agricultural value; No fragm. of agricult. land = No fragmentation of agricultural land.

The argument that is used in nearly half of the proposals to justify the approval despite their inconsistency with the Direction (thirteen times out of 19) is that the proposal is consistent with the Draft South West Sub-Regional Strategy, which stipulates that the growth target in Wollondilly Shire is for 5,230 additional dwellings by 2031, 4,000 of which should be greenfield dwellings. The second main argument used is that the rezoned land is of minor significance. However, 'minor significance' is never defined. Finally, the other arguments used are mostly arguments developed by the applicants to depict housing development as 'in place' (e.g. the development would be situated near an urban area or it would be consistent with existing developments) while presenting farming as non-viable or as a nuisance (e.g. the land is of limited agricultural value or agricultural uses would create conflicts with residential uses).

What we can see here is that when considering a Direction (S117 Direction 1.2 Rural Zones) which aims at protecting rural zones, the Department of Planning and Environment seems to draw upon the housing forecast of the Draft South West Sub-Regional Strategy to make a decision, while discarding potential agricultural uses by re-using the arguments of the applicants. This can potentially be explained by the fact that the pressure to proceed with housing developments is dominant in the Metropolitan Strategies. One planner interviewed illustrates this by explaining that "the government always had a focus on jobs and housing and creating areas for people. That's been quite a big focus in the Plan for Growing Sydney. It's about creating places [to] live, work, play et cetera", whereas little information is available that could be used to assess the agricultural value of the land. When looking at the gateway decisions, it is obvious that the planners assessing the rezoning proposals rely mostly on information provided by the council, since they only make comments based on that information. However, we saw earlier that most of the rezoning applications provide limited information about the agricultural dimension of the land.

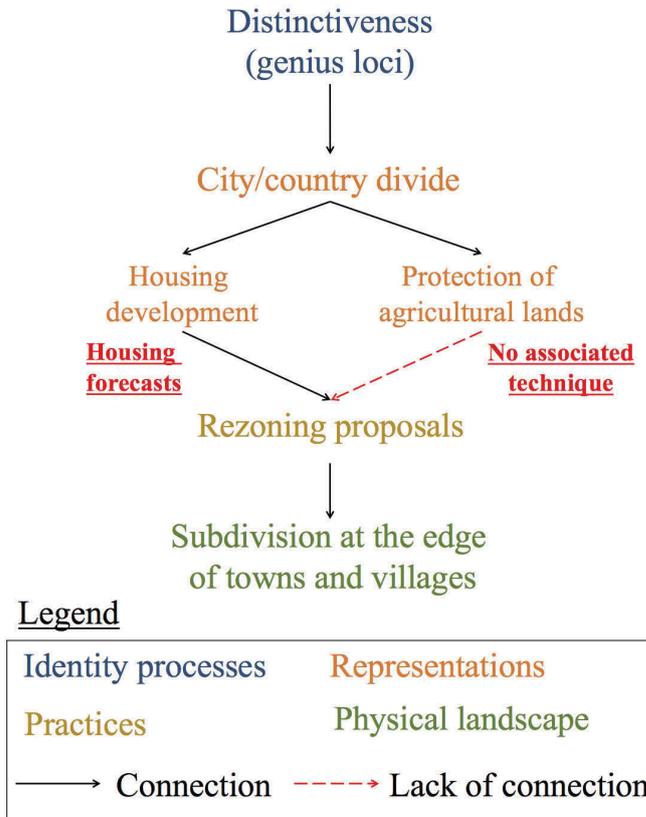
Other agencies, which might have more information about the agricultural use of land, such as the Department of Primary Industries, are often consulted after the gateway process to provide advice on specific issues. However, in the cases studied, only a few applications were sent to the Department of Primary Industries, and this was done mostly to address very specific issues, such as possible conflicts with existing agricultural activities, rather than to assess the validity of the application in terms of the place of agriculture in the Sydney Basin. According to one planner interviewed, the best chance farmlands have to be protected from development is if the land possesses other characteristics, such as being flood or bushfire prone, or having environmental

qualities, which are more systematically considered: "Environment, flooding, bushfire, so in some ways, by virtue, and perhaps it's by accident, but it's the nature of the land as well, that they are protected". When it comes to environmental qualities, this planner explained that they are often taken into consideration more than the potential agricultural use because the Commonwealth and state legislation captures the question of the environmental qualities of the land: "it's also [environmental qualities] captured by Commonwealth legislation, so under the EPBC Act <sup>5</sup>, a lot of the vegetation in Western Sydney, or some of the vegetation, are critically endangered or threatened, so if it's Cumberland Plain vegetation or woodland, it's captured by Commonwealth legislation, and the State legislation, so that's why it's by virtue of that legislation it's given sort of very high consideration immediately. [...] so quite often that farmland or rural land might be protected by virtue that it's got the other critical components on it." By contrast, the policy that could contribute to the protection of agricultural areas in peri-urban Sydney, the Rural Lands State Environment Planning Policy (SEPP) on rural lands, which aims at identifying significant agricultural lands, focuses on rural New South Wales, and consequently excludes peri-urban agricultural lands (Sydney Agriculture Strategic Approach Working Group, 2017). We can see here that the protection of biodiversity is more systematically integrated into the process because of its legal status, which means it can indirectly contribute to the protection of farmlands in peri-urban Sydney.

What we have illustrated here is that the rationality of planning centred on housing development and its associated technique (housing forecasts) influence the process of rezoning of lands in Wollondilly Shire, whereas the competing rationality of protection of agricultural farmlands, which is part of the inclusive representation of rurality developed by Wollondilly Shire Council, does not have an associated technique and therefore is not fully integrated with the decision-making process (Figure 4.5 below). For this reason, it seems that even though these two rationalities cohabit in the representations of rurality in planning documents, the housing rationality seems to remain, for now, dominant in influencing the development of the Shire.

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<sup>5</sup>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act



**FIGURE 4.5:** Representation of the associated techniques which explain why housing development is favoured over the protection of agricultural lands in rezoning proposals.

Whereas housing development rationality benefits from housing forecasts, the preservation of agricultural lands rationality does not benefit from an associated technique

If we refer to our politics of place/landscape framework, so far, we have seen how an inclusive representation of rurality based on the compact city concept, which aims at combining housing development and the protection of farmlands, is promoted in planning documents. We have also seen how this inclusive representation of rurality is not fully implemented in the planning practices, and that housing development takes precedence over farming. In the last section, we saw that this was supported in that housing development possesses an associated technique (housing forecasts) whereas protection of farmlands does not. The place identity promoted by the council, that is transgressed in planning practices, can be considered as a hegemonic place identity because it contributes to determining the type of development occurring in the material landscape of the Shire, and therefore the role of farming in the peri-urban environment.

In the next section we will see that this dominant place identity, which is based on a city–country divide, is not the only dominant place identity in Wollondilly Shire. Indeed, the city–country divide has been undermined by a competing place identity which expresses itself through the transgression of the city–country divide.

## 4.2 The dissolution of the city–country divide?

The promotion by Wollondilly Shire Council of the distinction between city and country has not been completely successful. Various spatial dynamics, past and present, are at play in the Shire that contribute to the transgression of the urban/rural divide, leading to the emergence of a hybrid space (Murdoch and Lowe, 2003). Taylor et al. (2017) argue that planners in Australia "are constrained by many path dependencies into articulating a clear and non-hybridized future with *certainty* and *separation* at its core", before describing this aim as a "chimera", and insisting therefore on the ineluctability of the hybridisation of peri-urban spaces (p. 86). In Wollondilly Shire, this hybridisation of the peri-urban space is visible. It is supported by a specific representation of what the landscape should look like, and whose practices are legitimate.

In this section we will demonstrate how a second hegemonic place identity, based on the hybridisation of the peri-urban landscape, seems to exist in parallel to the one promoted by the council. This place identity can also be considered as hegemonic because it influences the spatial dynamics in Wollondilly, and therefore actively contributes to shaping the material landscape of the Shire. However, this dominant place identity does not exert itself in the same area of the Shire as the first one. The first hegemonic place identity drives the development at the fringes of towns and villages, this second dominant place identity influences the development further inside rural lands.

Using the politics of place/landscape identity framework, we will demonstrate in this section how a competing hegemonic place identity has been created, based on a different conceptualisation of the identity of the Shire, and supported by a specific representation of rurality. This representation of rurality determines the practices considered legitimate in the landscape and the evolution of the appearance of the material landscape.

In this section we first look at several planning practices and changes in the material landscape which contribute to the hybridisation of the rural landscape of Wollondilly Shire. We then look at how the changes in the physical landscape are supported by a conceptualisation of the identity of the Shire based on a representation of rurality as low density housing development. Finally, we see how the representation of rurality

promoted here challenges the legitimacy of farming practices in the rural parts of the Shire.

### **4.2.1 The hybridisation of the rural landscape**

Several planning practices have triggered (sometimes inadvertently) changes in land use that have contributed, and sometimes still contribute, to the hybridization of the rural landscape of Wollondilly Shire. We focus here on family excision, community titles and zoning ordinances. These three planning practices have contributed, and sometimes still contribute, to the replacement, in the material landscape, of traditional agricultural uses by non-agricultural uses (housing developments) or/and non-traditional agricultural uses ('horsiculture'). These changes in land use put pressure on farmers by increasing land prices and rates, and these pressures are heightened by the low profitability of farming.

#### **4.2.1.1 Family excision and community titles: introducing rural-residential uses in rural lands**

The distinction between city and country has been subverted, in the past, through the implementation of family excision and community titles, which have enabled non-agricultural uses to occur in land zoned rural. Family excision enabled farmers to subdivide a small amount of their land in order to enable family members to build a property close to the family farm. However, there was no clause preventing the property from subsequently being sold to non-family members. As a consequence, several properties have subsequently been sold to people who do not practise a farming activity. The community titles enabled and still enables a group of persons to buy a large block of land and build housing on a portion of the land, provided that the rest of the land was farmed. The consequence of this type of development, according to some interviewees, is that land designated for farming activities, in community titles, is often unsuited to agriculture (steep slopes, for example) and is, as a consequence, not farmed. Family excisions and community titles have introduced residential uses to rural areas.

#### **4.2.1.2 Zoning ordinances: authorising a wide range of uses**

Zoning ordinances also play an important role in the hybridisation of rural areas in Wollondilly Shire. Whereas in some parts of the world, owners of lands zoned rural have to practise a farming activity or rent it to an active farmer (Forbord et al., 2014),

practising agriculture is not compulsory in the rural lands of Wollondilly Shire. A wide variety of uses are authorised in lands zoned rural (RU1 Primary production, RU2 Rural Landscape and RU4 Primary production small lots) in the Shire. For example, on lands classified as RU1 Primary Production in the Shire uses of the land can go beyond agricultural uses (Wollondilly Shire Council, 2011b). Indeed, in addition to farming activities and activities supporting farming, other uses of the land are authorised, including animal boarding or training establishments ('horsiculture'), houses, or secondary dwellings. Zoning ordinances, by authorising a relatively wide range of uses of lands zoned rural, seem to contribute to the hybridisation of rural areas.

#### **4.2.1.3 Changes in the physical landscape**

These planning practices led to changes in the physical landscape, such as the development of 'horsiculture' and the purchase of large tracts of land for housing development.

Several farmers explained that 'horsiculture', which is not perceived as a traditional agricultural use but rather as an urban-oriented use of the land, has expanded in Wollondilly Shire. This expansion has been observed elsewhere in Australia (Low Choy et al., 2007) as well as in other parts of the world (Bomans et al., 2010; Elgåker, 2012; Quetier and Gordon, 2003; Zasada et al., 2013). Whereas 'horsiculture' is sometimes considered as having a positive impact on the agricultural sector by creating new economic opportunities for farmers through the sale of cereals and grains to horse farms, or by enabling farming operations to remain viable by integrating horse enterprises into their operations (Elgåker, 2012; Zasada et al., 2013), it is also considered as having potential negative impacts, such as decreasing the area of agricultural land use for food production (Bomans et al., 2010). Several farmers interviewed were wary of the development of 'horsiculture'. They perceived it as a "time bomb" and a potential threat to the future of agricultural production in the area. One farmer expressed his concerns about the progressive replacement of agricultural production by the horse industry this way: "Well the horse industry, I can see here the horse industry in this area is absolutely expanding exponentially. Every property that's sold, if it was a farming property is changing to horse, and intensive horse, lots of horses."

A second phenomenon leading to the progressive replacement of agricultural land by other uses is land speculation. According to several farmers, large tracts of land are bought in rural zones and left idle. The aim of the buyers is to wait for a change in zoning (from rural to residential), in order to subdivide and create housing developments. The

expansion of the horse industry and the purchase of large tracts of land for housing development also contribute to the hybridisation of the rural areas in Wollondilly Shire.

The hybridisation of the landscape is detrimental to farming because it results in "placing speculative land pressure on farmland" (Wollondilly Shire Council, 2011a, p. 57), raising the cost of rates for farmers and preventing them from purchasing land to start an operation or expand an existing one. This is reinforced by the fact that farming is often unprofitable, which is not an element per se of the hegemonic place identity, but is an external element that increases the marginalisation of farmers.

### **4.2.1.4 Hybridisation of the rural landscape and farmers' economic viability**

The question of the lack of economic viability of farming has been raised on many occasions by farmers. In particular, they attribute a lack of viability to the impacts of neo-liberal policies on farming such as the deregulation of the dairy industry, the increased prices of inputs, and the monopolies of major retailers. In addition, they point out that the neoliberal political discourse, in Australia encourages bigger farms and views small farmers negatively. Several dairy farmers saw the deregulation of the dairy industry as a turning point which meant farmers had to either increase their productivity or exit farming. The second element raised was the increase in the cost of inputs such as fertilisers, chemicals and seeds. The third element highlighted by several farmers is the dominance of major retailers when it comes to setting the prices of farm produce. These prices, according to several farmers, do not take into account the costs of production, enabling farmers to make only limited profit on their products. Another issue raised by one farmer was the coupling of the deregulation of the farming industry to a political discourse which focuses on bigger farms, and promotes the idea of 'get bigger or get out'.

These changes are perceived as particularly harmful for peri-urban farmers because the high price of land in the area increases the lack of viability of farming. For example, one farmer explained that the combination of the deregulation of the dairy industry and the high price of land in peri-urban areas made it advantageous to sell the farm and resettle further away, or to exit farming altogether: "A high percentage of farms around here that couldn't survive that new deregulated environment, on top of that, their land values were higher, so they go 'you know what, I don't want to do this anymore, I'm going to sell the thing and retire as a millionaire'". The deregulation of the agricultural sector is therefore considered by some farmers to be an explanation for the decline in the number of farmers in peri-urban areas. Another farmer explained that the increase in land prices in the peri-urban, combined with the low profitability of agricultural activities, prevents

farmers from buying additional land to improve their viability through economies of scale: "Land prices in this area have gone up to, gone up a lot, so land costs are very expensive [...] if you work on a return per capital input, the returns are very low. Like if you go in the country in New South Wales, land use is cheap, farmers can buy a lot of land they can do a lot, like here we are restricted because to go and buy another block of land, you want, nearly a million dollar, and the return, you won't get the return." Finally, another farmer explained that the idea of 'get bigger or get out' penalises small farmers, who are dominant in the peri-urban.

The high prices placed on agricultural lands in the hybridised rural landscapes of the Shire harms farmers, who cannot purchase additional lands nearby. This problem seems to be heightened by the lack of viability of farming activities. In the literature review, we explained that two perspectives existed concerning the analysis of the phenomenon of urbanisation (Low Choy and Buxton, 2013). In the first perspective (the rural perspective) it is argued that it is the lack of economic viability of farming that explains peri-urbanisation. In the second perspective (the urban perspective) it is land speculation which leads to the conversion of agricultural lands for residential uses. Here we can see that farmers consider that both of these elements play a role in explaining farmers' struggles, with one reinforcing the other.

In this section we have seen that several planning practices and land use changes encourage the process of hybridisation of the landscape of the Shire. We have also seen that the phenomenon of hybridisation occurring at the local scale is reinforced by the lack of economic viability of farming, a problem that is exacerbated by the neoliberal agricultural policies adopted in Australia. In the next section we will see that the hybridisation of the rural landscape (Murdoch and Lowe, 2003) is supported by a representation of rurality which goes against the city–country divide promoted by the council.

### **4.2.2 A representation of rurality that transgresses the city–country divide**

The hybridisation of peri-urban landscapes is supported by a part of the community whose representation of "rural living" is characterised by low density housing development, that contrasts with the city–country divide promoted by the council. In submissions responding to rezoning proposals, members of the local community describe the city–country divide and the higher density housing promoted by the council as going

against the idea of "rural living"<sup>6</sup>. They propose another conceptualisation of "rural living" characterised by the development of low density residential housing in a rural landscape. As a consequence, they propose another identity for the Shire based on a different 'genius loci'.

### 4.2.2.1 Scale and density

In several submissions, the scale of the development proposed in rezoning proposals was considered to be too big, and was consequently seen as contradicting the idea of "rural living" by allowing the emergence of what is called in a submission an "entire new suburb". The density of the development is also often opposed. It is argued, in these submissions, that the density proposed for the development is too high, and that it would lead to the loss of the rural atmosphere/landscape. Whereas in rezoning proposals it is often suggested that the zoning should be R2 Low Density Residential and the area for each house 450 m<sup>2</sup>; in submissions, it is often argued that the zoning should be changed to R5 Large Lot Residential (which is a less dense zoning) and the area for each house to 1000 and 4000m<sup>2</sup>. The argument to support these assertions is that this would be in keeping with the idea of what is a rural community.

### 4.2.2.2 A battle of identities

This opposition to the model of spatial development defended by Wollondilly Shire Council is based on different conceptions of the identity of the Shire. In several submissions it is argued that the density of the developments should be revised in order to maintain the "unique small town culture, rural environment and atmosphere", a "way of life", or a "picturesque rural scenery". The "aesthetics aspect and rural landscape of the towns", as well as the "scenic visual amenity of the hills" that surround the town, are also evoked. In addition, the submissions often characterise Wollondilly Shire as being distinct from other areas that are characterised by "urban sprawl" or a more "suburban" character (Glenmore, Mount Annan and Saint Clair). For these members of the community, the identity of the Shire is strongly linked to its unique physical characteristics and atmosphere. The identity claimed by local community members in these submissions is related to the idea of genius loci. It is therefore the region's physical appearance (low density development in a predominantly rural area) that

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<sup>6</sup>Even if the submissions focus mostly on rezoning lands situated relatively close to towns and villages, the discourse developed by inhabitants in these submissions give us a broader idea of their conceptualisation of rurality, which is based on the development of lower density residential housing

makes the landscape of the Shire unique and distinguishable from other landscapes, such as suburban landscapes (see Figure 4.6 below for a representation of a hybridised rural landscape).

This second place identity is considered as a competing place identity because the representation of the rural landscape influences the development of the landscape (low density development in a predominantly rural landscape). It also dictates what practices are considered as legitimate in some parts of the Shire's landscape. In the next section, we will see how the hybridisation of the rural landscape promoted by some in the Shire leads to the progressive questioning of the legitimacy of farming practices in the peri-urban landscape.



**FIGURE 4.6:** Low density development scattered throughout rural lands in Wollondilly Shire, NSW, Australia. [Google Earth (May 5, 2016), Wollondilly Shire, Australia. Google 2017. [Retrieved July 17, 2017]].

### **4.2.3 Challenging the legitimacy of farming practices in the peri-urban landscape**

The hybridisation of the landscape means that residents live in close proximity to farming operations. This leads to land use conflicts as residents' representations of rurality are based on a certain aesthetics of the landscape which does not necessarily sit well with farming operations. This is particularly true of intensive farming operations

such as poultry farms and horticulture which represent an important part of the agricultural activity of the Shire. According to farmers and planners, non-farming landowners put pressure on farmers by challenging their farming practices. This situation affects farmers negatively in various ways. Firstly, they have a negative psychological effect, as farmers feel scrutinised. Secondly, and maybe more significantly, they can lead to the intensification of the restrictions put on farming.

In this section we will first see how farmers' practices are the subject of complaints, open conflicts, lobbying actions and pressure for subdivision. We will then look at the impacts of these actions on farming operations.

### 4.2.3.1 Challenging the legitimacy of farming practices

Several interviewees acknowledged that complaints against farmers in Wollondilly Shire have become a substantial problem, particularly in relation to poultry farms and market gardens. Moreover, a planner interviewed explained that the noise and odour regulations applied in peri-urban areas are adapted from residential areas and not farming areas, and they therefore protect the residential inhabitants against noise and odours produced by farming operations. A manager whom we interviewed reinforced the idea that the amenities of residents take precedence over the rights of farmers to practise farming activities, by explaining that there was no "green card" for agricultural activities, including in lands zoned agricultural (RU1 zones). Farming is therefore increasingly subject to the approval of the non-farming residents.

The increased number of complaints in the hybridised rural landscape was often interpreted by the farmers we interviewed as the result of the lack of communication between themselves and non-farmers. One farmer explained that one of the consequences of this lack of communication was that issues were not resolved "over the fence" through direct negotiation. Instead, the complaints were sent to the council, which investigated the farm in order to take steps if necessary. The observation that non-farmers are often more likely to voice their concerns about farming practices to Council officers or to non-farming neighbours rather than directly to farmers, and that this prevents issues from being solved by those directly involved, has also been made in other parts of the world (Kelsey and Vaserstein, 2000). It seems to be a common feature of the peri-urban landscape. This lack of communication contributes to driving a wedge between farmers and non-farmers. Two farmers said that the relatively large size of their properties partially protected them against complaints from neighbours. One farmer said:

*that's why you are fortunate here when you are on 45 acres. I'm not farming right up*

*to the fence. I'm a long way from the fence. You know what I mean? [...] trees along the boundaries and all that, which is a buffer and it doesn't stop those complaints but it reduces them.*

However, the reduction in the availability and affordability of land for farming in the Shire means that the future of farming seems to be conceivable only on relatively small plots of land. This suggests that complaints from neighbours are likely to increase.

In a few cases recounted by interviewees, relationships between farmers and neighbours deteriorated to the point where complaints escalated into open conflicts. For example, one farmer reported that neighbours were complaining about his activities on the grounds that they were: creating excessive dust and noise, invading their privacy, and polluting a creek. Progressively the tensions between the neighbours and the farmers increased, leading the farmer to take an Apprehended Violence Order against his neighbours. These types of stories, although they remain relatively rare in farmers' accounts, show how conflicts between farmers and non-farmers can lead to extreme situations.

Another type of action undertaken by non-farming landowners against farmers is the development of open opposition to farming, through the lobbying of local government and the posting of signs in the area. One farmer gave the example of particular members of the community successfully lobbying to prevent the expansion of a vegetable farm.

Finally, residents can also indirectly undermine farming through pressure for the subdivision of land. One farmer explained that she attended a meeting in her area where residents gathered in order to push for the rezoning and subdivision of their lands. However, in this instance the council intervened and reaffirmed that the area would remain a rural zone and would therefore not be subdivided.

#### **4.2.3.2 Consequences for farming operations**

The impacts of complaints on farmers take several forms. The first one is psychological as several farmers explained that they felt "harassed" and "scrutinised" at all times, even though they were not doing anything "wrong or illegal". This could also lead to a fear of being pushed out of the area if complaints became too frequent: "you sort of feel eventually you are going to be pushed out of the area, or forced out because of so many complaints from these newer people to the area". This contributes to the general feeling that the future of farming in the area is uncertain, and that the legitimacy of farming in areas zoned rural is progressively undermined.

The second, and perhaps most significant, negative impact of complaints is that they

can lead, in certain cases, to restrictions on farming practices (Kelsey and Vaserstein, 2000). Poultry farmers reported that some restrictions, particularly restrictions on truck movements at certain hours, could impact their operations because the collection of animals has to be done at certain times.

In addition, the prioritising of amenity over the productivity of the land is leading to the establishment of stringent conditions for farmers' development applications, making it difficult or even impossible for them to start or expand an operation. Even though the council attempts to include farming in the identity of the Shire, actual events often go against farming. One manager interviewed explained that Wollondilly Shire tries to "send a good signal" to the agricultural industry, but that this signal is partially contradicted by the problems of complaints and the difficulty for farmers to obtain approval for their development applications.

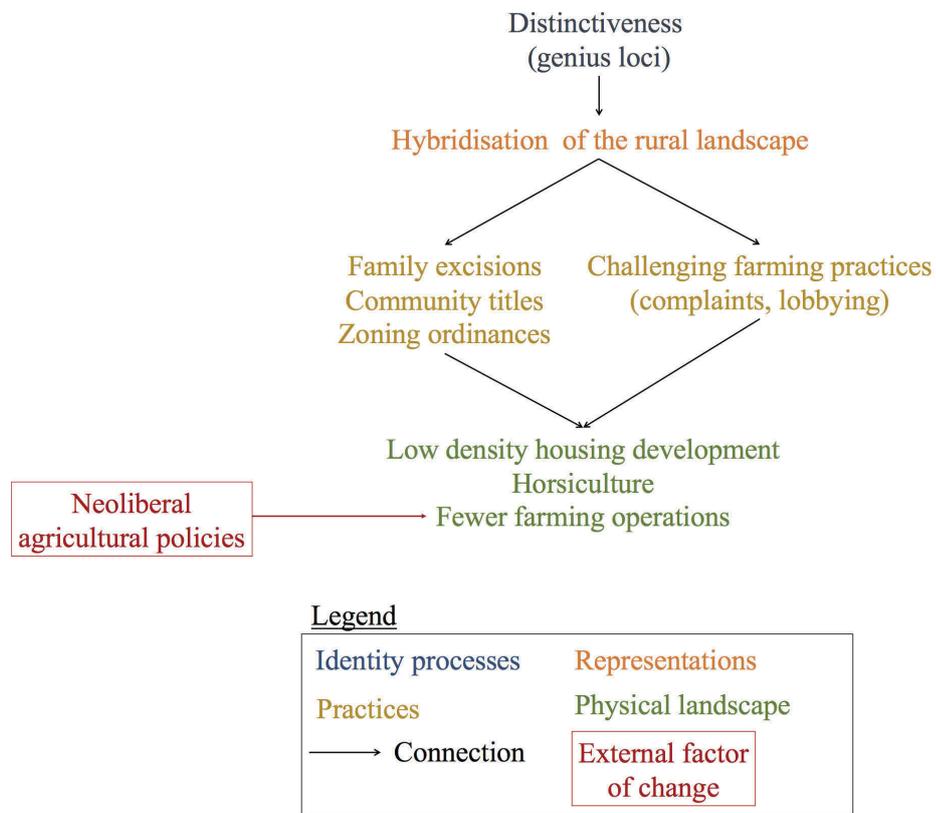
However, several farmers qualified their statements about the negative impacts of complaints by explaining that Council officers balance regulations on odour and noise with the needs of farmers. Several farmers acknowledged that Council's arbitration in terms of complaints is often supportive of farming, when the farmer is being "reasonable" ("As long as you are not being really bad, as long as you are not doing anything extreme, if you are just doing things being careful, and within reason, they'll support you"). Using the example of a farmer baling hay at night, one farmer explained that the council supported the farmer and explained to the complainant that it was an acceptable agricultural pursuit that happened only a few times per year. One farmer explained that if the regulations on odour, noise, and dust were strictly enforced, that could encourage more farmers to leave the area:

*Okay well, if regulations were enforced about smell, odor, noise, dust, if say, like, at the moment they know we are farming and they got, people now have to accept what we are doing, to a point, if there are restraints put in place, that makes it too difficult to work in an area, there is too many people around you, if you've got to spray and you just can't because of the wrong wind direction, those things would put pressure.*

We can see here that the council attempts to limit, when possible, the negative impact of complaints on farming activities.

In relation to the politics of place/landscape identity framework, we have seen in this section that there is a competing hegemonic place identity that is based on the idea of the distinctiveness of the Shire. Figure 4.7 below shows that this distinctiveness is expressed through a representation of the Shire as a hybrid landscape with low-density residential developments in a predominantly rural landscape. This representation of

the landscape has impacted the development of the physical landscape of the Shire, through the increasing number of houses and non-traditional agricultural uses (such as ‘horsiculture’). These changes in the physical landscape became possible through various planning practices past and present (family excision, community titles, zoning ordinances) that have inadvertently enabled this type of place identity to be represented in the physical landscape. At the same time, it has meant that farming practices have become progressively more challenged in the landscape, and considered by many to be an illegitimate use of the land.



**FIGURE 4.7:** Representation of the second hegemonic place identity in Wollondilly Shire.

### 4.3 Synthesis

This chapter described two hegemonic place identities that stand out in Wollondilly Shire. They are considered to be hegemonic because they are able to shape the development of different parts of the Shire. They therefore have a considerable impact on

what the landscape of the Shire looks like, and what practices are considered legitimate.

These two competing hegemonic place identities seem to be based on the idea of the distinctiveness and uniqueness of the peri-urban landscape. The identity given to the Shire in these place identities is therefore based on the idea of ‘genius loci’, that is, on the idea that it is the specific physical features of a place that give it an identity. However, even if those two dominant place identities consider that the identity of the Shire lies in its distinctiveness, the nature of this distinctiveness is embedded in different representations of what a peri-urban landscape is. One representation sees a peri-urban landscape as a landscape where a city–country divide is maintained, whereas the other sees it as a hybrid landscape consisting of low-density residential development in a predominantly rural environment.

These two competing place identities are supported by different, and potentially contradictory planning practices that result in various changes in the material landscape. Whereas the first place identity focuses on the development of houses on the fringes of towns and villages, the other promotes the development of low-density residential housing and of non-traditional agricultural activities in the Shire. However, these competing hegemonic place identities seem to have in common a lack of consideration for farming. In the first case, farming is presented as out of place, as a non-viable activity of nuisance value, whereas in the second case, farming activities are progressively constructed as an illegitimate use through the increasing number of complaints and conflicts between non-farming landowners and farmers.

Finally, the marginalisation of farming due to the hegemonic place identities in the Shire is reinforced by the impact of global economic forces at the local scale. Indeed, the marginal economic viability of small scale farming due to the impact of neoliberal policies on the farming industry in Australia, combined with the higher land prices in peri-urban areas, results in farmers being unable to access lands and expand or start farming operations. In this chapter we have seen how farmlands and farming activities seem to be excluded from dominant place identities in the Shire. In the next chapter we will see how farmers, in response, have constructed a resistant identity that reasserts the legitimacy of their farming operations in peri-urban areas.



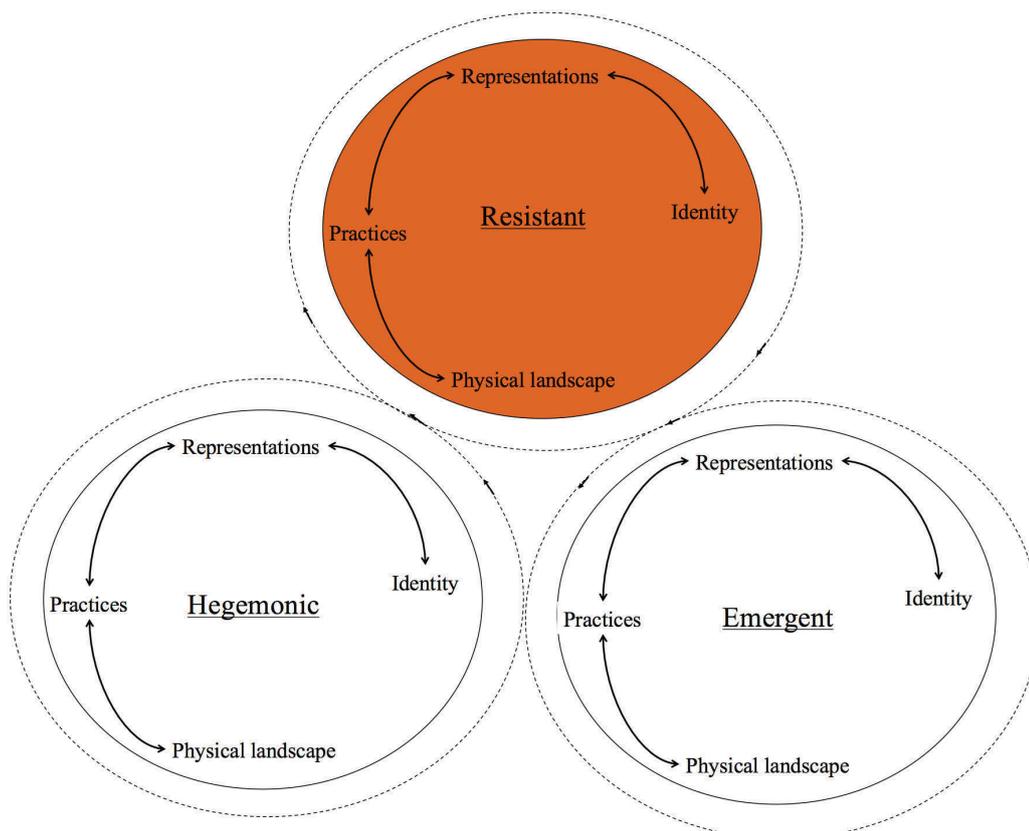
## FARMERS' RESISTANT PLACE IDENTITY: CONTINUITY AND DISTINCTIVENESS

**H**egemonic place identities in Wollondilly Shire, in combination with broader global forces, such as the liberalisation of the Australian agricultural markets which negatively impacts the economic viability of peri-urban operations, have progressively, and sometimes inadvertently, marginalised productive landscapes. This has resulted in the questioning of the legitimacy of farmers' practices in the peri-urban landscape. In this chapter we will look at how farmers create a resistant place identity in response to the marginalisation of productive landscapes in Wollondilly Shire, and how this resistant place identity is failing to lead to the emergence of farmers' collective organisations aimed at placing peri-urban farming activities at the forefront of the political debate.

Farmers' construction of a resistant place identity is based on a negative representation of themselves as a disappearing group. This representation is counterbalanced by their positive representation of themselves as good carers of the land. Farmers seek to affirm their resistant place identity by asserting the legitimacy of their embedded farming practices and their productive use of the land. In contrast, they depict non-farming landowners (the out-group) as having a passive relationship to the landscape, based on the representation of the landscape as a place of consumption. The notion of a landscape of consumption refers to the increasing commodification of rural landscapes (Fløysand and Jakobsen, 2007; Laliberte, 2012; Tonts and Greive, 2002). The process

## CHAPTER 5. FARMERS' RESISTANT PLACE IDENTITY: CONTINUITY AND DISTINCTIVENESS

of commodification of rural landscapes involves the promotion of rural (or peri-urban) towns and rural areas as commodities. In this context, it is not the productive use of the land that is valued but rather its landscape and lifestyle amenities (Tonts and Greive, 2002). In the material landscape, the commodification is visible through the consumption of land and housing for lifestyle and amenity purposes (Tonts and Greive, 2002). This distinction between production and consumption is used by farmers in Wollondilly Shire as a basis for legitimising and reinforcing their resistant place identity. In the politics of place/landscape identity framework, farmers' resistant place identity based on two identity principles: continuity and distinctiveness. Farmers' resistant place identity is characterised by their feeling of being a disappearing social group, and therefore lacking continuity. It is also characterised by their feeling of distinctiveness, which is expressed through a specific representation of what the landscape should be used for, and what practices should be considered appropriate or inappropriate in the landscape (Figure 5.1).



**FIGURE 5.1:** Politics of place identity framework. In orange, the resistant moment, which is the moment we focus on in this chapter.

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In the literature on landscape and place, the landscape has often been defined as being a normed space where diverse groups define what are the "proper and improper relationships [...] between themselves and the physical environment" (Greider and Garkovich, 1994) and what is a legitimate use of the environment (Yung et al., 2003). In social psychology, it has been found that a group is always trying to establish a positive social identity by distinguishing itself from an out-group which it defines negatively (Ellemers, 2010; Tajfel, 1974). In Wollondilly Shire, farmers' representations of what is the appropriate type of relationship between humans and the environment is used to enhance their own view of their social identity, and legitimise their practices, while defining non-farming landowners negatively, as having inappropriate connections with the landscape.

Traditionally, a social constructivist perspective of rurality has been adopted in research, which focused on how rurality is constructed through discourses. More recently, the importance of examining practices (including iterative everyday practices) to better understand "the ways in which the materialities and meanings of rural space are reproduced, consolidated and contested, along with the identities of those who dwell and move within them", has been acknowledged in the literature (Edensor, 2006, p. 484) (Galani-Moutafi, 2013; Woods, 2010). For this reason, our model of place identity based on the interrelationships between the physical landscapes, practices, representations and identity processes, seems to be appropriate for tackling the question of how farmers construct a certain vision of rurality which legitimises their resistant place identity.

This chapter is based on the analysis of the three rounds of interviews with farmers, described in the methodology chapter, as well as the analysis of the interviews with planners and managers.

The chapter will examine four issues. Firstly, how farmers construct their identity as a disappearing social group whose continuity in Wollondilly Shire may be threatened. Secondly, how farmers counterbalance this negative aspect of their identity by presenting themselves as good carers of the land, in opposition to non-farming landowners, thereby enhancing their distinctiveness. Thirdly, how farmers use their representation of the landscape as productive to oppose non-farming landowners' representation of the landscape as a landscape of consumption, by describing the practices of non-farming landowners as inappropriate and detrimental to the productive landscape. Finally, the chapter examines how the resistant place identity of farmers has not led them to organise themselves collectively to defend farming interests in the peri-urban.

## 5.1 Threatened group continuity

The farmers interviewed often observed the erosion of the farming community in the area:

*when I started, and I'm not really sure, but I would imagine there were nearly 100 farms in this district, [...] that's what memory says, and even in this valley, there were, say another three or, say four dairies when I started, now we are the only dairy, and have been for probably nearly 20 years the only dairy in this valley.*

This erosion of the farming community can be illustrated by statistics showing that between 1981 and 2011, the number of farmers in Australia dropped by 40% (106200 farmers exited farming between 1981 and 2011) (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2012). When we look at the statistics concerning full time equivalent employment by industry sector for Wollondilly Shire, we see that the absolute number of farmers increased in the area between 2000 and 2015 (from 866 to 884) (Macarthur Regional Organisation of Councils, 2016b). However, we would need statistics on a longer period of time to illustrate the trends in Wollondilly Shire, as the erosion of the farming community evoked by farmers started earlier than 2000. There might therefore have been negative trends, with farmers exiting farming in Wollondilly Shire before 2000.

Another point that is worth noting is that the percentage of the work force represented by farmers between 2000 and 2015 has decreased from 9.1% to 7.6%, (Macarthur Regional Organisation of Councils, 2016b). This shows that farmers are progressively representing a smaller part of the population in the Shire, which could potentially contribute to explaining farmers' feelings that the farming community is being eroded.

This feeling of erosion of the farming community in the area is leading farmers to consider their group identity as threatened. Several changes were considered by farmers to illustrate this feeling of erosion of the farming community in the area, resulting in a threat to the group continuity, including: fewer interactions with peers; less information sharing and mutual aid between farmers; the reduction of support (suppliers, public institutions, associated industries); and the diminution of farmers' political voice at the local level.

Many farmers reported feeling increasingly isolated from their peers. Most farmers indicated that the number of farms in the area had declined since they had started farming, and several of them suggested that their interpersonal and business relationships with other farmers had been stronger when they began farming. One farmer talked

about growing up in contact with other local farmers who were actually her relatives. She explained that they spent time together and helped each other. However, she believed that many farmers had left the area and the social bond that had existed in the past had progressively eroded ("there is a social thing, we all knew one another, a lot of us were related, a lot of us were family, so that' all died off too"). Consequently, several farmers said they felt "isolated" or that they felt they were "farming in isolation" in the Shire. When asked what the advantage of relocating to another area would be, one farmer explained that he would have the feeling of being "more among [his] kind", illustrating the isolation felt by farmers in the peri-urban. There was therefore a general feeling among farmers of a progressive diminution of interactions with peers leading to increasing isolation of the remaining farmers.

One of the consequences of the increasing isolation of farmers is the decline of information sharing through extension practices, and a decline in the amount of mutual aid between members of the farming community. For example, one dairy farmer indicated that he used to share more information with other dairy farmers about cultivars of crops, the breeding of animals, machinery and technology. In particular, he talked about the importance of the field days organised by a dairy producer association, where farmers visited other farms to observe their practices and learn. He explained that these events do not exist now in the area, due to the small number of active dairy farmers. This same farmer explained that the dairy association in the area had been combined with another association from another location (the NSW South Coast) outside peri-urban Sydney, which organised meetings and field days, but events were too distant to be worth attending. He also suggested that the information he might obtain from the South Coast may not be relevant for his farm because of differences in production systems between locations. Another dairy farmer also highlighted the importance of local field days, where farmers looked "at someone else's pasture", and suggested that this loss of peer-to-peer learning among farmers resulted from the "confidence about the industry" being "slowly eroded". This farmer linked these changes with the increase of "supermarket power" and the reduced strength of the dairy industry in the area. He explained that now farmers were "very much tending to do their own thing", and added that even if formal events were organised where farmers got together - such as the Camden Show, or the Symposium of the Dairy Research Foundation (at the University of Sydney) once a year - those events were rarer and the information coming from "chatting to people", and the enthusiasm resulting from "looking over the fence" and competing with other farmers, which were once an intrinsic part of farmers' sociability (Burton, 2004), was

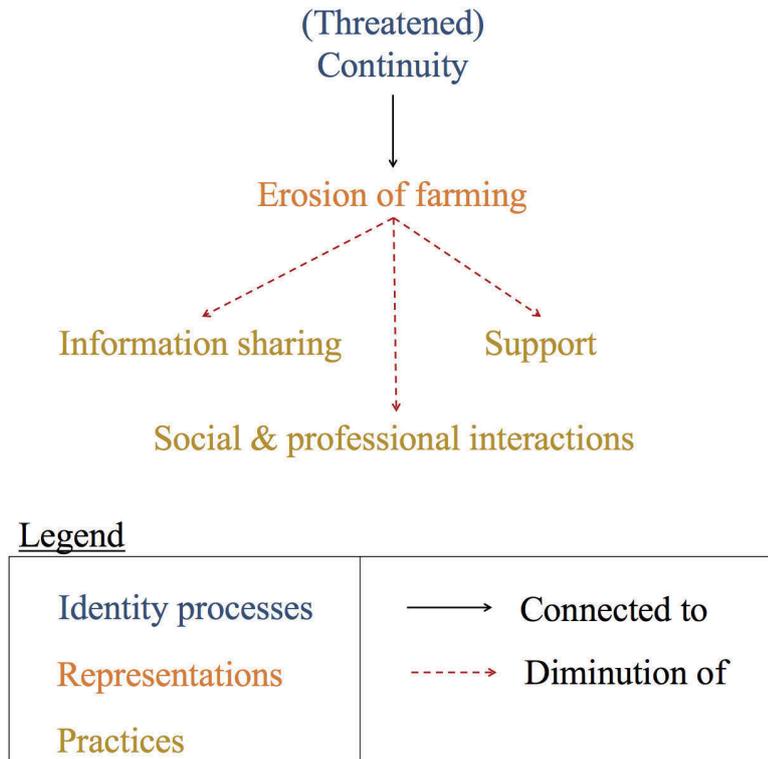
slowly disappearing. This feeling was not exclusive to dairy farmers and was also shared by farmers in other industries. For instance, an orchardist also indicated that the decline in the number of orchardists in the area meant that if help was needed on the farm there were not many other farmers that could be contacted.

Another change often referred to by farmers was that private and public support for the farming industry had diminished in the area. For example, two farmers explained that there were fewer suppliers of rural products and services in the area and that "you have to travel to get good deals, because we are not a big farming area". Another farmer talked about declining support from the state government's agriculture agency. This farmer explained that the agency formerly located technical staff in the area (at Camden), including an entomologist and a fruit inspector. However, with the relocation of the agriculture department's head office to Orange, much of the government's rural advisory service had been withdrawn. The decline of services in the area is not necessarily due to the relocation of the agriculture department's head office to Orange, but rather to the privatisation of extension services (Marsh and Pannell, 1999, 2000, 2014). However, the relocation reflects the decline of coastal agriculture in and around Sydney - with the focus shifting to broad scale agriculture in the central and western regions of NSW. This same farmer also suggested that regular visits to local farms by commercial representatives of rural product suppliers, such as agricultural chemical representatives, had similarly declined, probably due to the declining market importance of the peri-urban. The private and public industries and institutions that used to support farming activities in the area are now located further away, diminishing farmers' feelings of being a well-supported industry.

One last element reported by two farmers, and well supported in the literature (Wilson, 2001) is that the decreasing number of farmers in the area has led to a loss of 'political weight' at the local scale. These farmers explained that "the councillors are always going to listen to what the people are telling them, and there is a lot more residential people than there are farmers", with farmers now seen as a "minority group" in Wollondilly Shire. This view was supported by a planner who explained that a Rural Industry Liaison Committee in Wollondilly Shire (which is a Committee constituted of farmers and planners, who get together every four months, to discuss about agriculture related issues) had been created by the Council to give farmers a voice in local public debates.

In the politics of place/landscape identity framework (Figure 5.2 below) the feeling of a threatened continuity expressed by farmers (identity principle) was supported by the

portrayal of the farming community as being eroded, and this is expressed through the progressive disappearance of several types of practices, including information sharing, social and professional interactions and mutual support.



**FIGURE 5.2:** Farmers’ resistant place identity based on the identity principle of a (broken) continuity.

## 5.2 Nuancing the idea of threatened group continuity

Farmers in the Wollondilly area seem to have built (in part) a social identity based on their feeling of threatened group continuity. However, farmers' perceptions of themselves as a disappearing social group at the local scale is mitigated by the participation of some members of the farming community in networks constituted of humans (peers, researchers, consultants etc.) and objects (magazines, farming websites) at a broader scale, and it therefore requires a more nuanced analysis. Farmers often explained that they were connected to actors beyond the local scale, such as scholars, farmers working in other regions, farming groups, consultants and the Department of Primary Industries (DPI), but also to objects such as farming magazines and websites. They explained further that those people and objects made up the network from which they obtained information about farming. One farmer indicated that he was not sharing with other farmers at the local scale but was in contact with universities across New Zealand and Australia, and explained: "I get sent information, because people know that I'm looking for it". This same farmer also explained that he was in contact with farming group such as FairFood on the NSW South Coast, as well as farmers in other geographical areas: "There are some great farmers further out west in NSW, especially in Victoria". He elaborated that the DPI was providing information about "environmental farming", "organic farming" and "technological things", adding that farming is "very well supported", qualifying the impression of withdrawal of public institutions from farming expressed earlier. Finally, another farmer also explained that much of the information he obtained about farming came from a commercial agricultural consultant: "in my case I've really, from the start in the 1990s, I used consultant, which to me is vital, but most farmers don't do. So, and that was the main way you get information, so. If you want change, create change, then you need outside advice, probably."

The second medium through which farmers obtain information is the internet and the media, specifically farming magazines. One farmer explained that the quality of the information obtained through magazines, is probably "fairly similar" to that obtained from chatting with peers at the local scale. While several farmers regretted the erosion of the social and professional network at the local scale, and while they tended to describe farmers as a disappearing social group in the Shire, several of them also explained that they created other opportunities to share and obtain information with a variety of stakeholders and media, at a broader scale.

Several farmers suggested that this evolution of their social network reflected the diversity of the farming operations and interests of contemporary farmers. Under such circumstances, sharing information with farmers at the local scale might not be the most suitable option, since they may not have the same degree of common interest as in the past. For example, several farmers made the point that one farmer might be more interested in environmental or organic farming, another in agritourism, and a third one in conservation, making sharing information at the local scale less relevant. One farmer illustrated this point by saying:

*I don't see great unity necessarily in the farming community, I mean, they talk about it, but I don't see it in a practical sense. We've got people like me or [...] interested in environmental [...] farming, and they are scattered all over the place, and you tend to read their books or research their work.*

Another farmer reinforced this view by saying: "we move in different circles now. And if I do go and socialise business wise, it's probably more for the agritourism business rather than just pure agriculture". Finally, one recently established farmer challenged the necessity of having a farming community at the local scale, and explained that for him farming was a business like any other, and getting together at the local scale was therefore not a necessity. He illustrated this point by comparing farmers to coffee shop owners: "We are just running a business. I don't think the local coffee shop owners get together here [...] they compete with each other. [...] It's just another arm of small business".

Clearly, some farmers created networks beyond the local scale, which were based on their own personal goals and interests, and which may diverge from the interests of other local farmers. This finding suggests that the community of place, which was where exchanges of information had occurred in the past, is progressively being replaced by various communities of interests. These new communities take various forms and are less geographically defined. The farming community, therefore, is not necessarily disappearing completely, and can be considered as being re-created (for some farmers) at different scales. However, the networks created beyond the local scale are still perceived by some farmers as less efficient than the local network. For example, one farmer said: "I just think, so much of your information just comes from chatting to people [...] I still think word of mouth is a good way to communicate". The importance of word of mouth in information sharing has been observed amongst Canadian Prairie farmers concerning adaptation to climate change. For these farmers, sharing with neighbouring farmers or family members has remained an essential source of information (Tarnoczi and Berkes,

2010). Therefore, the replacement of a local network by an extended social network is not necessarily completely satisfying for farmers. Moreover, despite the emergence of these extended social networks, farmers still expressed anxiety about their feelings of isolation at the local scale, and perceived their group continuity as being threatened. Finally, extended social networks enable farmers to continue to get access to information. However, they do not provide farmers with a sense of being among their kind at the local scale. When asked what he missed about not having a farming community anymore, one farmer offered: "just the friendship and the like-minded conversation". Therefore, the replacement of a local network by an extended social network only partially changes the idea of threatened group continuity.

In the next section we will see how this threat to farmers' social identity is counterbalanced by the enhanced distinctiveness resulting from farmers' representations of themselves as good carers of the land in opposition to non-farming landowners, whom they viewed as passively engaging with the landscape.

### **5.3 Enhanced distinctiveness**

As evidenced in the literature, it can be argued in social identity theory that members of a group aim at maintaining a positive social identity by valuing themselves positively in comparison to an out-group (Tajfel, 1974). We will see here how farmers build a positive sense of their own distinctiveness based on the representation of themselves as taking good care of the land, in contrast with non-farming landowners. In studies on social changes in peri-urban areas, these opposing representations are often expressed in terms of 'newcomers' versus 'long timers', or 'insiders' versus 'outsiders' (see Yung et al., 2003). In the Wollondilly area however, this nomenclature did not seem accurate, since the distinction farmers were making between themselves and 'others' was not based on longevity of residency in the area, but rather on their representations of appropriate land use.

#### **5.3.1 Landscape of production vs. landscape of consumption**

To distinguish themselves from non-farming landowners, farmers in Wollondilly frequently conceptualised their use of the landscape as being for 'production', and non-farming landowners' use of the landscape as being for 'consumption'. This distinction between farmers as having an embedded relationship with the landscape based on their

productive activities, and non-farming landowners as commodifying the landscape, has been observed in various case studies (Abrams and Gosnell, 2012; Galani-Moutafi, 2013; Nesbitt and Weiner, 2001; Tonts and Greive, 2002; Walker and Fortmann, 2003), and the idea of a transition from a productivist to a post-productivist landscape speaks to this distinction between a productive and a consumptive landscape (Argent, 2002; Holmes, 2006; Wilson, 2001). Therefore, the distinction farmers make in their representations of farming, and of non-farming landowners' use of the landscape, mirrors other case studies and reflects a broader change in rural landscapes from a purely productivist landscape to a partially post-productivist landscape that applies beyond the Wollondilly area.

Farmers often emphasise that the land for them is a place of productive output that sometimes also has the potential to be a place of social reproduction through succession planning. When asked to define farming, most of the farmers interviewed explained that it is about the daily work of planting, growing and harvesting crops, or of growing grass and producing milk, depending on their production systems. In addition, some suggested it is also related to the transmission of the land to the next generation, even though, for various reasons that will be explored later, succession planning is only an option for a small number of farmers in the area. Consequently, farmers often have a representation of the landscape as a productive space. In contrast, non-farming landowners were most often depicted by farmers as considering the landscape as a space of consumption, which was disconnected from the reality of the productive rural landscape. Several farmers made the point that many non-farming landowners did not understand the day-to-day reality of living in a farming area, in particular they did not understand that the practice of farming produces noise, dust and odours, the elements most often cited by farmers. One farmer also said that farm work is a '24/7 activity' which is another aspect of farming she believed was little understood by non-farming landowners. Instead, non-farming landowners were considered as 'tree-changers' (Argent et al., 2011) who expected the countryside to be "rolling green hills and cows in the paddock", rather than intensive market gardens and poultry farms, which are important activities in Wollondilly Shire. When discussing non-farming landowners' representations of what the countryside should be, farmers often proposed a resistant discourse based on the idea that a rural area is intended to support a productive landscape. They further expressed either their failure to understand how their practices could be questioned in an area where agriculture was designated to be the main activity, or asserted that it was legitimate for them to continue their activities in an area zoned for agricultural activities. One commented:

## CHAPTER 5. FARMERS' RESISTANT PLACE IDENTITY: CONTINUITY AND DISTINCTIVENESS

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*When someone moves in and encroaches in your space, which I believe is your space because you have done everything right by being in the correct zoning, and having approval for what you are doing, and then you have people encroaching and then, they start complaining.*

The other said:

*As far as spreading chicken manure is concerned, hey, we've been doing it a lot longer than you have been living here. So if any new neighbours, my attitude is, well, we were here first, so and this is a rural area and we are farmers*

Farmers therefore often described their representation and use of the land as legitimate, on the basis of zoning, or because they had established their practices over an extended period which pre-dated non-farm land occupancy. In addition to asserting their own legitimacy, they questioned the legitimacy of non-farming landowners (with the exception of those with a self-sufficiency ideal) who were often described as having an idealistic view of the countryside that did not correspond to what it really was: a place of production. For example, one farmer described the productive outcome of non-farming landowners' occupancy as minimal due to their lack of "connection" to the land ("that person to me doesn't have a connection with his land, he has just a stylised ideological and idealist view of living in the country"). This lack of connection was measured in the light of the work put into the land, and the commitment of individuals to the maintenance and care for the land. When asked to describe the nature of his "connection" to the land, one farmer answered: "See my hands and my finger nails, if they were, look at yours, if they were like yours, I would say, I have a connection, yours might be a bit tenuous". This same farmer considered unproductive lands as "wasted lands", and described the lack of commitment of non-farming landowners by explaining that they rapidly became bored of living in a rural environment and "neglected" the land. This lack of "connection" to the land was considered to be an illustration of non-farming landowners' idealistic views of the countryside which did not factor in the importance of working the land and managing the landscape.

The distinction farmers were drawing between themselves and non-farming landowners was particularly visible in the way farmers constructed non-farming landowners' practices as 'unsuitable' in a rural environment, and as the expression of their conceptualisation of the landscape as a place of consumption rather than production.

### 5.3.2 Non-farming landowners' practices as inappropriate

Non-farming landowners are often described as coming from the city, and as using the landscape as a place of habitation or leisure, rather than as a place of production. One farmer explained that "they'll build a house and they'll put, they'll buy from 5 to 15 acres of land and they will buy the kids a horse, a pony, and they will put it in the paddock, the kids will ride a motorbike around the paddock." They were also sometimes depicted as reproducing in the countryside practices that were associated with a suburban lifestyle which farmers considered inappropriate in a rural environment. Two farmers for example, cited regular lawn mowing by non-farming landowners as contradicting the tacit rule that land in the countryside needed to be farmed: "I couldn't [...] see the point of having a massive parcel of land that I have to mow every two weeks. It's a waste of time. I mean you need to grow things." For another farmer, it was the practice of fencing around their houses that was considered to be a practice that was not appropriate in the countryside: "they build a big house, a big mansion, and then put a fence around, which is, puts it on a block the same size as they moved out of Woollahra or Double Bay, and the rest of the land is neglected". For these two farmers, non-farming landowners were importing to the countryside, practices that were appropriate in a suburban environment, but were considered a waste of productive land in a peri-urban environment. According to the literature (Walker and Fortmann, 2003; Yung et al., 2003) the question of politics of place in the peri-urban, and elsewhere, is often related to questions of class and social control of the landscape, with farmers often representing themselves as oppressed. In our case study, non-farming landowners were frequently alluded to as wealthy urbanites who had relocated from wealthy inner city suburbs of Sydney. Other references were made to the potential class divide between farmers and non-farming landowners. For example, one farmer imagined the discourse of someone offering to buy his property as follows: "Oh I'd like to build a nice thing with an helicopter pad so I can take my helicopter to the city and I give you two million dollars", whereas another farmer referred to non-farming landowners that complained about farming activities as: "higher-income earning people, they are very articulate and well organised, [...] perhaps a professional background working in Sydney", and to farmers as "pretty humble". However, despite the existence of a rhetoric of class divide, it was not used or instrumentalised to undermine the legitimacy of non-farming landowners in the landscape. Rather, the focus was on the inappropriateness of non-farming landowners' land practices and their relationships to the landscape.

More broadly, the relationship of non-farming landowners with the land was de-

scribed by farmers as passive and as lacking commitment. Several farmers described non-farming landowners as passively enjoying the landscape, and often depicted them as external observers of the landscape, which they believed was an attitude that was in opposition to their active and embodied relationship to the landscape through work. For example, one farmer said: "I suppose some people would have the vision of looking at their window and see nothing but rolling green paddocks and having healthy fat animals that are doing whatever animals need to do to survive". Another farmer explained his view of non-farming landowners' visions of the countryside as corresponding to a fantasised idea of what it is: "they see the country as a picture, a landscape painted by Monet, the hay stakes in the paddocks [...] so yeah, they have this idealistic view of country life and they buy a property, they work in the city, and the grass grows". These quotes espouse a common view among farmers of the relationship of non-farming landowners to the landscape as mediated rather than direct, with the non-farming landowner depicted as passive. This concept of the passivity of non-farming landowners is associated with a lack of commitment among non-farming landowners in terms of taking care of the land and animals. One farmer described non-farming landowners as leaving animals neglected: "they buy a property, they work in the city, and the grass grows, they have to mow it every week, so they buy a horse, so the horse will eat it, or buy some sheep, those animals are neglected."

More generally, non-farming landowners were described by farmers as using damaging practices, particularly in relation to 'hobby-farming'. One farmer believed that hobby farmers frequently overgrazed their lands. They were also often depicted as not taking good care of animals. In the eyes of several farmers, non-farming landowners possessed animals for lifestyle reasons, such as seeing cows in the paddocks, or having the children riding a horse, but were not able or willing to take good care of them, leaving the animals neglected or ultimately selling them. This neglect was often seen as further evidence of the lack of connection and commitment to the land, and its productive outcomes on the part of non-farming landowners.

### **5.3.3 Negative effects on farmers of the modification of the physical landscape**

For some farmers, non-farming landowners' lack of care for the land was considered to be detrimental to their own farming activities due to the changes it created in the physical landscape. These changes included the propagation of weeds and feral

animals, the increased number of some species of wild birds, and dogs attacking livestock. However, non-farming landowners, the principal 'other' against which farmers were building their place identity, were not considered as the only source of these negative effects. Indeed, land bankers (individuals investing in the land in order to later subdivide and rezone it) and 'horsicultural' operations were also considered as contributing to those negative effects.

Non-farming landowners' farming practices, as well as the land banking phenomenon, were often considered by farmers as contributing to the propagation of weeds and feral animals, creating what one farmer called "green deserts", which is a term referring to lands that have the appearance of agricultural lands but are actually not used for productive purposes (Knowd, 2013). This farmer explained that "green deserts" are "empty rural land":

*Neglected land, not cared for, it's generally owned by a person who is not connected with that land, or not knowledgeable as how to minimise the impacts, and you get, you get a lot of weeds, you get feral animals you get a lot of invasive plant species, that type of things, whilst, uninitiated city dwellers who might go for a drive in what they call the countryside say, oh it's lovely here, it's nice and green, but it's a green desert it's not productive, and it's in fact negative.*

This vision of the land owned by non-farming landowners as "green deserts" encouraging the propagation of weeds and feral animals, was shared by several farmers interviewed. Another farmer also identified land purchased to be subdivided and developed, as a potential source of weeds and feral animals. He explained that banked lands are a "seed bank for noxious weeds and a haven for introduced species or you know predator animals." Some farmers also explained that non-farming landowners did not control the wildlife on their properties, or contributed to artificially increasing their numbers by feeding the wildlife, which increased the number of animals on farmers' properties. One farmer observed that there were not many farmers (orchardists, flower growers or vegetable farmers) left in the area that had an interest in controlling wildlife, and he continued by saying that "everybody else has just got horses and they don't care if they've got deer on their place or kangaroos. But they come to our places they do damage". Another farmer cited non-farming landowners feeding the wood ducks on their back lawns, as a cause of damage to their crops. However, alternative views were also expressed. One farmer explained that important plots of land belonged to the water catchment authority, which was not, according to her, appropriately managing the land, leading to an increase in wildlife. For example, she explained that selective burning was

not practised, which meant that deer grazed on those lands when there was feed, and moved on to farmlands when feed became scarce, causing damage to crops. The lack of care of public land has also been highlighted by natural resource management volunteers in Queensland (Davis and Carter, 2014). When it came to the increased presence of weeds, notably blackthorn bushes, one farmer explained that their propagation was probably due to the climate: "it has something to do with the climate, you know, it used to just die off after eight years or six years, but not now, it just got bigger, and bigger and bigger, so whether it was climate change or what, I don't know. I don't know". However, even where farmers acknowledged that other factors might have been playing a role in the propagation of weeds and feral animals, non-farming landowners and land bankers were most often identified as responsible.

The second element of change in the physical landscape often evoked by farmers, and more particularly orchardists, flower growers and vegetable growers, was the increased prevalence of wild birds that ate their crops. Farmers often attributed increased wild bird populations to 'horsicultural' operations and pet horse ownership by residents. Horses were frequently fed grain in the paddocks, which attracted birds, which then damaged crops on adjoining farms:

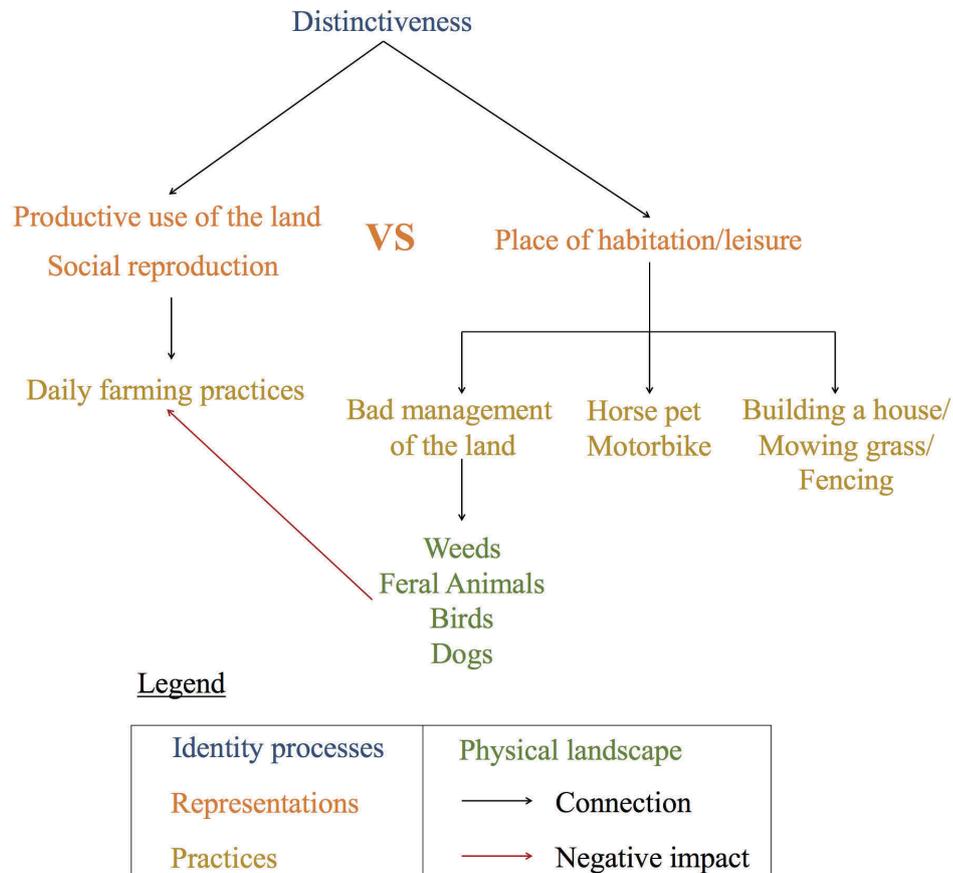
*Here the horses are remaining in the paddock, they get fed in the paddock, so they get a lot of grain, the grain is spilt on the ground, the wild birds, the parrots come and eat them, eat the grain that the horse don't eat, and the population of the wild birds is getting much, much bigger than nature would provide for, so we get an explosion of wild birds, which impacts on our crops.*

The last element noticed by farmers who had livestock was the increasing number of dogs in the area, which were not looked after, and might have been chasing or attacking livestock. One farmer explained that three dogs "ripped a kangaroo to pieces" and he was worried the same thing might happen to his calves, since "the neighbours don't look after their dogs". In a case study by Walker and Fortmann (2003) damage to livestock by domestic dogs owned by non-farming landowners was portrayed by ranchers as a "lack of understanding and respect for traditional culture, property rights and livelihoods" (p. 479). In our case study, the farmers referring to the dog problem did not clearly express this kind of resentment; however, the dogs were perceived as a potential threat to livestock, and therefore, as having a negative impact on farming practices.

In conclusion, non-farming landowners' practices were viewed as inducing negative changes in the physical landscape. Those negative changes were believed to be affecting farmers' ability to practice farming, which was considered as the appropriate use of the

land in a rural area. Therefore, the negative impacts of non-farming landowners on the landscape were used by farmers to enhance their distinctiveness and reassert their legitimacy in the landscape. The question of the impact of non-farming landowners in the peri-urbanising landscape, and more specifically their impact on the propagation of weeds, has been tackled in the literature, and can contribute to an understanding of the views of the farmers interviewed (Davis and Carter, 2014; Gill et al., 2010; Klepeis et al., 2009). For example, Klepeis et al. (2009) explain that non-farming landowners are often part-time residents or absentee landowners who do not receive their primary income from the land, and therefore do not necessarily actively control weeds. Moreover, they explain that the social capital that existed when the land was owned by full-time farmers is not relevant to non-farming landowners, limiting abilities to take collective decisions about weed control. These conclusions seem to converge with the farmers' accounts from the current study. However, it is also argued that many non-farming landowners have, like farmers, productive goals and aim at controlling weeds, even if the quality of the control could be improved (Gill et al., 2010). In addition, it is also said that the distinction between farmers and non-farmers is artificially reinforced by institutional practitioners who divide those actors by offering services to one group or the other (Davis and Carter, 2014). Despite the likely diversity of values, goals, and practices of the non-farming landowners, which may vary in their impact on the local landscape, there is substantial evidence from Wollondilly that farmers' enhance their distinctiveness as a group by questioning the legitimacy of non-farming landowners in the peri-urban landscape.

If we consider our politics of place/landscape identity framework we can see in Figure 5.3 below that farmers built a resistant place identity based on the differences (identity principle of distinctiveness) between themselves and non-farming landowners, which reinforced their feelings of legitimacy. Farmers' feelings of distinctiveness were strengthened by representations of themselves as good carers of the land, as using the land for productive uses, and sometimes for social reproduction. In contrast non-farming landowners were considered as having an idealised and passive relationship to the landscape and as only viewing the countryside as a place of habitation and leisure. This distinction between farmers and non-farmers was reinforced through consideration of practices. Farmers considered their practices as appropriate because they contributed to the management and care of the landscape through their daily farming practices, whereas non-farming landowners' practices were considered as inappropriate (e.g. mowing grass) and potentially damaging (e.g. poor management of the land).



**FIGURE 5.3:** Farmers' resistant place identity based on the identity principle of distinctiveness.

In the next section, we will see how farmers' resistant place identity does not lead to the organisation of collective actions aimed at putting farming activities and farmlands in the forefront of the political debate.

## 5.4 Farmers' response: weak collective organisation

The farmers interviewed in Wollondilly Shire created a resistant discourse to the dominant place identities present in the Shire. However, despite the widespread nature of this resistant discourse, according to many interviewed farmers, it has not led to the organisation of collective action, which is a common way to cope with threatened group identities (Breakwell, 1986). According to Breakwell (1986), when the identity of a group is threatened, several coping strategies can be implemented. She distinguishes the creation of support groups to share information and raise consciousness, and the

emergence of groups which aim at creating change such as pressure groups or social movements.

The farmers of Wollondilly Shire interviewed in this study have not adopted any of those coping strategies. Instead they explained that the small scale farmers of the Sydney Basin are underrepresented in farmers' organisations, and that they do not mobilise themselves at the local scale to defend their interests. Several farmers offered explanations for the lack of collective action of small peri-urban farmers, which can be analysed using the social capital framework, and more particularly the notions of bonding and bridging (Woolcock, 2000). Bonding and bridging refer to intra-community (bonding) and inter-community (bridging) ties. The combination of these two dimensions of social capital can lead to the social, political and economic advancement of a group. In this section, we will look at how the weak collective organisation of farmers seems to reflect the weak bridging and bonding social capital of small peri-urban farmers (Woolcock, 2000).

### 5.4.1 Weak bridging social capital

Bridging social capital manifests in stronger intercommunity ties, that is, the relationships of a group (in this case peri-urban farmers) with external actors. Many peri-urban farmers in Wollondilly Shire explained that they were relatively disconnected from wider farming organisations, and therefore had relatively weak bridging social capital. The only external group with which farmers were connected were the planners and managers at the local council. However, both planners and farmers explained that the outcomes of this bridging social capital were, for now, relatively limited.

Several farmers explained that they were not part of important farmers' organisations, such as NSW Farmers, because they had the feeling that this organisation did not represent the interests of small farmers, and had a bias toward broadacre farming in the west of the state. A few farmers indicated they once belonged to NSW Farmers but had been disappointed, either because they did not get help when they needed it, or because they did not manage to get the 'critical mass' for a better representation within the organisation. One horticulturist explained that there used to be some NSW Farmers employees working with horticulturists in the area, but this arrangement did not last because the local industry did not possess a sufficient 'critical mass' to justify significant investment by NSW Farmers. Several farmers said that they did not get enough out of NSW Farmers, and the annual membership was too expensive compared to the help and support they received. Therefore, most of the interviewed farmers seemed not to belong

to NSW Farmers, which is the dominant farmers' organisation in NSW.

The main forms of bridging social capital that farmers reported were their ties to planners working for the local council, through the Rural Industry Liaison Committee (RILC). This committee was put in place to give a voice to farmers in Wollondilly Shire:

*The group that's making the most noise is the one that gets the attention, and that has tended not to be farmers, so at times the past councils looked at which groups should be consulted instead of just listening to the noisy ones.*

The RILC has a dual purpose. Firstly, it advocates for farming in Wollondilly Shire and at the metropolitan level. One example of advocacy is that a scheme of agricultural credits<sup>1</sup>, which was advocated by one farmer in the area, is now integrated into the Greater Western Sydney action plan. Secondly, it aims to ensure that planning decisions made at the local scale do not hinder farmers' practices.

According to farmers, the RILC was useful in many respects. First of all, it provided an opportunity for farmers to influence planning, particularly when it came to development applications (DA). One farmer observed that the RILC could "moderate council" concerning development applications, and elaborated by saying: "anything that's a little bit questionable as a DA, like, they will bring it to us, [...] it's an opinion only, but they can take that opinion away from fellow farmers and that is good. And hopefully we can influence to be a little bit more reasonable at time". Secondly, the RILC raises awareness among planners and managers about farming issues and raises the awareness among farmers about planning issues. Indeed, the same farmer explained that: "we are educating the council officers, as they are educating us, but there is not going to be a lot of change out of it [...] They justify what they are doing basically to us. But at least they are listening." Indeed, this farmer explained that planners "realise some of the issues" that farmers are facing, whereas farmers have gained a better understanding of the planning side: "It was interesting to understand his side of it as a planner, because we look at it as farmers and think they are just a pain in the ass, excuse the expression but, there is, you've got to look at their side they have got a stack of legislation to satisfy all that."

The RILC helps build bridging social capital between farmers and planners. However, its contribution to the social, political and economic advancement of farmers remains relatively weak. Indeed, one farmer stated that "in the cold hard facts of life [...] we are

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<sup>1</sup>Agricultural credits would work in a similar way to the City of Sydney Council's Heritage Floor Space Scheme. A farmer would obtain 'credits' based on production. These 'credits' could then be bought by developers who would like to intensify residential developments.

not achieving a lot". There were several reasons for this. Firstly, as seen in the previous chapter, concerns about residents' amenities often take precedence over farmers' concerns. Therefore, when suggestions are made at the RILC to, for example, minimise setbacks in order to make possible agricultural activities on smaller lots of land, it is difficult to have them accepted by councillors who are worried about neighbours' complaints and the "fire back" from the community. The second main limitation of the RILC is that the farmers who are members of the RILC do not necessarily represent the whole farming community. Indeed, one farmer, who was a member of the RILC, expressed his doubts concerning the ability of the farmers on the RILC to represent all farmers: "while I'm on that committee I try to represent all farmers, but I don't really know what a lot of them are doing". The direct consequence of this limitation is that there is no guarantee that the information provided during RILC meetings is disseminated among farmers. The lack of dissemination of the issues discussed at RILC meetings seems to be illustrated by two farmers interviewed, who were aware of the existence of the RILC, but explained that they did not know what the RILC really about. One farmer stated: "I know that our local council do have what they call rural liaison group, but I don't really know what they talk about".

One farmer said that for the RILC to become a more fruitful organisation, the farmers of Wollondilly Shire needed to meet on a regular basis to discuss issues and then appoint a few farmers as representatives of the farming community at the RILC. However, organising farmers' meetings at the local scale would require a strong bonding social capital. In the next section, we will see that farmers' bonding capital in Wollondilly Shire, and more broadly in the peri-urban, is weak and this prevents the local collective organisation of farmers.

#### **5.4.2 Weak bonding social capital**

The relatively weak bridging social capital of peri-urban farmers is accompanied by a relatively weak bonding social capital, which refers to the intra-community ties. Several farmers interviewed explained that peri-urban farmers organised only for short periods of time when they needed to respond to an immediate threat. They suggested various elements that could explain this phenomenon, including the diversity of perceptions about peri-urban issues among farmers, their cultural diversity, and the lack of communication between commodity groups.

The lack of representation of small peri-urban farmers at the NSW scale is not the only problem according to one farmer, who also stressed the need to have an organisation

at the local scale that would represent the interests of small-scale farmers. He said that no such organisation existed:

*We have one farming organisation called NSW Farmers but they represent everything from flower growers to oyster growers to chook growers, to [...] pig growers. So they try to represent everybody and they only do a reasonable job just. We need to worry about what's going on in Wollondilly Shire; you know what I'm saying? And there is no farmers' organisation at that level at all. Nothing exists.*

Several farmers said that there had been attempts to organise themselves at the local level, but they had mostly been short-term initiatives. Indeed, several horticulturists suggested that farmers in the Sydney Basin mobilised themselves only in response to immediate threats. They often spoke of the water reform agenda as an example. Prior to the reforms, water licences were calculated according to the land surface area under irrigation, which resulted in an over allocation of water resources. The government reformed the legislation for the allocation of licences on a volumetric basis. This reform was perceived as a threat by many horticulturists and was highly contested. When speaking about this period, several farmers referred to meetings organised among farmers to discuss the issue that were relatively well attended. However, once the water reform issue was resolved, the attendance at these meetings declined. Another farmer described a local organisation created among horticulturists that met every three months. This organisation was later integrated into NSW Farmers and lost its participants because they did not want to pay membership fees to NSW Farmers. The mobilisation of farmers in the Sydney Basin seems to be relatively short term and attempts by horticulturists to create a long lasting organisation have been undermined by existing institutional arrangements.

The accounts of many farmers emphasise the idea that farmers in the area have a tendency to focus principally on their own operations and do not participate consistently in collective organisations and actions (Elton Consulting, 2009). Several farmers interviewed attempted to give reasons for this. Most notably, they suggested that members of the farming community do not have a unified view about how they should respond to issues specific to peri-urban environments, such as urban sprawl. For example, some farmers felt that urban sprawl is going to threaten their ability to maintain their farming activity, and prevent young people from starting a business, whereas others saw it as an opportunity to sell their lands. Without consensus, the impetus for collective action and group formation is lost. Another reason given by one farmer to explain the lack of collective action was the great variety of operations in the area. He said that there were

only a small number of dairy farmers in the area and that their operations and interests were so varied that it was hard for them to discuss issues and create a united front ("different activities and different family pressures"). However, one farmer suggested that for dairy farmers a political organisation aimed at lobbying government already existed called 'Dairy Connect'. According to this farmer, the association had some success during the deregulation and restructuring of the dairy industry (Dibden and Cocklin, 2005), in formulating restructuring assistance packages to ease the transition from a regulated to a deregulated market. This farmer also spoke of the contribution of Dairy Connect to making major supermarkets accountable for their actions on pricing, and said that Dairy Connect was an important political organisation. For horticulturists, the difficulty of creating a united front did not necessarily come from the variety of operations and interests of growers, but rather, according to one farmer, from cultural barriers. Considerable cultural diversity exists among these growers, who come from different ethnic backgrounds (Parker, 2007). This grower explained that some ethnic groups did not always have a good command of English, which made their involvement in political actions difficult. He also suggested "cultural barriers" were a factor which increased the difficulty of coming together. Finally, some dairy farmers took a broader perspective and spoke of a lack of communication between the "different commodity groups" and explained that they were "isolated" from one another, and that this contributed to a lack of collective action across commodity groups in the area.

This analysis leads us to the conclusion that the resistant discourse of farmers is accompanied by a relative 'immobility' when it comes to concrete actions to re-legitimise their views about what the role of farming should be in peri-urban landscapes. However, as we will see in the next section, the lack of political action does not mean that no action is taken at all.

## **5.5 Synthesis**

As seen in this chapter, farmers are creating a resistant place identity built on their feelings of being distinct from non-farming landowners. Farmers consider themselves as having an appropriate connection to the landscape that is based on a representation of the landscape as a place of production, and on the enactment of daily farming practices which contribute to maintaining the landscape in a productive state. In contrast, they perceive non-farming landowners as considering the landscape as being for consumption, and as adopting inappropriate practices in the landscape, that

they mostly consider as a place of habitation and leisure. They also see non-farming landowners as holding a romanticised view of what a rural landscape is, leading to bad or non-existent management of the land. This sharp distinction between farmers and non-farming landholders has been criticised in the literature (Davis and Carter, 2014; Gill et al., 2010), where it has been acknowledged that non-farming landowners also use the land productively, and agree that the land needs to be used. Our assumption is that farmers maintain this sharp distinction between themselves and non-farming landowners to enhance their distinctiveness, and consequently their legitimacy in the peri-urban landscape. Our second finding in this chapter is that farmers' resistant place identity does not seem to be resulting in the implementation of collective actions to renegotiate the role of farmers in the peri-urban. This lack of collective action is considered here as reflecting the weak bridging and bonding social capital of peri-urban farmers.

In the next chapter, we will see that the absence of collective organisation among farmers does not mean that no action is taken to renegotiate their role in the peri-urban. On the contrary, we will see that a great variety of actions and arrangements initiated by farmers could be considered as potential sources for the renegotiation of farmers' roles in the peri-urban.

## ARRANGEMENTS: THE INDICATIONS OF AN EMERGENT PLACE IDENTITY IN WOLLONDILLY SHIRE?

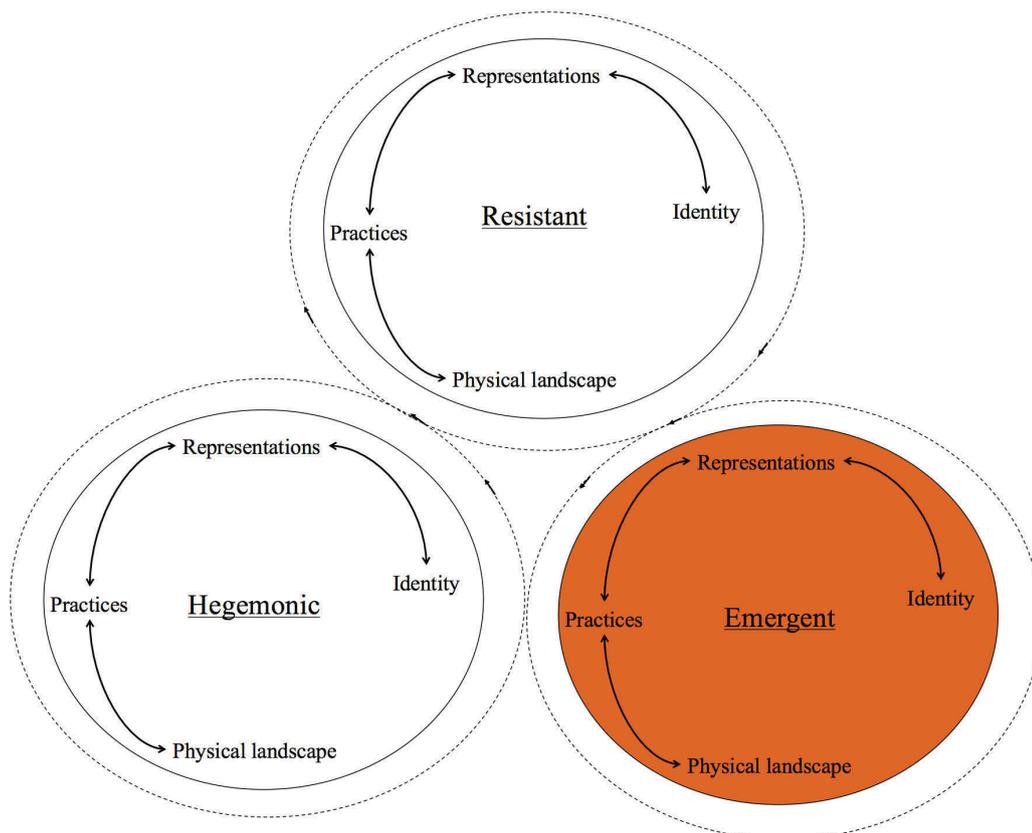
**T**he two hegemonic place identities identified in Wollondilly Shire contribute, sometimes inadvertently, to the marginalisation of the Shire's farmlands and farming activities. Following the spatial development promoted in the Metropolitan Strategies (Department of Planning and Environment, 2010, 2015), the first dominant place identity aims at accommodating both housing development and the preservation of the natural and agricultural landscapes through a city–country divide (Wollondilly Shire Council, 2011a). However, the necessity to maintain the city–country divide is used in planning practices to justify further housing development, and to represent farming as out of place. The second dominant place identity in the Shire is based on the undermining of the city–country divide through the development of low density housing on rural lands. The development of housing on rural lands has led to an increasing number of complaints against farming practices from non-farming neighbours, a trend which has been observed elsewhere (Abdalla and Kelsey, 1996; Kelsey and Vaserstein, 2000; Owen et al., 2000; Taylor et al., 2017). Finally, low density housing has also made it much more difficult for farmers to access to new lands due to increased land prices.

The marginalisation of farmlands and farming activities in the Shire's dominant place identities is heightened by the limited economic viability of farming in the peri-urban,

## CHAPTER 6. ARRANGEMENTS: THE INDICATIONS OF AN EMERGENT PLACE IDENTITY IN WOLLONDILLY SHIRE?

due to the impact of neoliberal economic policies on the farming industry (Dibden and Cocklin, 2005; Lawrence, 1999; Pritchard, 2005a,b).

As a response to the marginalisation of farming in hegemonic place identities, farmers developed a resistant place identity based on the loss of group continuity and an enhanced distinctiveness, supported by farmers' perceptions of themselves as good carers and managers of rural lands. However, as we saw in the last chapter, this resistant place identity has not led farmers to organise themselves collectively in order to renegotiate the role of farmlands and farming activities in the economy, in planning and in rural society more generally. However, the absence of collective organisation does not mean that no action is undertaken by farmers in response to the challenges faced by peri-urban agriculture. On the contrary, various practices have been undertaken by farmers that create the conditions for a potential emergent place identity, of which farming would be an integral part (Figure 6.1).



**FIGURE 6.1:** Politics of place identity framework. In orange, the emergent moment, which is the moment we focus on in this chapter.

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Taking the words of Cosgrove, Larsen (2004) defines an emergent place identity as follows: "emergent cultures are marked by futuristic visions that seek to remedy a group's contemporary problems and inequities by promoting alternative geographic designs" (Cosgrove, 1989, p. 132). An emergent place identity is therefore an alternative to the dominant place identity (which promotes the views of dominant groups) and to the resistant identity which "promotes inaction and resignation" (Larsen, 2004, p. 954). This alternative emerges, according to (Larsen, 2004), through the development of "alternative geographic designs", or in other words, through the reshaping of the geography of place (boundaries of a place, interactions between places). We argue here that the creation of an emergent place identity occurs, not only through the reshaping of the geography of place, but also through the renegotiation of the relationships between groups in a particular place. In this chapter we will consider how, through various practices, farmers create potential paths toward an emergent place identity.

Larsen (2004) focuses on how an emergent place identity is created when stakeholders construct "alternative geographic designs" that enable them to regain control over the means of production. In this chapter we will focus on how farmers regain access to the means of production (farmlands in this case), but also on other elements, including: how they get access to feed or compost, how they foster better relationships with non-farming neighbours and how they manage to sell their produce for a fair price. We will see how these practices contribute to developing alternative geographic designs, as well as renegotiating relationships between farmers and non-farmers in the peri-urban, creating, in this way, the conditions for the creation of an emergent place identity.

The literature review demonstrated that the relationships between the different dimensions of the politics of place/landscape identity framework (physical landscape, practices, representations, identity processes) are bi-directional. In Chapters 4 and 5, we saw how various stakeholders develop certain representations of the landscape that support their identity and dictate what the landscape should look like, and what practices are considered as appropriate. In this chapter, we will see how changes to practices induced by various external pressures (no access to land, conflicts with non-farmers, low returns on produce etc.) seem to have the potential to modify representations, and potentially to reframe identity principles in order to create an emergent place identity.

To look at these changes in practices we will look at the various "arrangements" made by farmers (Robineau, 2015). The notion of arrangements refers to "informal agreements, compromises, and adaptations" or "explicit arrangements based on rules negotiated and established by the different actors to gain access to various resources" (Robineau, 2015,

p. 323). These arrangements can therefore be informal or formal. We argue here that the concept of arrangements developed by Robineau (2015) in the context of urban agriculture in Bobo-Dioulasso can be applied to peri-urban farming in a developed country such as Australia, even though the degree of formality of the arrangements is sometimes greater in the Australian context.

In this chapter we will focus on four types of arrangements, identified in our interviews with farmers and to a lesser extent with planners. These arrangements are: the ability to source by-products from the city; the ability to lease lands; neighbouring practices (Sharp and Smith, 2004); and finally, farmers' markets. We will describe these arrangements (practices) and demonstrate how they may influence representations, and lead to the creation of an emergent place identity through the renegotiation of the roles of farmers in the economy, in planning, and in rural society more generally.

The objective of this chapter is not to envision a definitive emergent place identity, but rather to use thick description and weak theory to describe the diversity of existing practices. Thick description and weak theory shift the focus from the building of a strong theory that could "organize events into understandable and seemingly predictable trajectories" to a focus on the description of the diversity of existing practices (economic practices in the case of Gibson-Graham) that "help us glimpse possibilities and hopeful strategies" (Gibson-Graham, 2014, pp. 148-152). We will therefore present each arrangement, and its main characteristics, strengths and weaknesses, and for each we will explain how it could potentially contribute to an emergent place identity.

## **6.1 Farmers' arrangements: changing practices and emergent place identity**

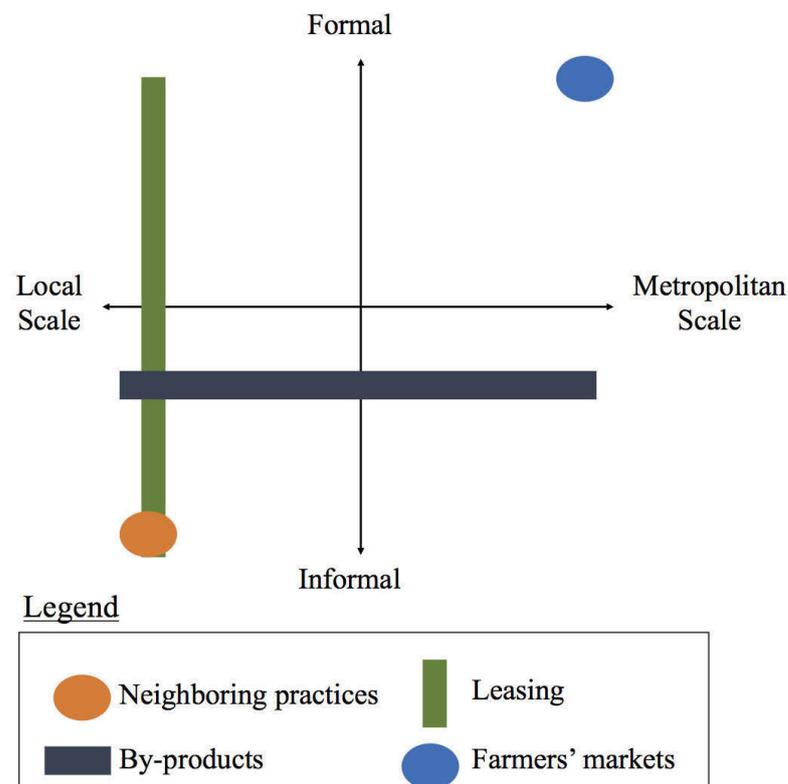
The main arrangements identified in this study involve a range of stakeholders, geographical scales and degrees of formality (see Figure 6.2 below). These arrangements are:

- Farmers' ability to source by-products, such as feed for livestock, alternative forms of fertilisers (e.g. recycled organics) and recycled water (e.g. grey water). These arrangements are occurring between farmers and companies or institutions that have the by-products. They remain relatively informal, and are happening at the metropolitan and local scales.

## 6.1. FARMERS' ARRANGEMENTS: CHANGING PRACTICES AND EMERGENT PLACE IDENTITY

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- Farmers' ability to lease lands in their local areas. This type of arrangement is made between farmers and other actors, in this case non-farming landowners or retired farmers. They range from informal oral contracts to formalised, signed leases between farmers and landowners (retired farmers or non-farming landowners). These arrangements are mainly carried out at the local scale.
- Neighbouring practices established by farmers to maintain good relationships with their neighbours and minimise the risk of conflicts. These arrangements are made between farmers and neighbouring landowners, and are therefore carried out at the local scale.
- The creation of farmers' markets which are developing at the metropolitan scale, and which are formalised through the creation of not-for-profit organisations. These arrangements are made between farmers, but also involve non-farming stakeholders, mostly clients.



**FIGURE 6.2:** Representation of the four arrangements identified in Wollondilly Shire on two axes.

Vertically the geographical scale at which the arrangement occurs, horizontally the degree of formality of the arrangements

## **6.2 Sourcing by-products: enhancing farmers' viability and challenging the city-country divide**

In this section we will see how sourcing by-products from other businesses in the local or metropolitan area contributes to enhancing the economic viability of farming operations and challenging the city-country divide that is dominant in planning.

### **6.2.1 Sourcing by-products as enhancing economic viability**

Several farmers obtained various by-products useful for their farms from other businesses in the local or metropolitan area. The first ones were animal feed stocks from by-products of Sydney's food processing companies. Two dairy farmers interviewed explained that they were obtaining most of their feed from the by-products of food processing companies in Sydney. They explained that the climatic situation in Australia, where the rainfall is not reliable, did not allow them to produce enough feed for their animals. Therefore, being able to source by-products from the city became an important part of the viability of their operations, as described by one farmer: "One of the reasons we did quite well as a dairy farm, was [that] we were using, what we call feed by-product [...]. We are close to Sydney, and in terms of trucking feed out that was relatively cheap for us, so that's sort of what kept us viable." However, these two farmers also indicated that these informal arrangements between farmers and food processing companies have progressively gained popularity, which consequently increased the price of the feed, making it less advantageous: "it was a big advantage. Less so in the last few years because more and more people are doing it, but when we started by-product was pretty cheap".

The second by-products were inexpensive organic materials containing plant nutrients for use as fertilisers. Those products were obtained from other businesses in the local or metropolitan area. Several farmers stated that they had access to relatively cheap chicken manure, which seems to be a widespread and historical practice among farmers ("I always had access to farm manure, you always buy it local, there is plenty of poultry farms"). Others talked about different types of fertilisers or mulch they obtained, for free or very cheaply, from non-farming stakeholders. These materials included sawdust, green waste from council pickups, and stable waste from race courses in Sydney. These farmers explained that being able to get these fertilisers was economical, because it reduced their use of more expensive chemical fertilisers. In several cases, these fertilisers

were obtained through relatively informal processes. In one case, a farmer's son learnt that a vegetable farmer was using green waste and transmitted the information to his father. In another case, a farmer's cousin obtained a contract to manage stable waste and brought the waste to the farm.

The third type of by-product was grey water from the Sydney metropolitan area for irrigation purposes. This type of water reuse scheme does not exist at the moment, but three dairy farmers referred to the potential for using grey water to irrigate farmlands for fodder production. According to one farmer, using grey water could contribute to solving water shortages on farms around Sydney. The climate in the area being relatively dry, the provision of water is often scarce and inadequate. Using grey water could therefore provide a certain degree of security. One dairy farmer explained that being able to use grey water would be "the one thing that would see [him] going up and buy [additional lands]". A water reuse scheme could therefore provide water security for farming operations in the area. This could in turn increase the viability of farming operations and the willingness of farmers to remain in the area.

In a context of unfavorable terms of trade, the arrangements - existing or yet to come, formal or informal - made between farmers and other stakeholders at the local and metropolitan scales contribute (or could contribute) to the economic viability of farming operations in the peri-urban. However, two farmers stressed that these types of arrangements, and more specifically a water reuse scheme, would contribute to enhancing the mutually beneficial relationships that can exist between the city and the country.

## **6.2.2 Rethinking the city-country relationship**

One farmer explained: "I think the two [city and country] can coexist, in fact I would like to think that they could do better than just coexist, that one could live out of the other", whereas another one gave more details on the nature of the interconnections between the city and the country: "being so close to the city recycling nutrients is an obvious [way] for us to go, and it benefits to the city too because a lot of these nutrients would otherwise go into landfill". Here, farmers emphasised the need to think about the city and the country in terms of interdependencies - the country takes some of the city's 'waste', in order to maintain and enhance the economic viability of its farms - instead of in terms of separation, as it is the case with the city-country divide. Planning documents for the Sydney area and local planning documents for Wollondilly Shire defend the city-country divide through the concept of the compact city, obscuring the interactions between the two. This separation between the city and the country has been,

## 6.2. SOURCING BY-PRODUCTS: ENHANCING FARMERS' VIABILITY AND CHALLENGING THE CITY-COUNTRY DIVIDE

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and continues to be, encouraged by several mechanisms (Williams, 1973). McClintock (2010), basing himself on Foster (1999), argues that the expansion of capitalist modes of production and the consequent urbanisation triggered a metabolic rift, which is a rupture in the interaction between humans and nature. As cities expanded, food was shipped from distant areas and nutrients were not returned to farmlands, breaking the nutrient cycle and creating this rift. According to McClintock (2010), "this rift reifies a false dichotomy between city and country, urban and rural, humans and nature", consequently "obscuring and effacing the linkages between them" (p. 193). Another agent that obscures the relationships between city and country is, according to several authors, the "fetishisation of rural living" (Gallent and Andersson, 2007, p. 19), or the "longing for a rural idyll" (Cook and Harder, 2013, p. 421). Indeed, the "fetishisation of rural living" leads to a conceptualisation of the rural as an unspoiled nature threatened by urbanity (Gallent and Andersson, 2007, p. 19). This conceptualisation of rurality as threatened by urbanity obscures the potentiality of positive interconnections between rural and urban regions.

The by-products sourced by farmers from urban areas may be considered as an entry point to enhance the synergies and co-dependencies between the city and the country (Woods, 2009) and may challenge the conceptualisation of city and country as two separate entities, a dichotomy which is an element of one of the hegemonic place identities promoted in Wollondilly Shire. This could lead to a recasting of the role of farmlands, often considered as out of place in this dominant place identity, as a beneficial land use contributing to the sustainability of the city (Madaleno, 2016; Smit and Nasr, 1992). In addition, we saw earlier that the lack of economic viability contributes to the marginalisation of farmlands and farming activities in the peri-urban. Yet, the use of by-products helps to increase the economic viability of farming operations. It could therefore play a role in reasserting the economic viability of farming in the peri-urban.

In this section we saw how the implementation of different practices (sourcing by-products), could potentially lead to the creation of a representation of the city-country as interdependent, consequently positively recasting the role of farming in the city-country relationship. These changes in practices and representations could be the first steps toward an emergent place identity which would (re)include farmlands and farming practices in planning representations and it may help to enable farmers to be economically viable.

## **6.3 Leasing: a re-legitimation of farmers' presence in the countryside?**

The second type of arrangement highlighted by farmers is the leasing of farmlands. We will see how leasing may have the potential to enable farmers to remain in or to settle in the peri-urban, as well as how, and under what conditions, it might contribute to re-legitimising farmers' presence in the countryside.

### **6.3.1 Leasing arrangements as a way to regain access to land and connecting farmers and non-farmers**

The farmers interviewed often referred to leasing as a practice they were already undertaking, or as an option for the future, either as a lessee or a lessor. The lessees can be farmers entering farming or expanding their operations, whereas the lessors can be retiring farmers or non-farming landowners leasing to farmers. According to several farmers, the demand for, and supply of, land for leasing is quite important in the Shire.

From a lessee's perspective, the potential for leasing farmlands in the peri-urban is important because the high capital cost of land purchase precludes farmers from entering farming or expanding their operations. Several farmers explained that leasing seems to be the only avenue currently available to counter the lack of access to land: "in peri-urban landscapes I would say leasing would be our only option [...] there is absolutely no way you would ever afford land, enough land, to be profitable". Moreover, one farmer stated that a significant number of aspiring farmers would like to farm in the peri-urban: "there is just a ridiculous amount of people out there that want to have a go at farming", and who "have no background in it so they have no family property to go back to, not a lot of capital to invest in it". From a lessee's perspective, we can see that there is a demand for lands in the peri-urban and that leasing seems to be the only way for them to access land.

From a lessor's perspective, several farmers explained that they would be willing to lease their lands upon retirement, particularly when they did not have a successor. One farmer offered: "I don't have sons that want to farm and I live on 90 acres and I've got adequate water, I've got 3 acres of greenhouses which I don't use all of. There is a demand for leased greenhouses so I'll retire, I will lease my greenhouses". Another farmer interviewed explained that she knew of older retired farmers "that wanted to see the farm up and running again but couldn't run it themselves and you know, they

really do want someone to come in and share farm and lease it off them". Leasing the land was considered to be a way to generate an income from the land while staying on the farm. Aside from land, leasing may also extend to farm infrastructure, such as green houses. Two farmers interviewed currently leased or had leased land from non-farming landowners. According to one of them, leasing the land frees non-farming landowners from the demands of managing their land while allowing them to enjoy a rural lifestyle.

Leasing seems to be the most straightforward arrangement for enabling farmers to gain access to more land, and it was referred to by many of the farmers interviewed for this research. But a few farmers talked about other types of possible arrangements (unconventional tenures) that could be tailored to the expectations of the farmers and non-farming landowners. One farmer described the case of a beef producer who, instead of leasing land, was just paying a low annual fee to the landowner in order to use their block of land. She also referred to her own case, explaining she used to farm the land of a neighbour for free. In both cases, the landowners did not demand leases because they considered that the relationship was mutually beneficial. Indeed, in the first case they were providing land to a farmer, and in exchange they could enjoy the view of the animals in the paddocks without having the responsibility of taking care of them. In the second case the neighbour could not manage the land but enjoyed living in the area. Having the land farmed was therefore a good way to keep the grass down, and the snakes away. Finally, the potential of share farming was also suggested by two farmers.

### **6.3.2 Is leasing contributing to an emergent place identity?**

Leasing or other types of arrangements could potentially have several advantages in a peri-urban context. They could help farmers gain access to land they cannot afford and may lead non-farmers to support farmers, potentially bridging the gap between farmers and non-farming landowners that has been described earlier. This could contribute to a progressive shift in the way farming is seen in dominant representations. Farming may come to be perceived as a legitimate use in the peri-urban landscape. This shift in the perception of farming could therefore challenge the two dominant place identities in the Shire which represent farming as 'out of place' or as an illegitimate use. However, there are two difficulties that will need to be overcome if leasing is to be a fair process that offers new entrants and existing farmers, insiders and outsiders, equal opportunities to access leases.

The first difficulty is that farmers who have access to leasing seem to already be part of the local community, meaning that outsiders may have more difficulty accessing

leasing arrangements. Indeed, one lessee-farmer explained that she and her partner had known their (non-farming) neighbours for a long time, and had built a relationship before starting the leasing arrangement ("my partner's parents were good friends with them and knew the ones on the other side for a while beforehand, so you tend to sort of build up those relationships and kind of lean on each other a bit if you are in that situation"). This same farmer explained that the leasing of land was currently a relatively unstructured process which depended on "who you know", and how connected you were in your industry. Therefore, the presence of this farmer and her partner in the area, and their integration into the local social network, played a role in their ability to lease land. This means that young farmers looking for lands may not know of the opportunities that exist in the area, and retired farmers or non-farming landowners may not know of these younger farmers looking for opportunities.

In order to expand, leasing might need to become a more formalised process that could bring into contact individuals who do not necessarily know each other beforehand. Such arrangements exist in the United States where several programs have created websites aimed at matching farm seekers with landowners, such as the Connecticut FarmLink program, and Maine Farmlink. Such a program could therefore be a potential way forward to enable farmers, who are not part of the local community to find land in the Shire. If this process seems promising on paper, it may be harder to realise in practice.

A study by Ingram and Kirwan (2011) showed that the process of matchmaking between older farmers and new entrants was rarely successful. Ingram and Kirwan (2011) examined the Fresh Start initiative (in Cornwall, in the United Kingdom) which aimed at connecting and assisting new entrants and older farmers to create joint ventures. Difficulties arose due to the differing motivations and goals of new entrants and older farmers. The only successful joint venture was a case where the new entrants and the older farmers already knew each other and worked together. This might therefore be a potential problem for unconventional tenures (e.g. share farming) where the older farmer and the new entrant might work together, an arrangement which requires that they have similar motivations and goals. This might be less of a problem for leasing, where the landowner is not directly involved in decision-making. In the case of non-farming landowners, Erickson et al. (2011) report that in a study carried out in Chittenden County (Vermont, USA), 45.6% of survey respondents indicated that they would be willing to enrol part of their lands in a program that would give farmers access to land, and 7.5% responded that they were already doing so. However, this was a prospective study

### 6.3. LEASING: A RE-LEGITIMATION OF FARMERS' PRESENCE IN THE COUNTRYSIDE?

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which did not provide empirical data on the need for stakeholders to know each other beforehand, even if the social dynamics between neighbours were considered important.

A formalisation of the leasing (or unconventional tenure) process might be a valid option to enable new entrants, who do not belong to the local community to gain access to lands in the Shire. However, negotiations will be needed regarding the degree of involvement of the landowner in the farming business, and the type of agreement that will be adopted between the two parties. In addition, the objectives of the lessee and the lessor should be discussed beforehand, and an agreement should be reached. Such conditions are not easily met. It is therefore more likely that leasing (or unconventional tenures) will initially be undertaken by farmers who belong to the local community.

The second difficulty identified is that, in some cases, the power relationship between lessors and lessees in Wollondilly Shire seems to be in favour of the lessors. This means that lessees do not always manage to get security of tenancy, making leasing less viable and attractive. For example, one farmer interviewed, who leased lands from non-farming landowners to expand an existing operation, explained that he was not able to get a "binding agreement" from the lessor. This was discouraging him from investing in the land. He illustrated this point by explaining that he managed leased lands differently from owned land:

*The only difference is the management of it. The soil, the rainfall, everything is the same [on the owned and leased land], except the management here [owned land] is more expensive so you are investing in things like fertiliser, fencing and woody weed control and all that things to manipulate the soil to grow more, where, you are not going to do that [in the leased land] if next week the fellow is gonna ring you up and say 'I have decided I don't want your cows on my place anymore', you know.*

This farmer explained that he would need a binding agreement for three to five years in order to invest in the additional tenanted land and get a benefit. A fully tenanted farmer would likely need an even greater security of tenancy. In this case, security of tenancy was not ensured. However, two farmers interviewed were fully tenanted and had managed to secure tenancy for periods of time which enabled them to invest in the operation and be viable. The degree of security of tenancy reached varies from one farmer to another. The reason for this could be that in New South Wales, the state seems to intervene only marginally in the tenant-landlord relationship, through the Agricultural Tenancies Act 1990<sup>1</sup>. This act focuses only on regulating the improvements made to the

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<sup>1</sup> Agricultural Tenancies Act 1990 (NSW).

land, the compensation for those improvements, and the resolution of disputes. It does not ensure security of tenancy for the lessee. The model of tenant-landlord relationship in New South Wales seems to be close to what Ravenscroft (1999) describes as the post-feudal tenant-landlord relationship. In the post-feudal relationship, the relationship is defined through contractual negotiations, potentially giving more power to the landlord.

In the literature, three types of tenant-landlord relationships have been identified (Ravenscroft, 1999):

- feudalism, where the landowners exert political, economic and social control in a "closed contractual structure" (Ilbery et al., 2010, p. 424)
- neo-feudalism, where states intervene in order to secure better conditions for tenants
- post-feudalism, where the "distribution of power is largely the subject of contractual negotiations between landowners and tenants" (Ravenscroft, 1999, p. 248).

The post-feudal model, which seems to be the existing model in New South Wales, can be illustrated, in an English context, by the Farm Business Tenancy (FBT) in the 1995 Act. In the FBT it is considered that the conditions of the tenure will be decided between the landlord and the tenant through a contract, without any intervention by the state. The consequence of the FBT was the increase of short-term leases to already existing farmers wishing to expand their businesses, resulting in the marginalisation of new entrants (Gibbard et al., 1999; Ilbery et al., 2010; Ravenscroft, 1999). Considering that New South Wales follows a post-feudal model, it is therefore likely that leasing will mostly be undertaken by existing farmers aiming at expanding their operations. Our empirical results showed that leasing agreements are not even satisfying for existing farmers expanding their operations, which means that it might be even more difficult for a new entrant to lease land in the Shire. We can therefore think that an intervention of the state in order to secure better conditions for tenants might be necessary to ensure that leasing becomes a viable option for lessees. However, such an intervention remains relatively unlikely. Another option to encourage leasing, and specifically long-term leasing, could be, as suggested by one farmer, the development of economic incentives for non-farming landowners, through a reduction of their rates when their land is leased for agricultural purposes.

In conclusion, we can say that if several difficulties are overcome, leasing seems to have the potential to be an opportunity for existing farmers and new entrants to gain

#### 6.4. PREVENTING CONFLICTS WITH NON-FARMING LANDOWNERS: RENEGOTIATING THE LEGITIMACY OF FARMING PRACTICES?

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access to land and maintain farmlands and farming activities in the peri-urban landscape. It may also be a way for retiring farmers with no heirs to remain on the land while receiving an income, and for non-farming landowners to be freed from the demands of managing their land. In the long term, it could potentially be a way to enhance mutually beneficial relationships between farmers and non-farmers, leading to the creation of more connections and understanding between them. This could result in the progressive re-legitimation of the practice of farming at the local scale. However, we can imagine that the farming activities that will probably be favoured in this process will be the activities considered the most socially acceptable by non-farming landowners. Even with this limitation, it could contribute to an emergent place identity where farming would gain significance in the (material) rural landscape and would be an integral part of farmers' and non-farmers' representations of Wollondilly Shire.

### **6.4 Preventing conflicts with non-farming landowners: renegotiating the legitimacy of farming practices?**

The third type of arrangement is the development of various practices implemented by farmers in order to reduce the likelihood of complaints and conflicts with neighbours. As previously discussed, the increased mix of land uses at the urban fringe, and more particularly the mix of intensive farming activities and residential uses, promoted by the second dominant place identity, has led to the development of conflicts between residential users and farmers, with the former challenging the legitimacy of the activities of the latter. The practices implemented by farmers in order to reduce the likelihood of complaints and conflicts with neighbours, that we will call "neighbouring practices" (Sharp and Smith, 2004), have the potential to contribute to a renegotiation of the legitimacy of farming practices in the Shire by making non-farmers more understanding of farming practices. The two types of "neighbouring practices" identified are: farmers' adaptation of practices to neighbours' expectations; and the creation of positive relationships with non-farming landowners.

The first neighbouring practice adopted by farmers is to limit the impact of farming practices on neighbouring properties and therefore adapt to neighbours' expectations. One farmer explained: "We've got a lot more people in the district now that have no idea about farming [...] so we have to be conscious of what we are doing and when we do it". This farmer said that farmers are mindful of the impacts on their neighbours, and try to limit them. For example, the same farmer explained that she was always careful not

to start any tractor work before 7:30 am, and to use the scare guns for the birds, and the pump for water at times when she would not affect neighbours negatively. Another farmer explained that during hot windy days he wet the floor in front of his shed to prevent dust from impacting the neighbouring properties. Two farmers thought about implementing more drastic measures, such as planting trees around their properties in order to hide their farms from view, or offering neighbours tubes to plant rows of plants to screen neighbours' views of the property. However, the lack of financial means in the first case, and of willingness of the neighbours for the second, prevented these measures from being implemented.

The second neighbouring practice adopted by farmers is the fostering of positive relationships between farmers and their neighbours. This can take the form of lending and borrowing material from neighbours, in order to foster cooperation. One farmer explained that he was sharing equipment with a neighbour: "We borrow stuff. I would lend him equipment and he would borrow equipment and I would borrow his stuff you know, [...] that he didn't have and I didn't have. And I helped him with jobs at times if he got stuck". Sharing material was considered by this farmer as a way to "be nice, and cooperate as much as I possibly can". Other farmers explained that they offered produce to neighbours in order to maintain good relationships. Indeed, two farmers explained that they tried "to remain friendly with everyone [...] and [...] if it means giving them [...] some fresh produce every now and then or whatever for free, then we will do it". They recounted a day where they went to see neighbours in the area to give them salads that they had prepared and did not sell at the market. Finally, one farmer explained that he also tried to organise social events in order to create and maintain positive relationships with his neighbours: "I organised Christmas Eve party and that was all of us, the locals, so a dozen or 15 of us got together socially and barbecue and those sort of things and just to try to have a community thing and basically I get along well with all my neighbours. And not just neighbours you know, one is a little bit further around."

This same farmer explained that fostering those relationships could sometimes lead to a better understanding of farming practices by neighbours. To illustrate this point, he explained that one day he spread compost on his property and the neighbour across the road complained to her husband about the odour. The husband indicated to his wife that this was only happening once a month and that it was something they had to accept. This example shows that creating good relationships with neighbours, through various "neighbouring practices", can lead to a better understanding and acceptance by the neighbours of reasonable farming practices and a progressive re-legitimation of farming

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practices in the peri-urban landscape.

This observation is supported by the literature on conflicts between farmers and non-farmers (Kelsey and Vaserstein, 2000; Owen et al., 2000; Sharp and Smith, 2003, 2004). It has been observed that the disconnection between farmers and non-farmers, which is the result of a loss of social capital, could lead to escalating conflicts between farmers and non-farmers, necessitating the intervention of a third party (Owen et al., 2000). This lack of connection can lead non-farmers to voice their concerns to non-farming neighbours or council staff rather than farmers, whereas positive actions are more likely to be taken when directly speaking to farmers (Kelsey and Vaserstein, 2000). On the other hand, when social capital between farmers and non-farmers exists, non-farmers are more likely to adopt tolerant attitudes toward agricultural activities (Sharp and Smith, 2003). Therefore, increasing social capital between farmers and non-farmers can be considered as a way to limit conflicts between farmers and non-farmers. Several authors (Kelsey and Vaserstein, 2000; Owen et al., 2000; Sharp and Smith, 2003, 2004) argue that increasing "good neighbour" activities or "neighbouring practices" (e.g. hosting community picnics, giving away manure, working around neighbours' activities, regularly interacting with neighbours) can lead to improvements in social capital between farmers and non-farmers and consequently to an increase in the tolerance of non-farmers for agricultural activities. We can therefore conclude that the various "neighbouring practices" implemented by farmers in the Shire have the potential to reduce conflicts between farmers and non-farmers. This could lead to a progressive acceptance and re-legitimation of farming practices in the Shire. However, according to Laliberte (2012) it also means that farmers are progressively put in a situation of dependency toward non-farming landowners, as they partially rely on the positive valuation of their practices to continue farming. Moreover, it puts the responsibility on farmers to create positive relationships with their non-farming landowners. We could argue that in addition to farmers' neighbouring practices, Wollondilly Shire Council could contribute to fostering positive relationships between farmers and non-farming landowners by organising events at the local scale. The SASA group argues that this could be done through the organisation of "local fairs, support groups, cultural activities, open days at farms, community supported agriculture, farm markets, et cetera." (Sydney Agriculture Strategic Approach Working Group, 2017, p. 15). To conclude, neighbouring practices have the potential to contribute to the creation of an emergent place identity by reducing conflicts between farmers and non-farmers and the progressive re-legitimising of farming activities in the Shire. However, the arrangements created by farmers could

be accompanied by Council-led actions aiming at fostering good relationships within the Shire. We will raise this point again in our Discussion chapter.

## **6.5 Farmers' markets: empowering farmers?**

The last arrangement we will focus on is the creation of farmers' markets, which are formal arrangements implemented at the local scale by farmers. As seen previously, the impact of neoliberal policies on the agricultural sector in Australia, and particularly the duopoly of supermarkets, has undermined the viability of peri-urban farming operations (James, 2016). The precarious financial viability of farming operations reinforces the marginalisation of farmers in dominant place identities in the Shire. Therefore, the ability of farmers to empower themselves and enhance their economic viability through the creation of farmers' markets can be considered as a prerequisite to farmers' renegotiation of their positioning in the politics of place identity of the Shire. Moreover, the creation of farmers' markets can lead to the development of better relationships between farmers and non-farmers, which could contribute to re-legitimising farming practices in the peri-urban.

In this section we will first demonstrate how farmers' markets can be seen as a way to empower farmers and enhance their economic viability. Secondly, we will see how this process can be undermined by looking at the limitations of farmers' markets. We conclude by examining how farmers' markets, in spite of their weaknesses, can contribute to the creation of an emergent place identity.

### **6.5.1 Farmers' market as empowering farmers, enhancing economic viability and creating relationships between farmers and non-farmers**

Farmers' markets, along with community-supported agriculture and other mechanisms, are often presented as alternatives to mainstream globalised food systems (James, 2016). Kirwan (2004) argues that the main goal of these alternatives is to "re-embed" the food system which is described as "the purposive action by which individuals or communities seek to create accessible structures that can allow them to regain some control within exchange processes" (p. 397). The process of re-embedding the food system is underpinned by two phenomena (Kirwan, 2004, p. 398):

- "valorisation", which enables "areas marginalised by globalisation to remain economically viable" by promoting "social and local embeddedness of production".
- "alterity", which focuses on creating an alternative system which "incorporate[s] social, environmental, equity and health issues into the production and consumption of food" and is not "based exclusively in the commodity relationship and profit maximisation".

Farmers' markets can be read as an arrangement which offers an alternative to the mainstream food system and which contributes to farmers' empowerment and economic viability through valorisation. It can also, through the creation of alterity, contribute to creating connections between farmers and non-farmers.

### **Valorisation**

As pointed out by the farmers interviewed for this research, farmers' markets can contribute to valorisation by enabling farmers to: 1. gain a certain degree of independence from wholesale markets and supermarkets, 2. remain economically viable and 3. redefine (with customers) the quality standards of the produce and promote the quality of their produce.

Farmers' markets are often presented by farmers as a way for them to regain control over the price of their products by by-passing the wholesale market. One farmer interviewed explained that farmers' markets enabled him to get a good price because he had the opportunity to "dictate the price". Another farmer explained that in the wholesale market farmers have "to take the price that the market sets" whereas farmers' markets enabled her to set her own prices. Controlling price by by-passing the wholesale market has been described in the literature as the main motivation for farmers' participation in farmers' markets (Kirwan, 2004).

Secondly, farmers' markets in our case study are owned and run by farmers. This results in farmers being able to establish rules conducive to farmers' economic viability. One farmer explained that when making the rules for a market there are two extremes. One is to create a "purely commercial market", which is mostly constituted of resellers and does not put any constraints on them. The other extreme is to create a "restrictive" farmers' market where "it's impossible for a genuine farmer to earn a reasonable income", because the constraints are too numerous. For example, this farmer explained that "restrictive" farmers' markets demand that it is the farmer, and only the farmer, who

sells his/her products. For this farmer the fact that the farmers' markets were run by farmers was an advantage, as farmers know what their peers' constraints are, and are therefore able to be pragmatic and find a mid-point between the two extreme positions presented above. To give an example, in the farmers' markets of our case study, farmers can sell the products of other farmers (third party products), if a farmer cannot go to the market. For a second farmer, another advantage of being involved in a farmers' market run by farmers is that it is "not just profit driven". The main aim is to "keep every stallholder viable". He explained that to do so they "regulate the number" of stallholders according to the demand, in order to make sure that every stallholder can make profit. He contrasted this approach to the Canberra market where every farmer who meets a set of criteria can sell their products on the market, with no effort to ensure that they will make a profit. We can clearly see that the fact that the farmers' market is owned and operated by farmers contributes to farmers' economic viability, and therefore constitutes the basis for the process of valorisation to occur.

Thirdly, through the creation of a direct relationship between producers and consumers at the farmers' markets, farmers are able to redefine (with consumers) the quality standards of the produce. They are also able to advertise the quality of their products and of their environmental standards, which they could not have done at the wholesale market. Several farmers explained that they are able to sell a wider variety of products at the farmers' markets than in the wholesale markets, where constraining size and quality standards have been established (Richards et al., 2012). According to farmers, customers are open to a greater variety of size and shape of produce than is considered acceptable at the wholesale market. Two farmers explained that when they were supplying supermarkets, they were asked to produce "big cabbages". By selling at farmers' markets, they realised that "people don't want big, the shops want big because they can cut it in half [...] We know for a fact, consumers don't want big". They added that farmers' markets enabled them to sell at a lower price produce that had been affected by the weather, which was something they could not do at the wholesale market. They explained that in "the wholesale market it has to be top quality all the time, but with the farmers' market you can tell, this got affected by the weather, it's not as good, the leaves are marked. You aim not to do that, but sometimes, with the weather [...] it's hard." The direct relationships farmers created with consumers enabled them to sell a wider variety of produce than what was deemed acceptable by supermarkets. The supermarkets' standards of size and quality do not necessarily correspond to the requirements of customers and farmers' markets become, for farmers and customers, an

arena where they can create different standards. Several farmers also explained that the farmers' markets are also a way for them to widen the variety of produce they cultivate and sell, and to value add by, for example, preparing homemade salads. The creation of an unmediated relationship between farmers and clients at the farmers' markets enables farmers and customers to redefine quality standards. It also gives to farmers more freedom in terms of production.

Another important positive aspect of the farmers' market is that it enables farmers to talk to customers about the quality of their produce (Kirwan, 2004). Two farmers explained that the farmers' markets enabled them to promote the quality of their products. For example, one farmer who practised integrated pest management (IPM), explained that the farmers' markets are an arena where he can explain IPM. When doing so, he contrasted farmers' markets with supermarkets and explained that IPM was not valued in supermarkets since IPM products are "mixed up with everyone else's stuff, and it's just there, it's not organic, it's just conventional". Farmers' markets therefore enable farmers to explain the value of their products, and to put an emphasis on the more sustainable farming practices that they used.

### **Alterity**

The second element that needs to be scrutinised is how alterity arises through the creation of a producer-consumer relationship that goes beyond a simple commodity relationship (Kirwan, 2004). Alterity can lead to the creation of a connection between consumer and producer which can lead to the re-legitimation of farming practices in the peri-urban landscape.

Several elements point toward the alterity of farmers' markets. The first one is that farmers often do not only consider farmers' markets as a place of commodity exchange, but also as a platform to providing information to customers on farming, to raise their awareness about the issues faced by farmers in Australia, and to share cooking recipes. Several farmers explained that they took advantage of the farmers' markets to talk to their clients and educate them on various subjects such as the seasons. Indeed, one grower explained that clients might ask him why he did not have sunflowers, which gave him the opportunity to explain that "they are a summer crop, I won't have any until November, - Ah but how come the florist has them'. [...] - well they come from north Queensland". They also explained that farmers' markets are a platform for raising awareness of consumers about agricultural issues. As one farmer explained, through

farmers' markets "we are getting our voice heard as farmer", on various issues such as water licences. Finally, farmers' markets are also seen, by some, as an opportunity to give information to consumers on how to cook their produce. One farmer explained that his wife goes to farmers' markets not only to sell produce, but also to explain to people how to cook them. She explained that "people don't know anymore; people are forgetting how to put a healthy but simple meal together. So you have to remind them or inspire them to wanna eat well, and to go home and try". Farmers' markets are therefore not only a place of commodity exchange but also a place of exchange of diverse types of information.

The second element that points toward the alterity of farmers' markets is that several farmers described selling their products at the farmers' markets as a rewarding activity. One farmer explained that the feedback given by the clients on his products was bringing him "satisfaction", and this satisfaction was a motive to "work harder". For another farmer it was the process of planting a seed, growing a plant, picking it up, selling it and hearing "this is beautiful" which was considered as rewarding. This sense of pride and satisfaction has also been described by Kirwan (2004), and illustrates the fact that farmers' markets trigger social interactions that go beyond commodity exchanges. One farmer went even further to explain that "a lot of our customers have become friends", clearly underlining these extended interactions between producers and customers.

Farmers' markets foster the process of valorisation and alterity described by Kirwan (2004). The process of valorisation enables farmers to stay economically viable through the creation of an alternative channel for the sale of their produce. This alternative channel contributes to the empowerment of farmers and the enhancement of their economic viability through their ability to set the price of their produce, define the rules of the markets, redefine quality standards, and advocate the quality of their produce. The creation of alterity enables farmers to connect with non-farmers. This could contribute to re-legitimising farming practices in the peri-urban landscape. However, opportunities to participate in farmers' markets are limited in Wollondilly Shire. Indeed, most farmers' markets are situated outside the Shire. This means that their effects on the re-legitimation of farming practices will likely be felt outside the Shire.

### **6.5.2 Challenging the alternative nature of farmers' markets**

The ability of farmers' markets to create an alternative food system that empowers farmers and enhance their economic viability can be challenged in several respects.

Firstly, farmers' markets can be considered as reproducing neoliberal forms by putting an emphasis on consumers' choice, overlooking the need for structural changes to the

food system (Guthman, 2008). As described in the previous section, farmers' markets are seen, by the farmers interviewed, as a way to educate consumers on agricultural issues and to encourage them to change their consumption habits. To further illustrate this point, one farmer explained that she hoped that raising consumer awareness at farmers' markets could lead to consumers' behavioural changes at broader scales: "We see the market as not just the selling opportunity and making money, we are getting our voice heard as a farmer, and so the few people that we have [...] then they are sitting down having coffee with their girlfriends and they start talking, that's possibly another two people, so to us we believe it's important, because hopefully we can get through to the consumer and Australia in general." Here, the change is considered as coming from consumers' behaviour. It therefore focuses on the responsibility of citizens, framed as consumers, to change the food system, without stressing the need for structural changes.

Secondly, one farmer observed that farmers' markets are largely reserved, with a few exceptions, to the "very wealthy" consumer. This raises the question of the potentially exclusionary dimension of farmers' markets, as well as the ability of farmers' markets to become a real alternative for farmers, in terms of scale. Indeed, one farmer explained that the demand for farmers' markets is "plateauing", because farmers' markets have "a certain demographic or geographic area where [they] draw from". If the demand for farmers' markets does not increase, the proportions of farmers' incomes derived from farmers' markets will also plateau, and new farmers may not have access to those market opportunities. The fact that farmers' markets do not represent a viable alternative for all farmers in peri-urban Sydney has been analysed by James (2016) and confirmed by one farmer who explained that the risk was that farmers would "flood the market". This farmer explained that the shift in the food system from supermarkets to farmers' markets has not happened yet. Consequently, there is not enough demand for farmers' markets to accommodate all the peri-urban farmers. The fact that farmers' markets do not represent a complete alternative can be illustrated by the fact that only one farmer interviewed was selling her produce exclusively through farmers' markets, whereas other farmers were still selling 50% or 60% of their products to the wholesale market ("Farmers' markets probably make up nearly 40 or 50% of my income now").

Thirdly, several farmers also raised concerns regarding the creation of non-genuine farmers' markets that competed with genuine ones. One farmer explained that the concept of farmers' markets has been:

*hijacked by non-farmers, by people who are pretending to be the farmers and they are buying the out of date product from the central market at Flemington and going to markets*

*pretending that they are farmers and that they are selling, on the side of the road some of them at markets, and they are charging high prices for substandard and inferior product because they are buying products that's cheap at the wholesale level because it's running out of its shelf life.*

The concept of farmers' markets therefore has the potential to be damaged by non-farmers who do not respect the rules of farmers' markets. One farmer also explained that farmer's markets are not easily accessible to all commodity groups. She explained that, for example, selling dairy products at a farmers' market is difficult because of "food safety" issues and the volatile nature of dairy products.

We can see here that farmers' markets can also be read as a weak alternative to conventional marketing channels which reproduce neoliberal forms, and do not represent a fully viable alternative for all farmers. This reading of farmers' markets is supported by several scholars. Guthman (2008), for example, argues that farmers' markets which position themselves as alternatives to the dominant food system actually reproduce "neoliberal forms, spaces of government and mentalities", particularly through an emphasis on consumer choice (p. 1171). In addition, alternative food networks such as farmers' markets are often considered as favouring affluent customers, and as largely representing a middle-class privilege and perpetuating existing local inequalities (DuPuis et al., 2006; Markowitz, 2010; Schupp, 2016). This means that farmers are likely to create positive relationships with a certain section of the population. Finally, James (2016) explains that farmers' markets do not necessarily provide a viable alternative for farmers. Taking the example of a farmers' market in Sydney, James (2016) shows that this farmers' market was established in competition with a non-genuine farmers' market (reseller) and closed a few months after it began due to a lack of customers. In this case the farmers' market did not represent a viable alternative for farmers who were still relying on the wholesale market for the sale of their products. Following this reading of our empirical data on farmers' markets, it seems that the ability of farmers' markets to empower farmers and enhance their economic viability is limited. However, several scholars offered a third reading of farmers' markets which goes beyond a view of farmers' markets as a failing alternative (Cameron and Gordon, 2010; Harris, 2009).

These authors (Cameron and Gordon, 2010; Harris, 2009), following Gibson-Graham (2006), developed the argument that neoliberalism (in our case the globalised food system) is too often seen as dominating the organisation of the world, and as "colonis[ing] all possible alternatives even as they emerge" (Harris, 2009, p. 60). Cameron and Gordon (2010) explain that this reading of the world often leads to a conceptualisation of the

food system as dominated by mainstream capitalism, and that alternatives challenge this food system. The problem is that since the view of a dominant capitalist food system is hegemonic, every alternative is assessed according to its degree of separation from the mainstream and is considered as weakening as it gets closer to the mainstream food system. The second problem, still according to Cameron and Gordon (2010), is that alternatives are often considered as "local", "small-scale", and consequently "ineffective in the face of the global scale of a dominant capitalist food system" (p. 3). In contrast, Cameron and Gordon (2010) encourage us to look at the diversity of the food system economy by using the diverse economies framework developed by Gibson-Graham (2006) which distinguishes different types of enterprises, markets and labour practices and aims at encompassing the diversity of the existing economy, without giving predominance to the capitalist enterprises, market transactions and wage labour (Table 6.1).

**TABLE 6.1:** Diverse economies framework of Gibson-Graham (2006).

| <b>Transactions</b>   | <b>Labour</b>  | <b>Enterprise</b>   |
|---|--|---|
| <b>Market:</b> goods and services traded at prices set according to the unregulated 'laws' of supply and demand         | <b>Wage:</b> individuals work for a wage   | <b>Capitalist:</b> privately owned enterprise where profits are owned by the employer – surplus is privately appropriated   |
| <b>Alternative Market:</b> goods and services exchanged in non-typical markets (e.g. farmers' markets, co-op exchanges) | <b>Alternative paid:</b> individuals do not work for a wage contract (e.g. self-employed worker) | <b>Alternative capitalist:</b> capitalist enterprises where the surplus is used for social or environmental causes (e.g. producer marketing cooperatives)           |
| <b>Non-market:</b> goods and services exchanged outside of the market (e.g. gift-giving)                                | <b>Unpaid:</b> individuals are not paid (e.g. volunteering, housework)                           | <b>Non-capitalist:</b> enterprises in which the appropriation and distribution of the surplus is dealt with differently (e.g. communal distribution of the surplus) |

If we use this perspective to look at farmers' markets, we can see them as an alternative market (the price is set by farmers themselves) and an alternative capitalist enterprise (farmers' markets are farmer-owned non-profit organisations) within the diverse economy. They exist along with the supermarkets which are capitalist enterprises trading goods on the market. They therefore do not offer a radical and complete solution to the problems of the food system, but they contribute to the economy and offer

partial solutions. Indeed, even if farmers' markets reproduce neoliberal forms, are not accessible to customers across social classes, and do not constitute a viable alternative for all farmers, they still constitute a first step toward a different and diverse food system by enabling valorisation and the creation of alterity (Kirwan, 2004). They consequently lead to:

- the empowerment of farmers, because the farmers' markets are farmer-owned
- the enhancement of farmers' economic viability because farmers set the prices
- the creation of connections with non-farmers, through exchanges during the markets.

We argue that these elements can contribute to the creation of an emergent place identity by alleviating farmers' lack of economic viability, which reinforces their marginalisation in the dominant place identities of Wollondilly Shire; and by reconnecting farmers and non-farmers, which could encourage the re-legitimation of farming activities in the peri-urban. However, we also acknowledge that farmers' markets are only one aspect of the diverse economy and cannot completely solve the problem of farmers' economic viability and of access to food across social classes. For these problems to be solved we argue that farmers would need to renegotiate their relationships with supermarkets and increase their bargaining power through, for example, marketing cooperation or bargaining cooperatives (Levidow and Psarikidou, 2011; van Caenegem et al., 2015). A study by the Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation, in Australia, stresses the need for farmers to engage into collective bargaining, through the development of collective bargaining groups or co-operatives, in order to re-balance the bargaining power in the agricultural industry (van Caenegem et al., 2015). They explain that to do so, social capital between farmers is essential. However, as we saw earlier, farmers' collective organisation in the peri-urban is relatively weak, meaning that creating marketing cooperatives could be a challenging endeavour. Finally, it can be argued that farmers' markets are probably not enough to recreate connections between farmers and non-farmers as they mostly reach middle-class customers. According to DuPuis et al. (2006) in addition to farmers' markets "more democratic food provisioning processes, including public procurement policies, consumer cooperatives and community food schemes" should be implemented (p. 272). This could enable farmers to re-negotiate their relationships with a broader cross section of the population. Finally, farmers could attempt to develop other strategies to sell their produce, such as through social enterprises delivering boxes

to clients or agritourism schemes. To conclude, it is very clear that farmers' markets do not constitute an adequate and complete response to the problems created by the current mainstream food system. However, they can be considered as a part of the diverse economy that contributes to change, and they have the potential to contribute in the creation of an emergent place identity in the Shire.

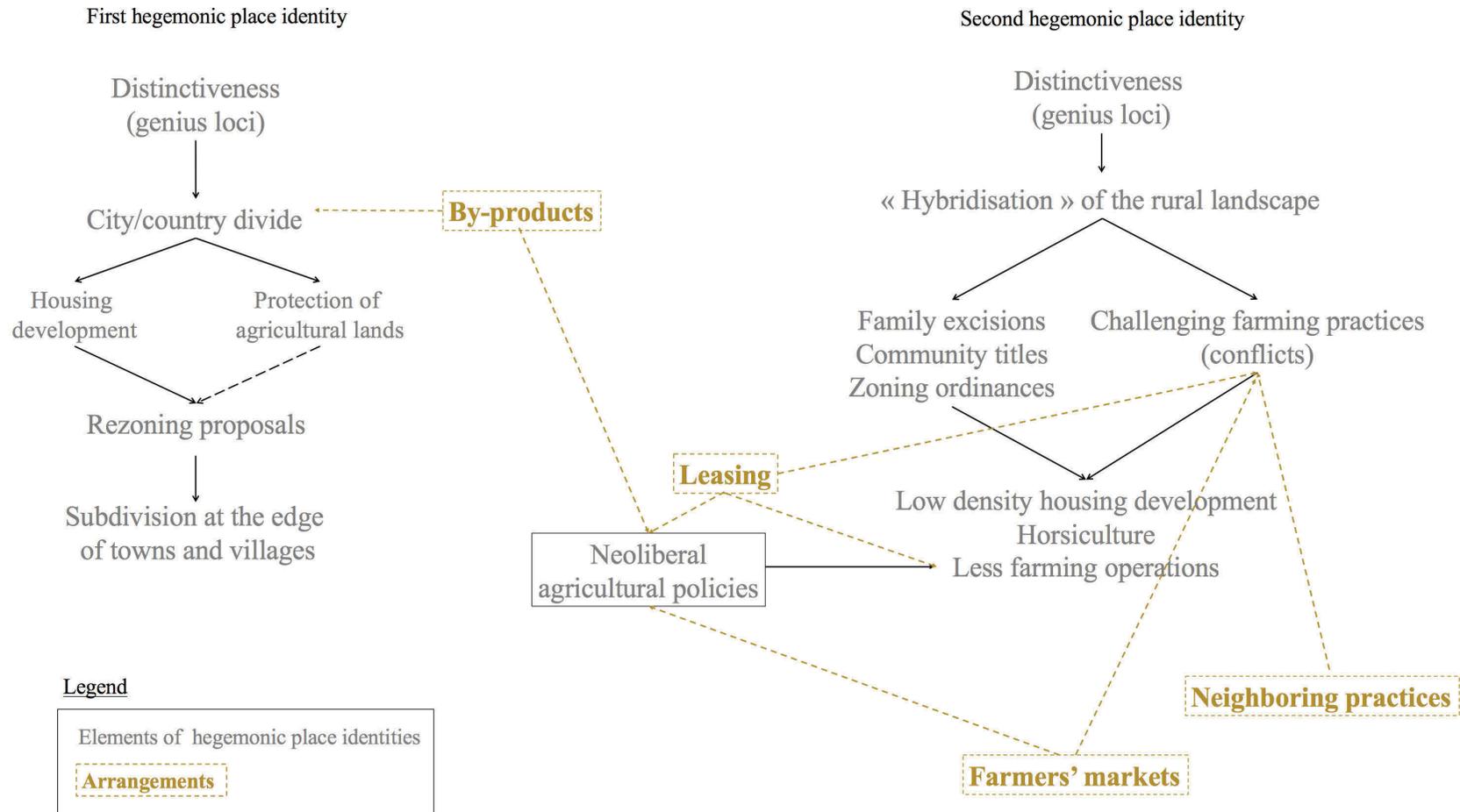
## 6.6 Synthesis

In this chapter, we saw how farmers implemented various types of arrangements (practices) which challenge several elements of the dominant place identities in Wollondilly Shire and contribute to going beyond a resistant place identity, which does not lead to the development of collective action, to renegotiate the role of farming in Shire. The main elements of the dominant place identities challenged by farmers' arrangements are:

1. The city–country divide (Figure 6.3 below). As seen in Chapter 4, the first hegemonic place identity in Wollondilly Shire promotes a sharp distinction between city and country. Whereas this concept aims at being integrative and therefore at enabling both housing development and the protection of farmlands in the Shire, it has been used by landowners as a tool to justify housing developments and to depict farming as out of place. In this chapter we saw that the sourcing of by-products by farmers could challenge the dominant representation of the city and the country as two distinct entities by emphasising the interdependencies between the city and the country. This could contribute to a positive recasting of the role of farming as contributing to the sustainability of the city, and therefore as something worthy of protection. This would therefore constitute an alternative geographic design, since the boundaries and relationships between the city and the country would be renegotiated.
2. The progressive disappearance of farmlands in the physical landscape of the Shire (Figure 6.3 below). We saw previously that the second dominant place identity present in Wollondilly Shire promotes the development of low density housing in rural areas. This has contributed to increases in land prices, making it difficult for farmers to buy land to expand or start an operation. The leasing of land could help farmers gain access to lands if it is based on agreements that enable them to invest in the leased lands. This is not a renegotiation of geographical designs per

se, but rather a renegotiation about what is considered the legitimate use of the land within a place.

3. Conflicts between farmers and non-farmers (Figure 6.3 below). In the two hegemonic place identities, farming activities are described as a source of conflict between farmers and non-farmers. In the second hegemonic place identity, conflicts between these two groups are particularly significant. The neighbouring practices of farmers could contribute to the diminution of conflicts between farmers and non-farmers by developing their social capital and fostering better communication and mutual understanding between the two groups. We also believe that leasing arrangements, by putting in contact farmers and non-farmers, could lead to a better understanding, on both sides, of the aims and objectives of both groups, leading to better relationships and a diminution of conflicts. Finally, farmers' markets also have the potential to foster better relationships between farmers and non-farmers. However, the fact that farmers' markets are not situated within Wollondilly Shire means that the benefits of improved relationships will lie outside the Shire. Those three arrangements will not create alternative geographic designs, but could create different relationships between stakeholders in the bounded space of the peri-urban and could contribute to a shift in the representation of farming as out of place or illegitimate in the peri-urban.
4. The lack of economic viability of farming operations (Figure 6.3 below). The impact of neoliberal policies on the agricultural industry has led to the decreased viability of farming operations, particularly in small peri-urban farms, which do not have the opportunity to achieve economies of scale. The low returns of farming activities, coupled with high land prices, make farming vulnerable in the peri-urban. The impact of neoliberal policies on the agricultural industry is not a part, per se, of dominant place identities, but it increases the marginalisation of farming operations in the peri-urban landscape by making them economically non-viable. Three arrangements contribute to enhancing the economic viability of farmers in Wollondilly Shire: the sourcing of by-products, the leasing of lands and farmers' markets. These arrangements do not directly contribute to the renegotiation of geographic designs, but they support farmers' economic viability, which is a prerequisite for the preservation of farming in peri-urban areas (James, 2016), and consequently for the creation of an emergent place identity.



**FIGURE 6.3:** Representation of how the arrangements contribute in renegotiating some elements of the two hegemonic place identities.

The different elements of the two hegemonic identities are represented in grey, whereas the arrangements are represented in yellow. Dotted arrows link the arrangements to the elements of the two hegemonic identities they challenge.

As explained in the introduction, the goal of this chapter was to identify the diversity of practices (or arrangements) which can be considered as indications of a potential emergent place identity in Wollondilly Shire, rather than to give an account of what an emergent place identity would be. The arrangements described in the chapter are not as yet supported by a coherent representation. Rather, they are practices, which were triggered by external pressures, and may lead to the creation of alternative representations and eventually identity and place identity. Therefore, it is difficult to depict a coherent emergent place identity at this time. Rather, we have described how various practices (arrangements) could potentially contribute to changes to the role of farming in the peri-urban and the creation of an emergent place identity. Even if these arrangements do not enable us to point toward a coherent emergent place identity, we argue that they hint at the emergence of a multifunctional landscape in the Shire. A multifunctional landscape can be defined as a landscape in which the focus is not on the specialisation in agricultural production and the segregation of agricultural activities from other rural activities, but rather on the identification of synergies and win-win situations between different rural activities and different spaces (city and country, for example) (van der Ploeg and Roep, 2003). We can see here that the different arrangements identified contribute to creating synergies and win-win situations between activities (farmers' markets, neighbouring practices and leasing contribute to the creation of synergies between agricultural and residential uses) and spaces (the sourcing of by-products creates synergies between the city and the country). We will focus on the creation of a multi-functional emergent place identity and the barriers to the creation of such a place identity and its limitations in the Discussion chapter.

In Chapter 5, we focused on how farmers construct their place identity (based on threatened group continuity and distinctiveness) in opposition to or in contrast with an out-group (non-farming landowners). In this chapter we looked at how farmers implement practices which might change their roles in the peri-urban landscape, through the creation of alternative geographic designs, and also through the modification of their relationships with other groups. Therefore, we focused on how farmers created a place identity based on the in-group/out-group relationship. One more element that needs to be considered is how farmers perceive the future of their farms. This element is essential, as creating an emergent place identity that would reintegrate farmlands and farming activities will be impossible if there are no more farmers in the peri-urban. In the next chapter we will therefore look at how farmers' place identity is influencing the way farmers see the future of their farms, and the measures they are taking to keep their

farms running.



## THE ROLE OF PLACE IDENTITY IN DETERMINING FARMERS' VISION OF THE FUTURE OF THEIR FARMS

In Chapter 6 we focused on the arrangements farmers develop with other groups of stakeholders in order to improve their situation in the peri-urban. We saw that those arrangements have the potential to lead to the emergence of a collective representation of the peri-urban that includes farmlands and farming activities, and could eventually lead to the creation of an emergent place identity. However, one further element emerged, through analysis of the case study, as essential for a better understanding of whether an emergent place identity is possible or not in Wollondilly Shire: how farmers' place identity influences the way farmers perceive the future of their own farms as well as the measures they take, at the farm scale, to keep their operations running despite the many current pressures faced in the peri-urban. This question is essential in our research, as an emergent place identity is only possible if existing farmers remain and new farmers settle in the peri-urban.

Farmers' place identities at farm-scale are determined by the nature of the relationships farmers create with their farms. The frame which is frequently used to analyse farmers' relationships with their farms is a dichotomy between tradition and modernity. Traditional farmers are often described as having a strong relationship with their farm that is expressed through: the transmission of the farm from one generation to the next,

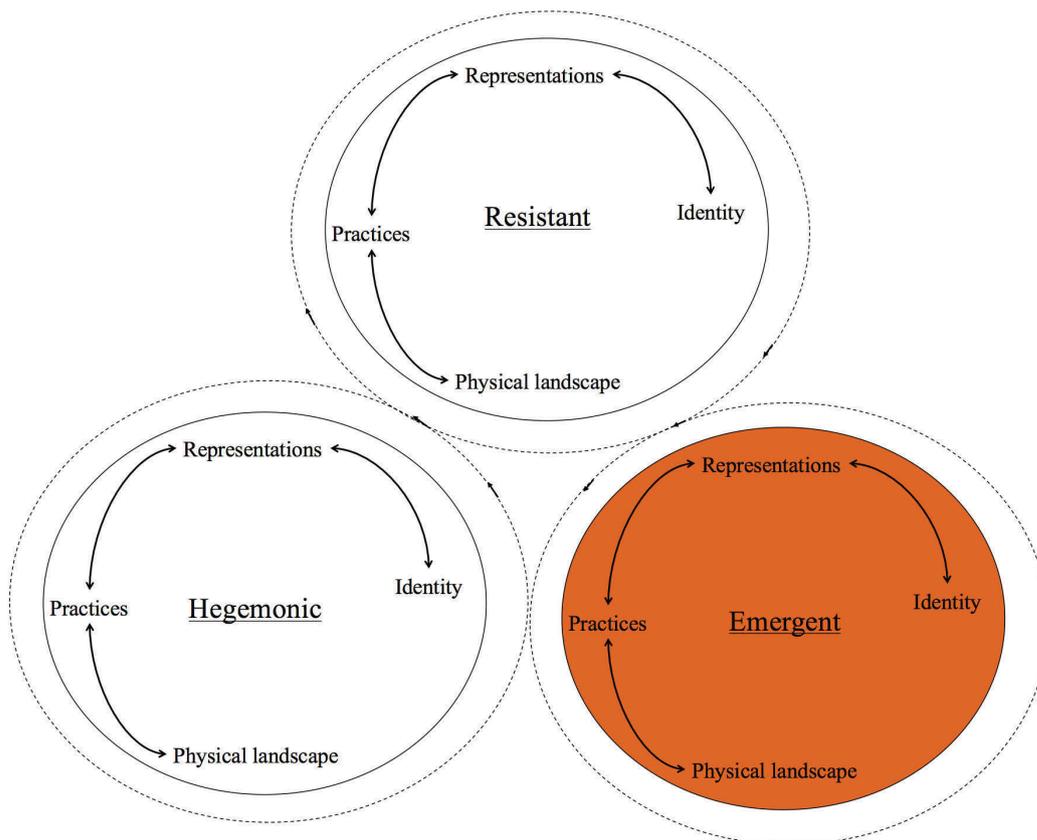
the co-location of the farm and the house, embedded farming practices, and an occupational identity strongly entrenched in productive activities (Cheshire et al., 2013; Gray, 1998; Kuehne, 2013). At the other end of the spectrum, modern farmers are described as considering the farm as a commodity (Johnsen, 2004). Farming is for them a personal choice. This means that there is no expectation that their children will take over the farm (inter-generational succession). Moreover, home and farm are not necessarily conflated (Cheshire et al., 2013). Finally, they do not necessarily have strongly embedded farming practices, and their occupational identity extends beyond productive activities (Stenholm and Hytti, 2014).

One implicit assumption behind the distinction between traditional and modern farmers is that modern farmers would be able to adapt more easily their farming operations to changed circumstances, than traditional farmers with a strong attachment to the land (Hildenbrand and Hennon, 2005; Johnsen, 2003). We could argue, therefore, that modern farmers are more likely to have a positive vision of the future of the farm due to their ability to adapt, whereas the farming enterprises of traditional farmers are more likely to be declining. Consequently, they may have a negative view of the future. In our analysis, we aim to demonstrate that the distinction between farmers who have a positive vision of the future of their farms and farmers who do not, does not correspond with the division between traditional and modern farmers, but rather with the division between farmers with a place identity that is both land-based and practice-based (a combined place identity) and farmers with a place identity that is exclusively practice-based. The combined place identity is based on the identity principles of continuity, self-esteem and self-efficacy whereas the practice-based place identity is based only on the identity principles of self-esteem and self-efficacy. Those two types of place identity are constituted of elements that belong to both tradition and modernity, therefore challenging this dichotomy. We argue here that the distinction between combined and practice-based place identity is more fruitful than the distinction between tradition and modernity for explaining farmers' adoption of adaptive strategies and views of the future of their farms in the peri-urban context.

The way we consider farmers' place identity in this chapter is different from the way we conceptualised it in Chapter 5. In Chapter 5, we saw how farmers built their place identities based on a comparison with an out-group (non-farming landowners). In this chapter, we focus on how farmers build their identities by defining themselves (through their relationships with their farms) without reference to an out-group. This is consistent with literature suggesting that representations are not used only by groups to value

themselves positively in comparison to an out-group. Representations also play a role in fostering "common consciousness among members which need not be associated with the intergroup context" (Breakwell, 1993, p. 4). We will therefore focus on how farmers' relationships to their farms contribute in defining farmers.

In this chapter we will focus on the prerequisite for the creation of an emergent place identity, which is that farmers remain and settle in the peri-urban. To do so, we will focus on understanding how the nature of farmers' place identity (combined or practice-based place identity) contributes to determining the adaptive strategies they adopt, and eventually the way they see the future of their farm. In addition, we will also see, in the final section of this chapter, how the nature and extent of the adaptive strategies adopted by farmers at the farm scale can help pave the way for an emergent place identity at the local scale (Figure 7.1).



**FIGURE 7.1:** Politics of place identity framework. In orange, the emergent moment, which is the moment we focus on in this chapter.

The chapter is organised as follows. Firstly, we present different conceptualisations of adaptive strategies identified in the literature, and explore in more detail how the distinction has been made in the literature between traditional and modern farmers. Then we present the different types of farmers' place identities identified (combined and practice-based). We describe the identity principles on which they are built, and what representations, practices and elements of the physical landscape support them, using the politics of place/landscape identity framework. Secondly, we see how different place identities of farmers (combined or practice-based) lead to the adoption of different adaptive strategies as well as different perceptions of the future of their farms in a peri-urban context. Finally, we examine whether the adoption of adaptive strategies by farmers at the farm scale can be considered as contributing to the creation of an emergent place identity at the local scale.

## 7.1 Adaptive strategies

The significance of farmers' relationships to their farms in determining the adoption of adaptive strategies and the ways they see the future of their farms emerged as essential for better understanding the possibility of an emergent place identity in Wollondilly Shire. This thread of enquiry appeared as relevant later in the analysis, and this is why we only present the literature related to adaptive strategies and farmers' relationships to their farms in this chapter.

There is an extensive body of literature on the adaptive strategies, adjustments and pathways adopted by farmers to respond to peri-urban constraints or broader structural changes (Evans, 2009; Inwood and Sharp, 2012; Johnston and Bryant, 1987; Maachou and Otmane, 2016; Recasens et al., 2016; Smithers and Johnson, 2004; Wästfelt and Zhang, 2016; Zasada et al., 2011). Several 'typologies' of the changes farmers make at the farm scale to adapt have been developed. Some focus mostly on adaptation to structural changes, whereas others focus on farmers' adaptation in peri-urban areas. In our case study, both are relevant because farmers experience pressures coming from both structural changes in the farming industry and changes triggered by their location in proximity to urban areas. Focusing on broader structural changes, Evans (2009) proposes a typology that identifies seven types of adjustment to structural changes:

1. adjustments that consist in modifying the emphasis of the farm enterprise, for example by reducing the importance of dairy and increasing the importance of sheep

2. adjustments related to labour, which are often the substitution of family for hired labour, or alternatively an increase in hired labour
3. adjustments to the business structure, such as creating a partnership
4. adjustments to tenure, such as buying land that was previously rented
5. adjustments related to the size of the farm, through either buying or selling land
6. adjustments focusing on economic centrality, with for example the increase of off-farm income
7. adjustments concerning diversification, such as increasing the income obtained from a non-farming activity on the farm.

Still focusing on structural changes, Smithers and Johnson (2004) identify possible adjustments as both positive and negative, including expansion and intensification, diversification, off-farm work, self-exploitation, no change, downsizing, or exiting. Other studies on adaptive strategies mostly concentrate on how farmers in the peri-urban adapt their operations to the city and the expectations of urbanites, rather than on structural changes. These studies mostly develop typologies of adaptive strategies that align with the idea of the creation of a multifunctional environment, that is to say an environment where the role of the farmer goes beyond food and fibre production. For example, Recasens et al. (2016) explain that farmers in peri-urban areas are shifting their focus towards: food quality, marketing, and crop-diversification (to suit the various tastes of tourists and urbanites); volunteer opportunities (for non-farmers to contribute to harvesting, for example); education activities, and leisure and cultural activities. Similarly, Zasada et al. (2011) identify various types of "post-productive, consumption oriented adaptation of farming activities" (p. 59), including: participation in agri-environmental practices (organic production schemes, extensive grazing), diversification in recreational services and lifestyle-oriented farming (horse keeping, hobby farming). For a summary of the different adjustments or adaptive strategies see Table 7.1 below.

CHAPTER 7. THE ROLE OF PLACE IDENTITY IN DETERMINING FARMERS' VISION OF THE FUTURE OF THEIR FARMS

**TABLE 7.1:** Summary of the different adjustments or adaptive strategies to structural changes and peri-urban constraints identified in the literature.

| Adjustments to structural changes             |                              | Adjustments to peri-urban constraints |   |
|---|------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---|
| Evans (2009)                                  | Smithers and Johnston (2004) | Recasens et al. (2016)                | Zasada et al. (2001)                          |
| Change in the emphasis of the farm enterprise | Expansion                    | Food quality and marketing            | Participation in agri-environmental practices |
| Change in the organisation of labour          | Intensification              |                                       |   |
| Modification of the business structure        | Diversification              | Crop diversification                  | Diversification in recreational services      |
| Change in tenure                              | Off-farm work                |                                       |   |
| Change in size of the farm                    | Self-exploitation            | Volunteer opportunities               | Lifestyle oriented farming                    |
| Change in the economic centrality             | No change                    | Educative activities                  |   |
| Diversification                               | Downsizing                   | Leisure and cultural activities       |   |
|   | Exiting                      |                                       |   |

Other authors move beyond the identification of adaptive strategies and focus on determining the trajectories taken by farmers. For example, Johnston and Bryant (1987) identify three potential trajectories in the peri-urban: i) positive adaptation (enhancement of farm production through the adoption of non-traditional activities such as direct marketing of produce, and intensification of the production; ii) normal adjustments (adjustments occurring widely in the agricultural sector, such as the adoption of a new technology to increase efficiency) and iii) negative adaptations (exiting farming, reducing production or investment). Smithers and Johnson (2004) identify three categories, each made up of two subcategories: i) expansion, ii) stability, iii) contraction. Within the expansion category, they identify farm-focused expansion, in which the farm supports itself, and assisted growth, in which other streams of income are needed to maintain the operation. Within the stability category, they identify persisting operations where farmers need other streams of income, but manage large farms and are committed to farming while thinking that expansion is impossible or not worthwhile, and hobby farms, where farmers have a low commitment to farming and support themselves mostly with other sources of income. Finally, within the contracting category, they identify the forced downsizing of operations where, due to external pressures, the farm income is insufficient to support the family and other streams of income are identified and the winding down

of operations when the farmer is approaching retirement and relies on pensions and investments.

One aspect of farmers' adaptive strategies that remains to be explored is the magnitude of the change at the farm scale. To grasp the magnitude of change, the concepts of incremental and transformative adaptation have been developed, although some authors have argued that the distinction is somewhat subjective and relative (e.g Rickards and Howden, 2012). However, certain factors have been identified as differentiating incremental and transformative adaptation. Incremental adaptive strategies are often conceptualised as a short-term, reactive response to external drivers that enable farmers (or other stakeholders) to maintain the essence and function of their systems (Béné et al., 2012; Mapfumo et al., 2015; Park et al., 2012). In contrast, transformative adaptations relate to the creation, by proactively managing drivers of change, of a new system involving long-term, deep changes (Béné et al., 2012; Mapfumo et al., 2015; Park et al., 2012; Rickards and Howden, 2012). Transformative adaptations are therefore often described as creating qualitatively distinctive changes in the system, such as going from cereal production to farm forestry for carbon sequestration (Béné et al., 2012; Mapfumo et al., 2015; Rickards and Howden, 2012). They are also described as having a profound effect on the system even if they seem minor (like the enhancement of economic viability and the modification of farm management through the adoption of off-farm work) (Rickards and Howden, 2012) and as having the potential to lead to behavioural and cultural changes (Béné et al., 2012).

In the literature, a variety of factors have been suggested as factors which determine farmers' ability to adopt adaptive strategies. Smithers and Johnson (2004) offers an encompassing, multi-scale view of these factors. They identify external agricultural conditions at the global and local scales, including biophysical, economic, social, political, technology, and information factors at the global scale, and land use restrictions, neighbours, agricultural support infrastructure, traditions/norms, socio economic composition, land values, and tourism potential at the local scale. They then identify factors influencing the adoption of adaptive strategies at the farm-scale, such as farm business factors (land quality, size, type, debt, enterprise cycle, ownership, and location) and household factors (background, education, life course, number-age of children, succession plans, and philosophy on farming). Here we will focus on how farmers' relationships to their farms influence their adoption of adaptive strategies and the views they have of the future of their farms in the peri-urban environment.

## 7.2 Traditional and modern farmers

The nature of farmers' attachments to the land is often articulated in the literature around the idea of cross-generational identities; the expectations regarding transmission of the farm from one generation to the next; the co-location of the home and the farm; and farming practices and the changes in occupational identity.

The notion of cross-generational identities implies that the farm does not only reflect the identity of the farmer who farms it, but also the identities of the previous generations (Kuehne, 2013). With this comes the obligation for the farmer to carry on the work of the past generations. For instance, Kuehne (2013) in his auto ethnography explains that he felt an obligation to keep the farm in order to maintain a living embodiment of the work that his father had done on that land. Gray (1998) illustrates this unflinching link between a family and a farm by explaining that the farmers he interviewed were always referring to a farm using the last name of the family farming on it. In this way, the family that farms the land becomes indivisible from the farm. For 'modern' farmers, on the other hand, the farm becomes increasingly considered as a commodity and is separated from the family history. Johnsen (2004) explains that the restructuring of the farming industry in New Zealand pushed farmers to renounce their personal and intrinsic goals, and to focus on instrumental goals, that is to say on profitability. In this context, the farm progressively becomes a commodity. Salamon (1995) conceptualises this distinction as the distinction between the yeoman and the entrepreneur. The yeoman farmer is a traditional family-oriented farmer, whereas the entrepreneur is a profit-oriented farmer.

The second element that distinguishes traditional and modern farmers follows on from the first: there is an expectation in a traditional farming family that one generation will carry on the work of the previous one, and will transfer the farm to the next generation. Several authors (Hennon and Hildenbrand, 2005; Kuehne, 2013; Villa, 1999) explain that on traditional family farms, there is an expectation that the children of the current farmers will take over the farm. Kuehne (2013) describes being "saturated with the farming culture from parents and friends from an early age" and felt he did not have any other choice but to become a farmer himself (p. 204). Villa (1999) makes a similar analysis by explaining that 'traditional' farmers in Finland felt that they had to take over the farm, and had a moral obligation of "bringing farming and family history one step further" (p. 333). Finally, Hennon and Hildenbrand (2005) explain that the personal biographies of traditional farmers are bound to their farms, and that they will always take into account the farm and family when it comes to decision-making. At the other end

of the spectrum, Villa (1999) presents younger farmers as taking over the farm because of their personal interest in farming rather than because of the feeling of a moral obligation. She also explains that young farmers have a more 'businesslike' approach to farming, meaning that they evaluate farming according to 'economy, workload and spare time', and consider that if they were not satisfied with the situation anymore, they will exit farming and pursue another career. Farming for younger farmers is an individual choice that can be challenged if it ceases to be satisfying. Hennon and Hildenbrand (2005) take a similar stance and explain that for modern farmers, farming is "a conscious decision made to pursue individual rather than group goals" (p. 508). Villa (1999) also identifies an intermediate situation where farmers choose to continue the family tradition but want to give to the next generation the freedom to choose their careers.

However, elements other than the distinction between traditional and modern farmers play a role in a farmer's decisions about whether or not to transfer the land to the next generation. One of the fundamental elements that can influence the creation of a succession plan is the availability of a successor. Several studies observe that due to the existence of higher earning potential and the declining viability of farming operations (due to declining terms of trade) young farmers move out of farming as there are more professional opportunities in other occupations (Barr, 2014; Geldens, 2007; Sappey et al., 2012). In addition, the identification of a successor is less and less common as farmers themselves sometimes discourage their children from becoming farmers (Ball and Wiley, 2005; Crockett, 2004; Sappey et al., 2012). In both Crockett (2004) and Ball and Wiley (2005)'s studies, less than 50% of farming parents wished for one of their children to take over the farm (respectively 41.1% and 47%). The remaining farmers were either unsure or against the idea (Crockett, 2004) or considered it unimportant (Ball and Wiley, 2005). The reasons for these views included: the impossibility of having two generations on the farm (lack of work, small size of the farm), farming was not a lucrative activity, farming was hard work, lack of insurance and retirement benefits, the difficulty of inter-generational work on a farm, the idea that farming needs to be a personal choice, and a focus on educating children and exposing them to non-farming extra-curricular activities in order to give them opportunities beyond farming.

Many other factors influencing succession planning have been identified in the literature. Wheeler et al. (2012) and Fischer and Burton (2014) provide summaries of those factors. Fischer and Burton (2014) divide them into two categories: farm factors and farm family factors. The factors related to the farm are: farm size (larger farms are more likely to have a succession plan); profitability; total farm assets; farm location; diversification

strategies; enterprise mix; land tenure; transaction costs; inheritance rights and death duties; and farm type. The farm family factors are: age (early succession planning is an incentive to invest in the farm), gender, personal preferences, values and intrinsic rewards, education, practical skills and knowledge, and intergenerational relationships. Finally, other macro-level elements are recognised by Fischer and Burton (2014) as having the potential to influence succession planning, such as agricultural policy regimes. Wheeler et al. (2012) demonstrated that the uncertainty concerning irrigation policies in a region of Australia was having influence on succession planning); the price-cost squeeze; on- and off-farm diversification opportunities; gender; ideal types of farmers; land price inflation; and farmers' increasing feelings of being marginalised in the wider society.

The third element distinguishing traditional farmers from modern farmers is the co-location of the home and the workplace. Farming is frequently described as a way of life, which often entails living on the farm, but Cheshire et al. (2013) point out that modern or globalised farmers often separate the workplace from their home. They associate this shift with an increasingly prevalent view among modern farmers that farming is a profession rather than a way of life.

The fourth element that differentiates traditional and modern farmers is the nature of their occupational identities. Traditional farmers tend to see themselves as 'producers', whereas more modern farmers adopt a broader range of occupational identities. Indeed, Stenholm and Hytti (2014) argue that the traditional occupational identity of 'farmer' is linked to the idea of being a producer, whereas the modern farmers consider themselves as entrepreneurs/businessmen, and "seek profits outside of traditional farming and emphasize innovativeness, risk taking, farm diversification, and also what has been labeled 'pluriactivity'" (p. 134). Sutherland and Darnhofer (2012) describe another type of evolution of farmers' occupational identity, triggered by the increasing disillusionment of farmers with the productivist model. They explain that many farmers engage in various ventures (diversification, off-farm work etc.) which result in the diversification and broadening of farmers' occupational identities. Modern farmers are therefore progressively developing new occupational identities that are more varied than those of traditional farmers.

The final element to be considered in farmers' relationships to their farms are farming practices. Through iterative farming practices, farmers create a strong bond with their farms. Kuehne (2013) explains that the attachment to practices is probably stronger than the attachment to the land, because it reflects the farmer's ability to alter the landscape

in order to leave his/her mark on the land. This aspect of farmers' attachments to place is rarely identified in the literature, and the distinction between traditional and modern farmers in terms of attachment to farming practices has not been described (Kuehne, 2013). However, it is likely that a modern farmer would potentially spend less time working the land, and consequently give less importance to the embedded practices of farming (Cheshire et al., 2013). For a summary of the characteristics of 'traditional' and 'modern' farmers' relationship to their farms, see Table 7.2 below.

**TABLE 7.2:** Characteristics of 'traditional' and 'modern' farmers' relationships to their farms.

| <b>Traditional</b>                                     | <b>Modern</b>                    |
|--|----------------------------------|
| Farm as representing cross-generational identities     | Farm as a commodity              |
| Expectations for children to take over the family farm | Farming as a personal goal       |
| Co-location of home and workplace                      | Separation of home and workplace |
| Occupational identity: producer                        | Broadened occupational identity  |
| Embedded practices                                     | Less/no embedded practices       |

In the next section we will examine the different types of place identity developed by farmers (combined place identity and practice-based place identity) and the identity principles those place identities enhance (continuity, self-esteem and self-efficacy). We will see that both of these types of place identity combine elements of tradition and modernity.

## **7.3 Land-based place identity: the importance of continuity**

### **7.3.1 The farm and the family**

In the current research, the farmers who had been occupying the same land for several generations (6 farmers <sup>1</sup>) partially built a place identity on the idea of continuity, which is reflected in the strong and continued connection between the family and the

<sup>1</sup>One farmer has been attached to this category, because he has more commonalities with this group, however we were not able to get an all-encompassing view of his relationship to the farm during the interview

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farm. For these farmers, the farm was a place where family members worked together and the practice of farming was strongly enmeshed in family life. One dairy farmer underlined this point by saying:

*I've just run around with dad all my life, yeah. I don't know. It's very different to people that just live in town and go to a job, you know, they don't get to work with their kids, or with their father, which [...] has its challenges, but you know, that's just a really nice way to live.*

This strong entanglement of the family with the farm is also reflected in the fact that it is expected that the farm will be transferred from one generation to the next. One farmer explained that it was very important for his father that he came back to the farm after having studied, in order to "keep that continuity of land". Another farmer stressed that the transmission of the farm to the next generation was taken for granted in his family: "every generation gets the land for nothing, and then we pass it on to the next generation, that's how it works in our family". Finally, it is often considered as a source of pride:

*That's happened three or four times, like three or four generations it's passed through so it has been a constant, you know, and all the family farms are pretty much the same I think you know, so that's, yeah, so I suppose, we are proud of that fact.*

The idea of this connection between land and family was expressed in stronger terms by one farmer who described a symbiosis operating between the farmer and his/her land after having farmed it for several generations. The farm becomes a strong part of a person's life:

*This property as much, is alive to me as much as any human that I have contact with. It's a hard thing to have to separate a person from a property that they are familiar with [...] You become part of the enterprise, part of the soil, part of all of it, it is you, it is who you are. To leave here, I would lose a lot of me. I'd leave a lot of me behind.*

The importance of passing the land from generation to generation lies, for one farmer, in the fact that it contributes to perpetuating the legacy of a person's lifetime of work, and creates an intergenerational enterprise:

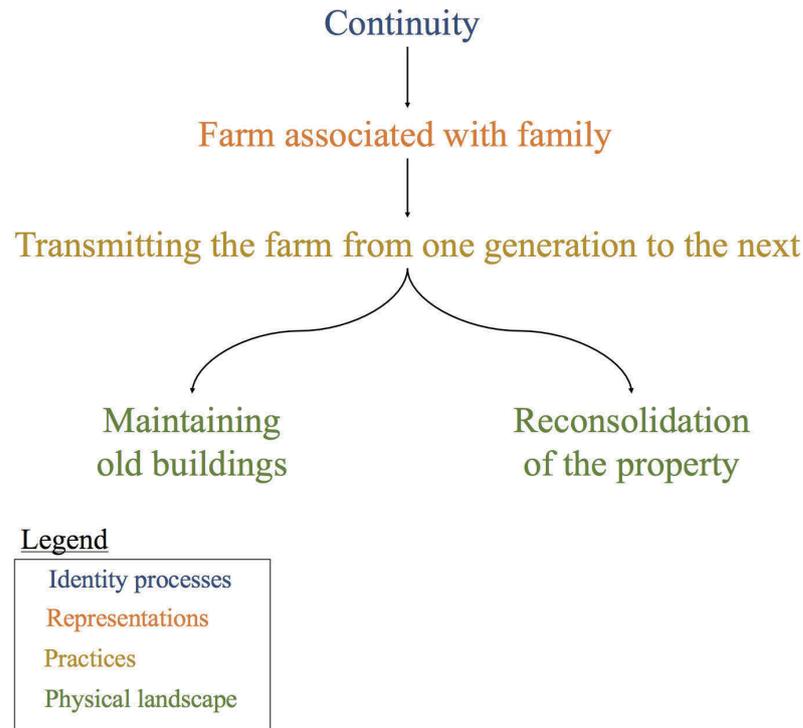
*You are dealing with somebody's lifetime work, and intergenerational transfer it's a constant pressure I suppose of you know, lifetime work being maintained and I think that's how some farmers think, is that they are creating a long-term intergenerational enterprise.*

For this farmer, these factors imbued inheritance with a moral responsibility to maintain the farm in the name of the past generations, but also a responsibility to the extended family, such as the brothers and sisters who grew up on the farm. Indeed, this farmer expressed his feeling of having a "moral obligation to maintain this, you know, more or less on their behalf".

This representation of the farm as being strongly related to the family life and work is visible in the landscapes of certain farms. For example, one farmer expressed the desire to maintain old buildings on the farm as proof of the work that had been done by previous generations. In describing the sheds built by family members in the 1950s and 1970s, this farmer explained that he might consider building bigger, more modern sheds as an addition to the already existing ones, but would not consider destroying the older sheds: "I can't see us tearing down the old shed. The old barn and the hay shed." For another farmer, this will to maintain the relationship between the farm and the family was reflected in the physical landscape, by the reconsolidation of the property that had at one time been split between different members of the family:

*the land was owned by my great grandfather, it was split up amongst the family, and we've been able to buy most of that land, it's been sort of spread through the family, we've been able to buy it back and consolidate the whole property again.*

The importance of the land, and more precisely the physical integrity of the land, was therefore of importance for this farmer who saw the land as a reflection of his family history. Farmers who value the connection between family and farm over several generations can be considered as having a land-based place identity. This land-based place identity can be summarised using the politics of place/landscape identity framework (Figure 7.2 below): farmers create a place identity based on the identity principle of continuity, which is supported by a representation of the farm as strongly associated with the family. This is reflected, in practices, by the transmission of the farm from one generation to the next, and is visible in the landscape of some farms through, for example, the conservation of old farm buildings built by previous generations, or the reconsolidation of the family farm.



**FIGURE 7.2:** Farmers' place identities based on the concept of continuity.

### 7.3.2 The farm as a means to achieve personal goals

Other farmers interviewed – who were not on multi-generational farms – did not associate their farms with their family histories. A few even considered the connection between the farm and the family as potentially negative, because they considered farmers on multi-generational family farms as not having "control over [their] destiny", and not being free to do as they wished on their properties. One farmer explained that farmers on multi-generational family farms often did not own the farm when they retired because "it's all held in a family trust, a business", and contrasted this situation with his own situation, saying: "in this case, yes I own. And that's a nice feeling". For this farmer, the transmission of a farm from one generation to the next was seen as a burden preventing a person from having his/her own individual destiny. For another farmer, the burden came from the expectations of the family about how the land should be managed: "it's expected and kind of inbred that things happen in a certain way and disrupt that too much is really difficult". In contrast, she explained that farming on land that was not family owned gave her the freedom to "do things the way that we see is the best".

For these farmers, having their own asset enabled them to control their destiny and

to be free to manage the land as they saw fit. The farm was therefore considered as a means to achieve personal goals rather than as a family tradition to be maintained. Incidentally, some of the farmers who did not associate their farms with their family histories, or who even considered this connection as potentially negative, often did not expect their children to take over the farm. They belonged to the intermediary category described by Villa (1999). One farmer stated that "it's not fair on them" to ask children to stay on the farm, because there was no future in farming. Other farmers insisted that they may, themselves, exit farming in the future, corresponding to Villa (1999)'s definition of more modern farmers. For these farmers, farming was an individual project that did not necessarily include the continuation of farming by their children.

Another element that is often raised by farmers who are not on farmland that has been in the family for several generations is that they do not have the emotional attachment to the land that farmers with a land-based place identity can have. One farmer who was leasing farmland explained that when he would leave the land, he would take the "things [he] like[s]" with him. When asked if he will miss the farm, he answered: "I have certain goals that I want to achieve, and once they are completed, I'll do something else", his goal being to set up the farm in a very efficient and environmentally sound way. We can see here that the farm was seen as a medium to achieve personal goals, but did not have a value in itself for this farmer. For another farmer the situation was a bit more ambiguous. This farmer had had to leave a farm and set up a new one twice in his life. When asked if he missed those farms, he explained that he was not "an emotional" person. But then he said:

*Maybe I shouldn't say I'm not emotionally attached to it all but if I, if something happens and I couldn't work the farm right? I would sell it tomorrow, going to live on an acre block or something. You know what I mean? But I prefer to stay on the farm" and then adds: "it's part of me; you know what I'm saying? It feels like part of me. And to sell it you feel that you are losing part of yourself, like losing a leg nearly. [...] It's that passion that comes back into owning.*

For this farmer, the answer to the question about attachment to the land, and the desire to keep it, was more ambiguous, but we can see that the role of attachment to the farm was individual ("it's part of me") and not related to family history.

Finally, when we look at farmers who had not been farming on the same land for several generations, they seem to value the physical characteristics or the location of the farm, rather than their connection to the land. One farmer explained that:

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*[the land] provided me with some of the requirements that I needed. North easterly facing aspect. Sloping, frost free. Didn't know how much water was available but I was hoping that there would be water on the ground. It was all bush, but it allowed me to selectively clear so that I had wind break all the way of this native bush that I left, which helps the farming, stopping damaging wind.*

Other farmers explained how the location of their farm brought them advantages of a different nature. One farmer explained that he chose a farm located on the catchment area so that the farm would be protected from residential development ("it is zoned catchment area, the threat of residential development will never worry me, because it won't happen here"). For another farmer the farm was located close to her family and friends, which was important for her ("I can stay close to my family [...] so we don't have to live out on a you know, broadacre kind of cropping, or sheep type enterprise"). Another farmer explained that they had looked for land in this area because they did not want to have too many inhabitants around their farm, as was the case in areas closer to the city ("my criteria was that [...] the area was nice and that there wasn't too many people around").

Even though multi-generational farmers also valued their farms and environments for their physical characteristics, more particularly the aesthetics ("That's an essential part of why we stayed here in the first place, because the actual view from this house, and the impacts of what's happening around the farm has been very little.") this was always secondary to their attachment to the continuity between the farm and the family. For farmers who had not farmed for several generations on the farm, the physical characteristics of the farm were elements that often explained why they were farming in the location.

When looking at the concept of continuity, the distinction between farmers who pass on the farm to the next generation and farmers who see the farm as a personal asset corresponds to the distinction between 'traditional' and 'modern' farmers. Traditional farmers have a strong embedded relationship with the farm, whereas modern farmers consider the land only as a way to achieve personal goals, and value it mostly for its physical characteristics and location. However, we will see in the following sections that the farmers interviewed also evoked other kinds of attachments to their farms which were not necessarily connected with the land, but rather with the farming practices and the way of life that comes with a farm. These other types of attachments were shared among all the farmers interviewed, regardless of their family histories. They were linked to different identity principles: self-esteem and self-efficacy.

## 7.4 Practice-based place identity: self-esteem

Farming practices have been identified as contributing to farmers' self-esteem. This was mainly visible in two respects. First, farmers often considered the farm as progressively becoming their own creation, which reflected their vision of how the farm should appear, as well as the work they had put into the land. Second, farmers often referred to how they had changed their farming practices throughout their careers to progressively integrate more environmental elements. Those environmental elements progressively became part of their definition of themselves as 'good farmers' and came to reinforce their self-esteem.

### 7.4.1 The farm as a personal creation

Farmers' descriptions of their farms as their own creations were often present in their discourses. The most patent example came from a farmer who explained that he created the farm "from scratch", after having bought a piece of land that was "all bush [...] with blackberries and weeds and terrible jungle". He described it as an "achievement" because "we made this ourselves [himself and his wife], for what it is, with good and bad". For this farmer, the farm was his creation and a testimony to the work he had done on the land in order to transform bushland into arable land. For other farmers who had started on an already existing farm, leaving their mark on the landscape consisted of improving the existing farm through, for example, the implementation of a better irrigation system, the enhancement of soils, and more anecdotal gestures, such as the fixing of a fence. This "slow and steady progression", according to one farmer, was a source of pride for farmers and brought them a sense of achievement. One farmer expressed this idea by stating:

*I want to try things, and follow best practice and I want to be able to stand back and say look I built that. I mean it's an ego thing I suppose, but I want to look at that property and say yes, it's a better property than when I came here.*

Another farmer, when asked about an important memory of his life on the farm, answered: "the improvements [...] how it was changed from the 1970s until now, and all the work that's gone into it". The modifications made to the farm progressively became a reflection of the farmer's ability and value as a farmer.

Finally, one farmer explained that this process of creation/improvement of the farm was rather personal and two individuals on the same land would probably establish different farms: "we've sort of created it; in our own vision if you like [...] if someone else

was running it, I think it would look quite different". The creation/improvement of the farm was considered here as the expression of one person's views of how farming should be practised and therefore represented a unique identity, with its flaws and qualities. This farmer acknowledged that this vision had its flaws but insisted that it was his vision and it was what mattered to him: "It doesn't say that it's perfectly done by us but that is how we've done it". Another farmer hinted at the same thing by offering: "this farm has so many things wrong with it, because it grew organically".

For farmers, their farms represented: their ability to modify the landscape in order to create a better farm; a testimony to their work; and a statement of their vision of how farming should be practised (with its qualities and flaws). Their farms acted as physical proof of their competence and therefore contributed to their self-esteem.

#### **7.4.2 The "good farmer" as an environmental farmer**

The second element contributing to farmers' self-esteem was the adoption of environmentally friendly farming practices throughout their careers, and the progressive integration of environmental farming into their definitions of the 'good farmer'. Farmers seemed to move away from the traditional definition of the good farmer which focuses exclusively on having tidy fields, high yields and high quality livestock, in order to integrate environmental elements (Sutherland and Darnhofer, 2012).

Several farmers interviewed explained that they had progressively adopted more environmentally friendly farming practices during their careers. In particular, they talked about how they built dams in order to contain all the run-off from the farm, adopted minimum tillage, changed sprinklers to drips systems for irrigation, used compost and organic fertilisers (woodchip, horse and chicken manure, green waste, saw dust, mulch) and pheromone traps and predators for pest control. Several farmers adopted more comprehensive approaches to reduce their impacts on the environment, such as Integrated Pest Management (IPM) or organic farming. The adoption of new practices was initially driven, for many farmers, by external constraints such as legal requirements (farmers farming in the water catchment are subject to stricter conditions), economic advantage (organic fertilisers were available freely) and time constraints (no time to start a pesticide program). However, several farmers also explained that they did not change practices only because of external factors, but also because changing practices was something deemed suitable by them. For example, one farmer who started to use horse manure and wood chip as fertiliser and soil conditioner explained that he started doing so because the materials were cheap but also because he realised that the

practices of the preceding generations were damaging the soil:

*So that's a mixture of horse manure and wood chip and that's been a huge benefit to the farm because traditionally this land has been ploughed a lot, and the more it gets ploughed, the more the organic matter in the soil is broken down, the more carbon we lose, and then, so we recognized probably about 15 years ago, that we needed to build our organic matter again just, and that's been very beneficial.*

Similarly, several farmers who farmed in the water catchment explained that their location meant that they were compelled to change their practices, and in many cases they were happy to make those changes. Two farmers explained that being in the water catchment forced them to think more about their farming practices. The wife of one farmer stated that being in the water catchment "made [husband's name] think more about the farming practices, and then his interest in IPM".

Several farmers indicated that they had observed the positive effects of changed practices on their farms. For example, one farmer stated that using compost and manure built up the organic matter in the soil, which meant that the soil better held nutrients and water. This growing integration of environmental measures in the work of farmers often led them to consider the care for the environment as part of the definition of the 'good farmer'. One farmer explained that good farming was "being profitable, making money, producing quality crops and doing it in an as environmentally friendly way as you can". For another farmer, good farming was "trying to grow a good product, doing things right for the environment, looking after your soil, good quality water within the farm". What we can see here is that the environmental dimension of farming was integral to farmers' definitions of what farming is about.

Another indication that the environmental dimension of farming was integral farmers' self-esteem was the frequency with which farmers compared their practices to the practices of their parents and explained that their practices were more mindful of the environment, and that their goal was to preserve the land for the next generation. For example, one farmer said that: "farmers now want to give their land in a better condition than they have received it and with the knowledge that is sort of around there with, looking after your soils and bushland a lot better, there is a lot more farmers now that are enthusiastic in doing that".

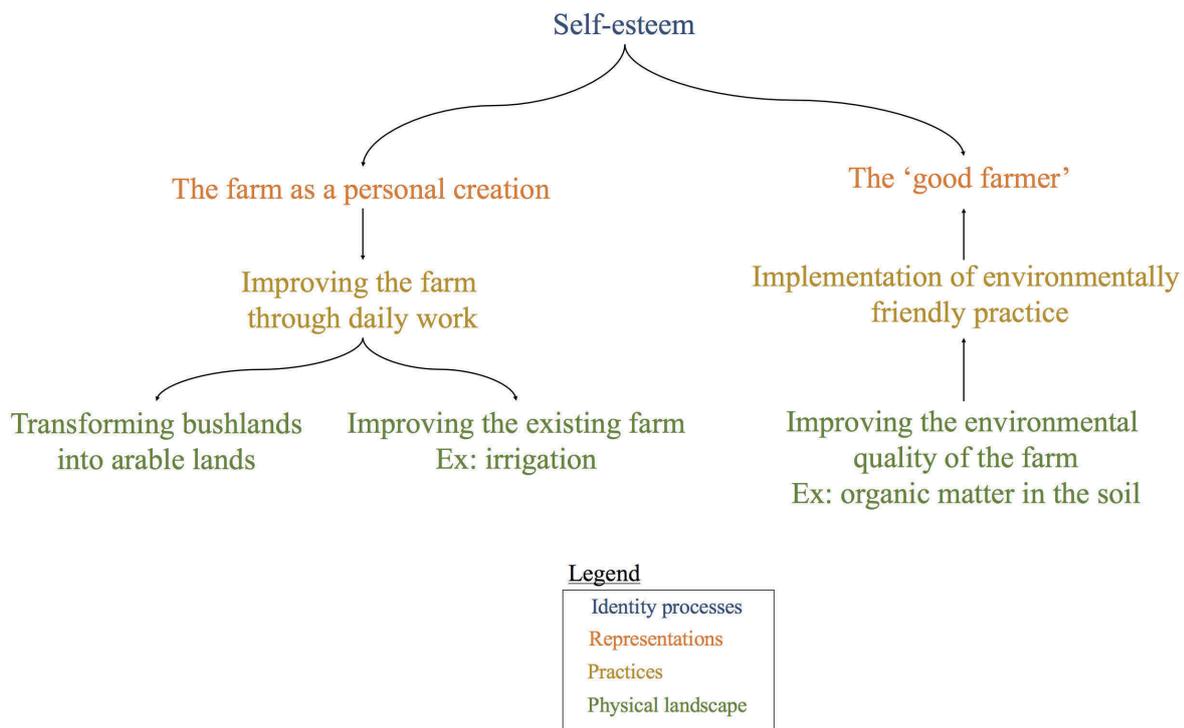
The environmental dimension of farming was therefore an integral part of farmers' discourse on farming, and was integrated into their definitions of 'good farming', and consequently affected their self-esteem. However, there were differences in terms of the degree of importance given to the environmental aspects of farming among the

farmers interviewed. Indeed, two farmers interviewed strongly advocated for the ideal of organic farming, embracing the 'ethos' of an organic farmer. Two other farmers explained that they were nearly farming organically but did not have organic certification. One farmer explained: "we've got an option any time, to go completely organic. That would lift our, what we get from our milk by 20/25% if we chose to go that way" but added that "the certification and the red tape of being an organic farmer is the only thing that is discouraging us to do it at this point". These two farmers were in an intermediate situation and were situated relatively closely to organic farming.

Finally, some farmers acknowledged the importance of taking environmental measures when possible, but were also using chemical solutions when they felt they were needed. One farmer explained: "where it is possible, I do, I use, I do the softest more environmentally friendly techniques, but realistically, for me to stay here and continue to make money, I can't do things that don't work, just for philosophical reasons". Another farmer explained that he tried to do things in an "environmentally friendly way", but he also stated that what was "environmentally friendly" was perceived differently by different people, and "some people would think, yeah you are an environmental vandal, others would say, yeah he is trying to do it". This farmer expressed the view that this intermediary position between organic and conventional meant that people may have different opinions about his practices. We can see here that the positive effects of these farmers' practices on the environment are debatable; however, it is important to note that the environment, and the modifications they made to the farm in order to make it more environmentally friendly, were integral to how they defined a 'good farmer', and this influenced their self-esteem.

Farming practices, whether they related to a farmer's ability to create or improve the landscape of the farm, or their ability to implement 'greener' farming practices, contributed to their self-esteem. The relationships of farmers to their farms are therefore created, not only through the connection between the family and the farm, but also through farmers' embedded farming practices, as described by Kuehne (2013). This type of place identity can be considered as a practice-based place identity, based on self-esteem. This practice-based place identity can be summarised using the politics of place/landscape identity framework (Figure 7.3): farmers create a place identity based on the identity principle of self-esteem, which is supported by a representation of the farm as the farmer's own creation and as a place to express his/her skills as a 'good farmer'. The representation of the farm as a farmer's own creation is reflected in practices which improve the farm through daily work. This representation is made visible in the

landscape of the farm through the transformation of bushland into arable land, or the improvement of the existing farm. Concerning the representation of the farm as a place where a farmer can express his skills as a ‘good farmer’, it is not the representation which determines the practices, but rather changes in practices (e.g. the implementation of environmentally friendly practices) and in the material landscape, in response to external constraints, which progressively influence farmers’ practices. These changes alter representations of what a ‘good farmer’ is by incorporating an environmental component.



**FIGURE 7.3:** Farmers’ place identity based on the concept of self-esteem.

In the next section, we will explore another aspect of the practice-based place identity. This aspect is built upon how farming practices and the lifestyle that comes from living on the farm, contribute to farmers’ feelings of self-efficacy. Self-efficacy can be defined as the way a specific environment, in this case a farm, can meet a person’s situational demands and enhance his/her ability to undertake certain tasks.

## 7.5 Practice-based place identity: self-efficacy

In our research, farm life seemed to enable farmers to develop their self-efficacy. The farmers interviewed often considered that the farm was meeting their situational

demands by offering them a challenge (in terms of farming activities) and a specific lifestyle.

### **7.5.1 Farming as a lifestyle**

Farmers often described how living on the farm was associated with a particular lifestyle. The two main aspects of this lifestyle were: the independence they had in the organisation of their time, and the intertwining of private and professional life which was made possible by the co-location of home and workplace.

Several farmers said that being a farmer gave them independence, which they defined as the ability to self-organise their time. They associated this independence with being "their own boss", and having the ability to assign themselves goals without external constraints other than the needs of the livestock or crops. What was considered freedom or independence by some was considered a burden, at times, by a couple of farmers, who felt that they were "tied down" by the farm, because they had to spend most of their time on it. We can therefore see that there exists a fine line between the independence and freedom offered by farming, and farming becoming a burden. However, all the farmers interviewed acknowledged that farming offered them a certain type of independence and freedom, and the burden of being tied to the farm was of lesser concern.

The second element of the farming lifestyle evoked by farmers was the intertwining of private and professional life, due to the co-location of the home and the farm. Farmers often described a blurring of the distinction between their private and professional lives. One farmer illustrated this point by saying that "the house is my home, and the farm is sort of an extension of my home". He went further by explaining that the farm had become part of his "whole life", illustrating the absence of distinction between a professional and a personal life. Two farmers had a more ambivalent view of the strong link between private and professional life: "you are at work all the time", which they felt could be an advantage because they stop work if they needed to, but they also saw it as a disadvantage because they were "never away from work". This intertwining of private and professional life was made more obvious when farmers were talking about the way they spent time with their families. This was particularly the case for female farmers. Indeed, several female farmers talked about farming as a way of life that enabled them to spend time with their families and raise their children while having a professional life. Indeed, one farmer stated:

*in my 20s I realised that I wanted to settle down, and become a mum and find a partner*

*and whatever, it made sense, because I can live where I work and work where I live, so that was a big thing. Another farmer made a similar observation: the fact that the children were young, I wanted to be home and it was a way of being at home and working at the same time.*

For several women, working on the farm was a way to reconcile their roles as a parent with their professional lives. This was not a discourse that was as present among males.

Farming was considered by farmers as a specific way of life that resided in the fact that the home and the farm were the same thing. This way of life offered them the freedom, on a day-to-day basis, to self-organise their time and to intertwine their professional and private lives.

### **7.5.2 Farming as a challenge**

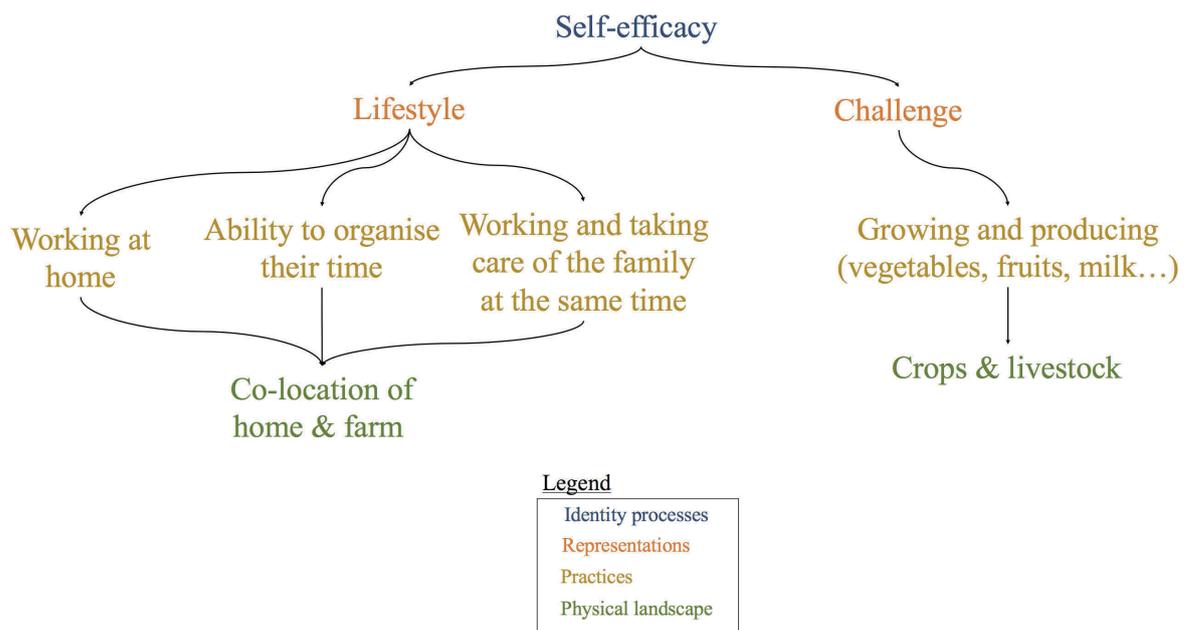
The second aspect of the 'self-efficacy' developed by farmers was a representation of farming as a 'challenge'. Indeed, the work done on the farm was considered by several farmers to be a way to show their self-efficacy through their ability to produce something out of "nothing" while overcoming various challenges (weather, weeds, bugs etc.), to breed better animals, or to cultivate better produce, and finally, to see the results of their work on a daily basis. One farmer also associated the idea of 'challenge' with the long-term project of addressing various farming-related environmental challenges.

Several farmers referred to the idea that farming was about the challenge of producing "something out of nothing" in spite of environmental challenges such as rabbits, weeds and bugs. Following the whole process from planting the seed to selling the end product was the main aspect of this challenge, and the most rewarding aspect of being a farmer. For other farmers, the challenge of farming consisted of the genetic improvement of livestock. One farmer, who was presenting cows at agricultural shows, explained that having the aim of breeding better cows was "kind of challenging", "which I think is important in anything that you do [...] otherwise you stop enjoying it if it becomes mundane and a routine". For this farmer animal breeding brought an element of challenge to farming: "rather than just coming in everyday and milking the cows and running the farm, it's nice to have a bigger thing to work toward". Finally, one farmer referred to the environmental challenges of this century, such as "water security and food security" and explained that the challenge for him was to contribute to addressing those environmental challenges by "changing the landscape in an environmental way".

What we can see here is that the 'challenge' of farming, whether to "produce some-

CHAPTER 7. THE ROLE OF PLACE IDENTITY IN DETERMINING FARMERS' VISION OF THE FUTURE OF THEIR FARMS

thing out of nothing", to breed better animals, or to answer to environmental challenges, is an important part of the attraction and interest of farming for the farmers interviewed. Self-efficacy can be considered as another element of a practice-based place identity. This practice-based place identity can be summarised using the place identity model (Figure 7.4 below): farmers create a place identity based on the identity principle of self-efficacy, which is supported by a representation of farming as a lifestyle and a challenge. The representation of farming as a lifestyle is reflected in practices by the ability of farmers to self-organise their work, and to have the feeling of working at home. This is made possible by the co-location, in the physical landscape, of the home and the farm. The representation of farming as a challenge is reflected in practices by farmers' ability to produce agricultural products and improve their quality. It is visible in the landscape through the presence of crops and/or livestock.



**FIGURE 7.4:** Farmers' place identity based on the concept of self-efficacy.

When considering the notion of continuity, we saw that there was a distinction between farmers on multi-generational farms, who had a strong place identity linked to the continuity between the farm and the family, and farmers on non-multigenerational farms, who had a weak place identity linked to the continuity between the farm and the family. This was aligned with the distinction between traditional and modern farmers. However, in the two last sections, we focused on the notion of self-esteem and self-efficacy, and we

saw that all farmers displayed an attachment to their farms stemming from their daily farming practices and the lifestyle that comes with the co-location of the home and the farm. Therefore, rather than distinguishing between farmers with a strong place identity and farmers with a weak place identity, we identify a range of types of place identities. Farmers who have been on the same land for several generations have a place identity linked to the land (continuity) and to their practices (self-efficacy and self-esteem), which we will call combined place identity, as it is a combination of land-based and practice-based place identity. Other farmers do not attach a strong significance to their connections with the land, but value their farming practices and lifestyle (self-efficacy and self-esteem) (Table 7.3). They therefore challenge the distinction between tradition and modernity as they take elements of both tradition (embedded farming practices and importance of the co-location of home and farm) and modernity (farm as a means to achieve personal goals, no expectations of generational succession). Even if they take elements of modernity, they maintain a form of attachment to their farms (farming practices and co-location of home and farm). We consider that these farmers have a practice-based place identity.

**TABLE 7.3:** Farmers' place identities: combined place identity and practice-based place identity.

| Combined place identity                                | Practice-based place identity   |
|--|---|
| Six farmers  | Nine farmers  |
| Farm as representing cross-generational identities     | Farm as a mean to achieve personal goals  |
| Expectations for children to take over the family farm | Farming as a personal goal- no expectations from children to take over the farm/ no intention of farming their whole life |
| Embedded farming practices                             | Embedded farming practices  |
| Co-location of home and farm (lifestyle)               | Co-location of home and farm (lifestyle)  |

In the next sections we will see how the distinction between farmers with a combined place identity and farmers with a practice-based place identity helps to explain farmers' adoption of adaptive strategies in the peri-urban, as well as their perceptions of the future of their farms.

## **7.6 Place identities and adaptive strategies**

In this section we will consider how farmers with a combined place identity adopt a wide number of adaptive strategies and are likely to have a positive view of the long-term future of their farms. We will then see how farmers who have a practice-based place identity are more likely to adopt less adaptive strategies and to have a short-term view of the future of their farms, for a variety of reasons that we will explore.

### **7.6.1 Combined place identity and adaptive strategies**

As seen previously, some of the farmers on multi-generational farms tend to maintain elements of the farm which are a testimony of the work of the past generations. However, this practice cannot be associated with a form of inertia or opposition to change. On the contrary, they seem to be ready to make considerable change in their practices, as well as in the appearances of their properties, in order to make the farm economically viable while retaining meaningful elements of the farm's heritage. Here, we will see how farmers on multi-generational farms have already modified, or are considering modifying, their farming operations in order to positively adapt to farming in a peri-urban context. We will also see how most of these farmers embed their adaptive strategies within a narrative of the desire to maintain the continuity between the farm and the family. For some of them, this leads to changes to their occupational identities. Finally, we will see how this has led them to develop positive visions of the future of their farms in a peri-urban context.

#### **7.6.1.1 Adaptive strategies**

Five farmers out of six had implemented a wide variety of positive adaptive strategies identified in Section 7.1 and one farmer was considering the opportunities for his children to diversify the activities on the farm in order to maintain its economic viability. Only one farmer coupled the adoption of positive adaptive strategies with the adoption of a negative one.

Three farmers diversified their farming activities and/or adopted agri-environmental practices: one farmer was participating in a biodiversity offset scheme (agri-environmental practices), in which he received money in exchange for protecting the bushland on his property and renounced his development rights. This same farmer also organised events on the farm such as music festivals, and authorised the use of his farm as a location for

movie production (diversification in recreational services). A second farmer started a milk processing factory as an additional enterprise to his dairy farm, whereas another farmer planted Christmas trees in addition to the main farming activity and engaged in crop diversification and agritourism. Finally, another farmer adopted organic farming.

Another strategy used by two of the six farmers was the intensification of their activities. One farmer used intensification in addition to other adaptive strategies, whereas the other focused only on intensification. One dairy farmer explained that he increased the productivity of his farm as a consequence of a change to his farming practices: he increased calving frequency, introduced calves to the dairy earlier, and lengthened each cow's lactation. Another farmer intensified the production on her orchard by reducing the height of the trees and increasing their population densities on the land. In addition, other adaptive strategies were utilised by those farmers, such as the substitution of family labour for hired labour, the addition of non-traditional business activity (e.g. farmers' markets instead of wholesale markets) and an increase in the size of the farm through the leasing of additional land. Only one farmer adopted a negative adaptation strategy, alongside positive adaptations strategies, by selling some of his land for subdivision. However, he negotiated to have access to the undeveloped portion of the land he sold to run cattle, meaning that he did not lose access to the land for farming purposes.

In some cases, the adoption of positive adaptive strategies induced considerable changes in the management of the land and consequently, the appearance of the physical landscape. The more obvious case seems to be the farmer who adopted the biodiversity offset scheme. He explained that before his participation in the scheme, he tended to keep the trees which were good fencing timber, but cleared most of the mid-storey vegetation, without making distinctions between native and exotic vegetation, in order to grow grass for grazing. Within the scheme he now cannot use that land for grazing purposes unless it favours the native vegetation. Instead, he concentrates on the development of native trees and mid-storey vegetation. The use and practices on this portion of land have therefore considerably changed, going from clearing for agricultural purposes (grazing), to conserving native vegetation.

In conclusion, farmers on multi-generational farms make significant changes to their farming practices (through adaptive strategies), with some of them considerably modifying the landscape of their farms, as well as their daily practices. In the next section we will see how, for most farmers, the adoption of those various adaptive strategies is linked to their discourse on their desire to maintain the connection between the land and the family.

### 7.6.1.2 Continuity and adaptive strategies

The decision to implement adaptive strategies is often linked, in farmers' discourse, to the desire to secure the future of the farm and therefore maintain the connection between the farm and the family. This was particularly obvious in the case of the dairy farmer who participated in the biodiversity offset scheme. He articulated a narrative around how the modification of his practices, through the adoption of the biodiversity offset scheme was a "good option" considering his "emotional attachment to the land" because it enabled him to retain ownership of the farm in order to pass it on to the next generation. This farmer explained that his dairy farm was not making enough profit, and the family had the choice to either subdivide the land for housing or participate in biodiversity conservation to secure an additional income stream. The option of the biodiversity offset scheme was chosen because it enabled them to improve profitability and retain the farm:

*It's a very exciting scheme because up until then we really had the option of really not making much money out of farming, [...] if we'd sold and subdivide it then there would be a huge amount of money, more than we need, and so the bio-banking is giving us a sort of middle course: more money than we would get from farming but not as much as we get from subdivision. But it has the advantage of meaning that we continue to live here and continue to control the place.*

The biodiversity offset scheme not only enabled him and his wife to keep the farm for their lifetimes, but it would also enable him to transfer it to the next generation: "It had firmed up our futures, being able to stay here for future generations." This farmer clearly articulated the idea that the adoption of bio-banking provided additional income which enabled him to retain ownership of the farm, and thereby to escape the other, more obvious option of subdivision for development. The aspiration to keep the farm, to continue to live on it and transfer it to the next generation was a consideration in the decision-making process for adopting bio-banking.

For most farmers working on multi-generational land, the desire to maintain the farm was one of the drivers for the adoption of new practices. For example, when asked if he would like to farm somewhere else, one farmer who established a milk processing factory explained: "Just don't want, I don't have to. You know, I live 100 meters from where I was born, I just don't want to move away, [I want to] stay here because of the income out of the factory, you know the dairy, you know the whole lot of it is profitable, quite profitable". Here we can also see that creating the milk factory was also a way to maintain viability,

stay on the farm and transfer it to his children, who already worked on the farm. Another farmer, whose children were still young, explained that if, hypothetically, she was able to acquire additional land, the adaptive strategies she had adopted had the potential to lead to an expansion of the farming activities "not just for myself but maybe for my children". We can see here that the adaptive strategies adopted by farmers often aim at keeping the farm in the family and increasing its viability in order to pass it on to the next generation. However, this is not always the case: one farmer adopted adaptive strategies for personal reasons, and his children were already farming on other farms and therefore had no intention of taking over the farm.

We saw earlier that many factors other than the desire to keep the farm in the family can play a role in the transfer of the farm to the next generation, and one important element was the attitude of the next generation to farming. Several farmers acknowledged that in addition to the desire to keep the farm, the question of whether their children wanted to take over the farm was also a determinant in their willingness to adopt adaptive strategies. For one farmer the adoption of adaptive strategies enabled him to transfer the farm to the next generation, but he also acknowledged that the fact that his children were "all very keen on the property" had influenced his decision. Another farmer explained that if he was to transfer the land to the next generation he needed the farm to remain viable, and therefore he had to adopt adaptive strategies. But he also explained that the "input" of the "future generation" was also essential to remain viable. Therefore, the desire of the children to take over the farm was essential to maintaining its viability. Finally, a farmer who had not, so far, implemented major changes to his farming practices, and did not know if his children would return to the farm, explained that if they were to come back, they would have to make important changes on the farm that he could not implement himself. What we can see here is that the combination of place identity, the adoption of new practices (adaptive strategies) and the intentions of children in regard to the farm are interlinked. Indeed, the desire of children to stay on the property encouraged some farmers to adopt new practices, but the adoption of new practices was also influenced by the fact that the children were interested in taking over the farm.

### **7.6.1.3 Modification of the occupational identity**

The adoption of new practices led several of the farmers in multi-generational farms to progressively redefine their occupational identities. Biodiversity offsets, direct sale of produce and the creation of a milk processing factory induced changes in these

farmers' occupational identities.

For example, the dairy farmer involved in biodiversity offset explained that the conservation of native bushland became progressively prioritised over dairy production: "we spend a lot of time now, doing bushland regeneration which is time that we would have spent farming so farming has sort of dropped lower in priority". This emphasis on conservation in daily practices led this farmer to consider conservation activities as part of a farmer's work. For this farmer "farmers are the best people, and I think the bio-banking scheme has shown that farmers are the best [...] to look after the bushland", because they are "there on the job, you can get out and count the birds, or plant some reeds or look after the ecosystem better than somebody [...] from a local town." For this farmer, conservation work became a part of his daily activity, and was integrated into his representation of a farmer's role. Therefore, a farmer is not only a producer, but also a conservationist.

Another farmer who employed direct marketing of her produce rather than traditional wholesale market channels also broadened her occupational identity. Her parents used to sell their produce through the wholesale markets and had little direct interaction with their consumers. She explained that the decision to go to farmers' markets meant that she marketed her own produce and was able to educate consumers about these products. She explained that:

*[You] probably spend 50% of your time, when you are out there marketing, talking to people about how to choose a nice piece of fruit when it's ripe, how to prepare, or how to eat, what we are supposed to use, as much as you do actually selling it.*

These activities progressively became part of the conception she had of farming. She illustrated this last point by saying: "you farm not only what you are growing but you farm your relationships with the customers as well".

A final example is the farmer who established a milk processing factory. He explained that the milk factory was created partially because: "I wanted to move away from it [dairying] and do more management", because "I was starting to get bored with it". He explained that he did not "have to milk every day" anymore, and defined himself as a "company manager sort of thing, that's all I do". He now described the dairy as a "good marketing tool" for the milk processing factory. The management aspect of his work was clearly dominant, and integrated into his occupational identity.

The implementation of substantial adaptive strategies in order to maintain the economic viability of the farm, accompanied, for some farmers, by a broadening of their occupational identity, shows that the farmers on multi-generational farms were ready to

modify their practices, the appearance of their farms, and their occupational identities in order to maintain their presence on the land. We can summarise this using the politics of place/landscape identity framework: farmers implemented changes in practices, which were progressively (for some) modifying their representation of what a farmer is - leading to a broadening of their occupational identity - in order to maintain the identity principles of continuity, that is to say the connection between farm and family.

### **7.6.1.4 A positive vision of the future of the farm in a peri-urban context**

The desire to maintain continuity between the farm and the family, the adoption of positive adaptive measures, the existence of succession planning strategies, and the broadening of their occupational identity often led farmers on multi-generational farms to envision a positive future for their farms in the peri-urban context, although this positive vision was in some cases challenged by the degree of uncertainty that comes with living in a peri-urban area.

Those farmers often had a positive view of the future of their operations. Two farmers interviewed described the farm and its activities as "expanding and increasing" and "going forward". One farmer explained that "many opportunities [...] have come up in the last 20 or 30 years" and said that "the future is pretty good" whereas another explained that her "marketing network is growing and the opportunities are growing there for me". They also developed a relatively positive vision of the peri-urban and saw several potential advantages to living in a peri-urban environment. For example, one farmer explained that the only thing that might force her out would be to "be stuck as a farm, as an island in the middle of a housing development", but she quickly qualified her statement by explaining that being surrounded by housing developments could have its advantages "because they've all got to eat, and I've got food, so even that may not be enough to make me leave" and explained that "you can turn it [urban sprawl] to your advantage if you decide to". She added that if one day she could not produce enough to stay viable only as a farm, she would adapt: "There is opportunities there if I'm flexible enough to take them up, look at doing workshops or farm tours or school groups, I don't have to just have my income simply by growing apples and selling them, I can have my income as an [...] a tourism thing or an education as well". For this farmer, urban sprawl, even if it was something she disapproved of, might provide new opportunities in the future. Other farmers adopted a similar point of view by stressing the idea that the increasing population in and around Sydney was providing them with new markets for their produce. For example, one farmer who produced hay explained that the "small

acreages blocks [...] lifestyle blocks, where they might run two or three horses on five acres", as well as the racehorse resting stables, had progressively become an outlet for their hay production, which had increased in the last 20 years. Finally, some farmers saw the possibility (identified in Chapter 6) of creating synergies between city and country by recycling grey water for irrigation. We can see here that these farmers considered the future of their farms positively and saw the peri-urban environment as offering potential opportunities.

This positive view of the future of the farm and the peri-urban context was occasionally challenged by some of the farmers interviewed. For instance, two dairy farmers explained that they saw three options for the future. The first one was to stay on the farm, and change activities by, for example establishing an agritourism enterprise, or lease more land, in order to remain viable. The second option was to buy cheaper land in another location, where they could grow feed for their animals, or start a new dairy altogether, and keep the land in the Shire to live on. For one of those farmers, a final option was to sell the land and move the whole farm further away from the city. We can see here that some of the farmers on multi-generational farms did not see the future as completely secure in their area, and were contemplating moving. One of these farmers explained that one of the reasons that could explain this vision of the future was that there was a lot of uncertainty regarding the evolution of the peri-urban environment:

*what the market will do, what the interest rates will do, what the [...] market will do, government bodies will do to us, as in, will they release the property next to us for high density housing or you know, for freeway or a [...] or whatever, shopping centre, who knows, we don't know what might happen there" and continues by saying that "it's inevitable that this land will probably be swallowed up by some sort of [...] development, I guess.*

For this farmer, whose adaptive strategies were to intensify his production and lease land to retain farm viability, the future of the farm in the long term was not secure. He explained that he had a "shorter term view" than what he would have if he was living in a completely rural environment. However, even if some farmers considered moving further away as an option because of the climate of uncertainty they experienced in the peri-urban, their first option remained trying adapt to the conditions in the peri-urban in order to retain their farms. This is illustrated by the fact that one of the two farmers who occasionally considered moving further away explained that he felt a moral obligation to maintain the farm on behalf of his family members. Therefore, moving further away did not seem to be the predominant option, and was counterbalanced by the desire or moral responsibility to maintain the connection between the family and the farm.

What we can see here is that farmers with a combined place identity (a land and practice-based place identity) often adopted what could be considered transformative adaptations. In some farms this involved a single major change, such as a shift in focus from dairying to biodiversity conservation or milk-processing. In other cases, it involved the addition of a variety of smaller changes: a plantation of Christmas trees, intensification, crop-diversification, marketing of produce at farmers' markets, and replacement of hired labour with family work. However, no matter the nature of the changes, the result was that the adaptive strategies they adopted were long-term adaptations which in some cases triggered deep changes in the system (the adoption of biodiversity conservation or milk processing) and had a profound effect on the system (a change in the management of the farm, or an increase in the long-term viability of the farm). Finally, they also triggered cultural changes because they modified aspects of some farmers' occupational identity. It is important to consider, nonetheless, that there were different degrees of adoption of adaptive strategies among farmers with a land-based place identity, and not all of them implemented radical changes. For example, one farmer focused mostly on intensifying his operation and leasing additional lands for economies of scale. However, we can see here that there appeared to be a tendency among farmers with a land-based place identity to adopt a number of relatively important adaptive strategies, and to embed them in a narrative about the connection between the farm and the family. We can also see that farmers with a combined place identity have, in some cases, children who are predisposed to taking over the farm. This influenced their decision to adopt adaptive strategies. Finally, we can see that these farmers often develop a positive view of the future of their farms in a peri-urban context.

These findings again challenge the distinction between tradition and modernity as farmers on multi-generational farms could be considered, until now, to be traditional farmers (with the farm representing cross-generational identities, expectations for children to take over the family farm, embedded farming practices, and co-location of home and farm). They could therefore be perceived as less likely to adapt to peri-urban pressures. However, it is apparent that they actually adapted to these pressures by moving beyond a focus on productive activities and broadening their occupational identity, which is a characteristic of modern farmers.

### **7.6.2 Practice-based place identity and adaptive strategies**

Farmers with practice-based place identities (nine farmers on seven farms) developed fewer adaptive strategies than farmers with combined place identities. For

these farmers, adaptive strategies seemed to be perceived as actions aimed at enhancing the economic viability of the farms in the short term. The reasons for this relatively short-term view varied according to the farmers' representations of farming: (1) Some of the farmers interviewed had been farming for several generations, or had been exposed to farming for several generations, but had moved to new areas of land several times during their lives, or they had bought land to farm after pursuing another profession for several years (we will call them the landowners). These farmers saw farming as a career, a passion and a lifestyle, but had negative visions of the futures of their farms in the peri-urban context. They also did not necessarily value the connection between the family and the farm and did not expect (or even discouraged) their children to take over the farm. (2) Other farmers with a practice-based place identity were often farmers who leased land and considered farming to be a personal challenge, and did not necessarily see it as a lifelong career (we will call them the lessees). They did not necessarily plan to continue farming for the rest of their careers, and had little expectation that their children would take over the farm, but they had a positive vision of the opportunities the peri-urban location brought to them.

#### **7.6.2.1 Adaptive strategies**

Farmers with practice-based place identities often implemented a smaller range of positive adaptive strategies than farmers with a combined place identity. They mostly adopted one adaptive strategy: non-traditional business activities, such as farmers' markets (four farms out of seven). One farmer developed more adaptive strategies, including agritourism and organic farming, while a couple referred to the possibility of adopting new positive adaptive strategies in the future, including the opening of a farm shop, involvement in agritourism, the leasing of additional land and intensification of their operations by practising double or triple cropping. One farmer also explained that his wife was working off farm (a change in the economic centrality) which is difficult to categorise as either a positive or a negative adaptive strategy. Alongside positive adaptive strategies, several farmers in this group adopted negative strategies. Two farms out of seven had either reduced the portion of the land that was farmed and progressively disinvested or had sold a part of their land. Finally, two farmers had not yet adopted positive or negative adaptive strategies. Unlike the farmers on multi-generational farms (combined place identity), for the farmers with only a practice-based place identity the adoption of adaptive strategies was not embedded in a narrative based on the connection to the land, or an aspiration to maintain the continuity from one generation to the next.

Rather, these adaptive strategies were often linked to the idea of making the farm viable in the short term. This was the case even for the farmer who adopted more adaptive strategies (organic farming practices and agritourism).

### 7.6.2.2 Land owners who see farming as an individual passion

The farmers who owned their land and saw farming as a career (6 farmers in 4 farms) did not report a willingness to keep the land for the next generation. Instead, they talked about their attachment to farming practices and the lifestyle that farming provided, even if it was not lucrative. One farmer said: "I'm not getting a good return to capital on it; you know what I'm saying that's a lifestyle as much as anything".

When discussing the attachment and even passion for farming practices two farmers explained:

*This farm on its own shouldn't exist as a farm. That's from an economic perspective, it is not sustainable financially [...] [I] do it because I'm passionate about growing food, I like the thought of growing food for people, of doing something that is a good thing to do, with inverted commas.*

*I like doing what I'm doing and then, okay if I wasn't passionate about what I was doing, you wouldn't do it, for the amount of work that you put into it and the money that you make, if I wasn't passionate, I wouldn't be here.*

These farmers were explaining that their reasons for farming stemmed from their passion for it, and their enjoyment of the lifestyle rather than the transmission of the farm from one generation to the next. These farmers therefore focused mostly on their personal relationships to farming, and never referred to the idea of transferring the farm to the next generation. Most of the farmers interviewed explained that they did not expect or even want their children to take over the farm and they often had a negative perception of the future of farming, particularly its lack of economic viability:

*When I first started there wasn't as much pressure on farmers than what there is now. There is a lot more paperwork involved, lot more documentation, the costs are higher, [...] higher inputs low returns, the returns are the same, the returns haven't improved, so we are growing up more stuff [...] probably making less money.*

In three farms out of four, the farmers were certain that their children or grandchildren would not take over the farm. The reasons they identified were that there was "no money" in farming, that their children "understand there is no future here for them",

that "you put too many hours in", and that the pressure of the complaints of residential neighbours was too high, and their children wanted to "come home and not to worry about what's outside the door. And you know, home is home, home is not the workplace". Only one farmer believed there was a possibility that the farm might be taken over by one of his children, but this was just a possibility. As explained earlier, the attachment to the connection between the farm and the family was not the only determinant of the transfer of the farm to the next generation, and the willingness of children to take over the farm also played an important role. One farmer confirmed this view by explaining that knowing that his children would not take over the farm discouraged him from investing in the farm and making substantial changes, whereas one couple explained that if their son decided to come back to the farm (and if they solved some private issues) they would start thinking about the adoption of new adaptive strategies, such as the leasing of additional lands.

What we see here is that farmers with a practice-based place identity adopted less positive and more negative adaptive strategies than farmers with a combined place identity. One factor that could explain this is that these farmers valued the lifestyle farming offered more than they valued the idea of keeping the farm in the family. Moreover, they did not expect their children to continue farming and their children were not always keen on taking over the farm. These elements had the potential to influence their adoption of adaptive strategies, as they needed to enhance the short-term viability of their farms, rather than to think about their long-term viability for future generations. In addition, the negative vision these farmers had of the future of farming in the peri-urban might also have influenced their uptake of new adaptive strategies. We could also think, inversely, that it is the negative vision of the future of farming and the absence of a desire for their children to take over the farm which made them renounce the idea of passing the farm on to the next generation and focus instead on their own passion for farming, resulting in the adoption of less adaptive strategies.

### **7.6.2.3 Lessees who see farming as one opportunity among others**

Farmers who leased land and considered farming as one opportunity among many describe farming as an activity that enables them to achieve their personal goals, and challenge themselves. They explained that once they would achieve this goal they would be ready to leave their current property or leave farming altogether. Indeed, one farmer explained that he would need ten years "to do the things that I need to do", to achieve what he wanted to achieve on his land, and that he would then move on to the next

project. He said: "I'm not going to retire [on this land] - this is just a journey". The land was therefore a means of achieving his personal goals rather than an end in itself. After achieving his goals, he would move on to the next project. Another farmer expressed a similar view, explaining that farming was on her partner's "bucket list" and that "he really wanted that challenge of, can I run a farm successfully on my own?", but "it's not something that he is tied to for the rest of his life". Furthermore, she explained that they would farm for ten years and then re-evaluate their situation to see if farming still satisfied them, or if they wanted to move on and do something else. Here, we can see that for this couple also, farming was a personal project and the aim was to challenge themselves and achieve personal goals before moving on to the next project. Adaptive strategies were perceived as a way of making farming profitable. They enabled farmers to continue farming and achieve personal goals, before potentially leaving the farm or farming altogether.

These farmers obviously did not expect their children to take over their farms and their discourse on adaptive strategies was therefore not embedded in a broader discourse on the transmission of the farm to the next generation. However, unlike the farmers who saw farming as a career, these farmers perceived the peri-urban positively for the lifestyle choices it offered (such as not being isolated) and its economic opportunities (farmers' markets, agritourism etc.).

## 7.7 Synthesis

In this chapter we saw that farmers' views of the future of the future of their farms and their adoption of adaptive strategies were strongly linked to the nature of their place identity.

Farmers with a combined place identity often developed transformative adaptive strategies, such as diversifying their activity or adopting agri-environmental practices (e.g. a biodiversity offset scheme, diversification into recreational services, a plantation of Christmas trees, crop-diversification, creating a milk processing factory), intensification, using family labour instead of hired labour, introducing non-traditional business activities (e.g. farmers' markets) and leasing additional land. These adaptive strategies are considered to be transformative because: they were based on long-term goals; they involved deep changes to the system with profound effects on it, including an increase in the long-term viability of the farm; and they triggered cultural changes by modifying

## CHAPTER 7. THE ROLE OF PLACE IDENTITY IN DETERMINING FARMERS' VISION OF THE FUTURE OF THEIR FARMS

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some farmers' occupational identities. In addition, they also helped farmers develop a positive vision of the future of their farms based on the idea that their farms were viable and sometimes even expanding, even though some of them acknowledged that the pressures endured in the peri-urban prevented them from thinking in terms of very long time scales.

In contrast, farmers with a practice-based place identity often developed incremental adaptive strategies. The most common strategy they adopted was participation in farmers' markets. These strategies were mostly seen by farmers as short-term measures which responded to external drivers of change (e.g. lack of viability of agricultural activities), which is why they can be considered to be incremental.

The reason why farmers with a combined place identity developed transformative adaptive strategies seems to be that they placed value on the continued involvement of their families with their land and they had children who were interested in taking over the farm. These farmers were therefore ready to make substantial changes to their activities in order to keep the connection between land and family. This resulted in their having positive views of the futures of their farms in a peri-urban context.

In contrast, farmers with a practice-based place identity seemed to place more value on the day-to-day practice of farming and the lifestyle it offered rather than on the connection between the land and the family. Moreover, they generally did not wish their children to take over the farm, or did not plan to farm during their whole career. This might partially explain why they implemented short-term incremental adaptive strategies which enabled them to keep their farms viable in the short-term, rather than long-term transformative adaptation strategies to ensure the transfer of the farm to the next generation. Some farmers with practice-based identities had very negative visions of the future of their farms, and of farming more generally in the peri-urban context. This negative vision of the future might also have contributed in making them renounce the idea of farm succession and focus on their own passion for farming. Other farmers viewed the peri-urban environment positively, as an area of opportunity (ability to develop agritourism and short food supply chains). However, these farmers did not plan on farming in the peri-urban for the rest of their careers, and some of them expected to potentially quit farming altogether.

The next question that needs to be answered is whether the adaptive strategies adopted by farmers at the farm-scale could constitute indications of an emergent place identity at the scale of the Shire. What we saw in this chapter is that most of the farmers interviewed adopted adaptive strategies, whether incremental or transformative (Béné

et al., 2012; Park et al., 2012; Rickards and Howden, 2012). Most of the adaptive strategies adopted by farmers can be placed in the context of the emergence of a multifunctional countryside, where the focuses of farmers move away from purely productive outcomes to enlarge the range of activities they perform (Renting et al., 2009; van der Ploeg and Roep, 2003). Indeed, we saw that both farmers with a combined and a practice-based place identity adopted adaptive strategies that went beyond productive uses in order to integrate several other functions (Renting et al., 2009). Several farmers integrated other activities into their operations, such as conservation work (a biodiversity offset scheme), a Christmas tree plantation, a milk processing factory and agritourism, whereas others expanded their activities by marketing and selling their produce at farmers' markets. The adoption of those new activities or practices can be considered as an indication of an emergent place identity where the roles of farmers and farming activities were recast positively, as they indicated that farming was considered to be an economically viable activity. This had the potential to challenge the contention that farming was a non-viable pursuit, a view that was used to justify the promotion of housing developments instead of the protection of agricultural lands. It could also enable farmers to create a response to the neoliberal agricultural policies which undermine their economic viability. However, the development of this multi-functionality seems to be somewhat fragile, as farmers who have a practice-based place identity only implement short-term incremental adaptive strategies. This means that the farms of farmers with a practice-based place identity will probably cease to exist in the near future, and this will cast doubt on the durability of the multifunctional project in Wollondilly Shire. We will focus on the creation of a multi-functional emergent place identity, and on the barriers to the creation of such a place identity, and its limitations, in the discussion chapter.



## DISCUSSION

**T**his study has provided four main findings:

First, we identified two hegemonic place identities, operating in different areas of the Wollondilly Shire. They are based on different visions of what the peri-urban landscape should be like (city–country divide vs. hybridisation of the peri-urban landscape), but both contribute – sometimes inadvertently – to the marginalisation of farming in the physical landscape of the Shire.

Secondly, we observed that farmers developed a resistant place identity based on their feelings of distinctiveness with respect to non-farming landowners. This place identity does not influence wider landscape changes, as farmers, due to a weak bridging and bonding social capital (Woolcock, 2000), do not engage in collective actions aimed at influencing the development of the Shire, and putting farming activities and farmlands at the forefront of the political debate.

Thirdly, we found that the arrangements farmers make in the peri-urban, may indicate the possibility of an emergent (multi-functional) place identity. Such arrangements have the potential to bring about renegotiation of the city–country relationship and also the relationship between farmers and other stakeholders, while enhancing the viability of the farmers’ operations. This could lead to a shift in the representation of farming in the peri-urban and eventually to an emergent place identity.

Finally, we found that farmers’ place identities (developed at the farm scale through their relationships to their farms) were influencing their visions of the futures of their farms, and the adoption of adaptive strategies fostering the emergence of a multi-

functional peri-urban environment. However, we also saw that the emergence of this multi-functional place identity in the long term was weakened by the fact that farmers with a practice-based place identity still plan to exit farming.

In the first part of this discussion we focus on identifying how the hegemonic and resistant place identities identified in the study echo and differ from the results of other studies on the peri-urban, in order to identify what new knowledge they reveal about the peri-urban. We then demonstrate how arrangements and adaptive strategies point toward an emergent place identity. Next, we focus on the potential limitations or pitfalls of this emergent place identity, and the actions that might need to be taken to address them. In the second part of our discussion, we centre our reflection on how the use of a politics of place/landscape identity framework, in which place identity is considered as a multi-dimensional concept (incorporating the material landscape, practices, representations and identity), enables us to better understand the development of peri-urban environments, as well as farmers' actions and decisions.

## **8.1 Politics of place in the literature: the city–country divide, and the consumption and production landscape**

In the existing literature on the politics of place in peri-urban areas, several elements identified in our study are present. First, the objective of a sharp separation between the city and the country, which characterises the first dominant place identity in the Shire, has been pursued by planners all over the world (Cadieux, 2008; Foley and Scott, 2014; Yokohari et al., 2000). In several cases, the distinction between city and country is described as being pursued by planners on the basis of an aesthetic assessment of the rural landscape, meaning that the planners privilege visual assessment over productive uses (Foley and Scott, 2014; Scott, 2008). In these cases, a distinction is often made between planners who value the idea of a rural aesthetic, and the rest of the population ("lay people") who value the landscape as a lived physical and social space, and consequently consider the sharp separation between city and country as anti-rural (Foley and Scott, 2014; Scott, 2008). This distinction between planners and lay people has also been described as an opposition between an ideal landscape and the landscape of practices (Cadieux et al., 2013). One of the dimensions of the politics of place in the peri-urban is therefore based on a disparity between the priorities of planners,

who focus on aesthetics, and the priorities of lay people, who focus on the lived space. These antagonistic representations of the countryside often produce different ideas of the type of development that is considered suitable in the peri-urban countryside. Indeed, whereas planners advocate for a separation between city and country, lay people often defend the idea of scattered housing development throughout the countryside, or at least the idea of the disappearance of a rigid "urban fence" (Cadieux, 2008, p. 182) (Foley and Scott, 2014).

Another aspect of the politics of place often described in the literature is the competition between productive and consumptive uses of the land in the peri-urban environment, due to amenity migrations to the countryside by urbanites (Laliberte, 2012; Tonts and Greive, 2002). Amenity migrants are often described as perceiving the countryside as an idyllic escape from the city. They are also considered as de-emphasising the productive use of the landscape because they use the land primarily for outdoor recreation and residential uses (Abrams and Gosnell, 2012). It is often observed that amenity migrants assess the quality of the environment in terms of its aesthetic attributes (Laliberte, 2012; Walker and Fortmann, 2003). For this reason, they are often depicted as looking for an aesthetic of rurality while rejecting and complaining about farming activities (Abrams and Gosnell, 2012; Cadieux et al., 2013; Laliberte, 2012).

What we can see here is that the literature on the politics of place in peri-urban areas seems to put an emphasis on two dichotomies. The first is a dichotomy between planners defending a city–country distinction and enhancing the aesthetic dimension of the countryside, and lay people defending a lived landscape with housing developments scattered through it. The second is a dichotomy between the consumptive use of the landscape promoted by amenity migrants, and the productive use of the landscape promoted by farmers and other stakeholders with a resource-based activity.

## **8.2 Politics of place identity in Wollondilly Shire**

Our study has points of convergence and divergence with the literature presented above. Our first observation is that the two hegemonic place identities and the resistant place identity identified in Wollondilly Shire can be associated, at first glance, with most of the elements of the politics of place identified in the literature. Indeed, the hegemonic identity defended by the local council follows the idea of the city–country divide, whereas the second hegemonic place identity is based on the hybridisation of the rural landscape (scattered developments in the countryside). And farmers' resistant

place identity is based on the opposition of landscapes of consumption to landscape of production. However, we will see in the next paragraph that some aspects of our findings align with the literature, whereas others are significantly different.

### **8.2.1 Hegemonic and resistant place identities**

The first hegemonic place identity was developed in planning documents and seems to align with the literature. Indeed, the planning documents in the Wollondilly Shire defend the idea of a distinction between the city and the country, and Council policies are based on the assumption that this distinction should enable the maintenance of "rural living". However, the difference between the findings of this research and those in the literature is that the city–country divide is used in Wollondilly Shire policies, not simply to preserve the aesthetic character of the area, but also to create an inclusive countryside able to accommodate both housing development and the preservation of the natural and agricultural landscapes. In this conceptualisation, working agricultural landscapes (and therefore lived landscapes) are considered as important, and the emphasis on the aesthetics of the landscape does not seem to be dominating, which is a point of difference between this research and previous research. The gap between the Wollondilly Shire and the cases presented in the literature seems to widen even more when looking at planning practices (in this case, rezoning proposals). In the rezoning proposals, it is made obvious that the council's inclusive representation of the countryside is used by landowners in rezoning proposals to promote housing development at the edges of towns and villages by depicting housing as 'in place' while characterising farming as 'out of place' and illegitimate. To do so, housing is often described as belonging to the landscape and as aesthetically acceptable, while agricultural lands are described as non-viable, unproductive and a potential source of conflicts. Here, we can see that in planning practices, the argument of aesthetics is not used, as it is in the existing literature, to protect the aesthetic aspects of the natural and cultivated landscapes, but rather to justify the promotion of housing at the edges of towns and villages, while depicting cultivated landscapes negatively.

The second dominant place identity, defended by some inhabitants of the area in submissions to rezoning proposals, is based on the idea that developing housing around existing settlements contributes to increase the suburban appearance of the area, thereby destroying its rural feel. In opposition to the "rural living" concept based on a city–country divide that is put forward by the council, they put forward an idea of "rural living" founded on the idea of low density residential housing scattered through the

rural landscape of the Shire. As seen above, the opposition between the city–country divide model and the low intensity development throughout the landscape model has been noted in the literature. The reasons put forward to explain this opposition is that planners focus on the aesthetics and want to maintain a city–country divide, whereas lay people favour the lived landscape and prefer scattered low intensity development. In our study, we found that the inhabitants supporting scattered low intensity development were not protecting the lived landscape, but rather the aesthetics of the landscape. Indeed, they often explained that lower density development corresponded to the rural character of the area, whereas denser housing development at the edges of towns and villages would increase the suburban appearance of the area. It appeared that, rather than being aligned with the local population’s defence of the lived place, the inhabitants who raised concerns in submissions to the rezoning applications, seemed to correspond more to the profile of amenity migrants who moved to the area in order to live in a rural environment. It appeared that, to them, the aesthetics of the landscape was the most important consideration, while productive activities were seen as a nuisance. This can be considered as partially confirmed when we look at the third (and resistant) place identity identified in Wollondilly Shire. This resistant place identity was evident in the responses of many of the farmers interviewed. It is based on the opposition farmers make between themselves, who support the landscape of production, and an out-group (non-farming landowners), who supports the landscape of consumption. Farmers believe that non-farming landowners use the lands for residential and leisure purposes and to enjoy the aesthetics of the rural landscape. They oppose these uses of the land because they consider their productive use of the land as more legitimate. We can see that the inhabitants promoting low residential developments within rural lands were seen by farmers as amenity migrants who consumed the landscape. It seems here that the distinction made in the existing literature between landscapes of consumption and landscapes of production partially explains the politics of place in Wollondilly Shire. However, it is important to mention that this view of non-farmers as using the land for consumption purposes has been challenged by some authors who argue that some landowners who are not farmers also have productive goals (Davis and Carter, 2014; Gill et al., 2010). Therefore, the distinction made between farmers and non-farmers has its limitations. An area for further research would therefore be to look in more detail at non-farmers’ perspectives in the Wollondilly Shire, in order to see if synergies can be identified between farmers and some groups of non-farmers.

We see here that the hegemonic and resistant place identities identified in Wollondilly

Shire have some commonalities, as well as significant differences, with the existing literature on conflict in peri-urban areas. In regard to the city–country divide, our results differ significantly from published case studies. In our research the city–country divide was used by rezoning applicants to justify the expansion of housing at the fringes of towns and villages, rather than to protect the aesthetics of the area. In regard to inhabitants' perspectives on housing development, our case study does not align with findings in published studies that inhabitants defend a perspective of the landscape as a 'lived space' and advocate low density housing development throughout the landscape (Cadieux et al., 2013; Foley and Scott, 2014; Scott, 2008). In our study, the inhabitants who defended the idea of low density development argued that this type of development was more in keeping with the aesthetics of the landscape. They therefore advocated low density development on aesthetic grounds and did not refer to the 'lived space'. In this respect they were more in agreement with the descriptions in the literature of the amenity migrants who valued the consumptive and aesthetic dimensions of the landscape in opposition to the productive landscape (Abrams and Gosnell, 2012; Laliberte, 2012; Tonts and Greive, 2002; Walker and Fortmann, 2003).

In the next section, we reflect on how the third moment of our politics of place/landscape identity framework (emergent place identity) points to potential ways forward for the renegotiation of the role of farming activities in the peri-urban.

### **8.2.2 Emergent place identity: toward a multifunctional countryside?**

In Chapters 6 and 7 we focused on identifying indications of a potential emergent place identity in the Wollondilly Shire. We identified both arrangements and adaptive strategies as indications of a potential emergent place identity in the Shire, which would be a multifunctional peri-urban environment. The concept of multi-functionality aims at demonstrating that agriculture has functions that go beyond food and fibre production, including landscape management, the protection of the biodiversity, and contributions to the socio-economic viability of rural areas (Renting et al., 2009). It also refers to the fact that the social fabric in many rural or peri-urban areas has changed, and productive activities have progressively become one use among others, including conservation and recreational uses (Groth et al., 2014). A successful multi-functional landscape would therefore be a space where groups who use the land in different ways do so harmoniously. This also requires the creation of a new social contract between farmers and non-farmers

who, as shown in this study, often have conflicting relationships.

Two scales of multi-functionality have been identified as relevant to analysing arrangements and adaptive strategies through the lens of multi-functionality: (1) the landscape scale that focuses on how more effective relationships can be created between different spaces, activities and stakeholders, to create a multi-functional landscape, which is what arrangements do; and (2) the farm scale, where farmers make changes (adaptive strategies) in order to promote multi-functionality and enhance their farms' viability. At the landscape scale, the creation of a multifunctional landscape is considered as a way to move beyond increasingly specialised agricultural production, progressively segregating agriculture from other rural activities, and instead focusing on the mutual benefits and win-win opportunities offered by different activities and different spaces (the city–country relationship for example) (van der Ploeg and Roep, 2003). At the farm scale, the development of multi-functionality is driven by three phenomena (van der Ploeg and Roep, 2003): (1) deepening, which means that "agricultural activities are transformed, expanded and/or relinked to other players and agencies in order to deliver products that entail more value added per unit" (van der Ploeg and Roep, 2003, p. 6). This can be achieved through the creation, for example, of shorter chains between production and consumption; (2) broadening, which means that farmers diversify their activities beyond food production to include, for example agritourism or management of the natural environment and the landscape, or diversification of their activities; and finally (3) re-grounding, where the focus is on using new resources or developing new patterns of resource use, with, for example, the adoption of pluri-activity or low external input agriculture. The development of multi-functionality at both the landscape and farm scales has the potential to bring about a renegotiation of the relationships between farmers and non-farmers in the peri-urban.

The arrangements identified in our case study focus on creating win-win situations among a range of activities, but also on creating the conditions for the emergence of a new contract between farmers and society. For example, the by-products purchased by farmers in cities and towns illustrate the positive synergies that exist between the city and the country. Three other arrangements identified in Wollondilly Shire (leasing, neighbouring practices and farmers' markets) can also potentially contribute to the emergence of a new contract between farmers and society. Leasing arrangement can contribute to creating mutually beneficial relationships between farmers and non-farmers: farmers have access to additional lands, which help them remain viable, whereas non-farming landowners have their lands managed by farmers. Moreover, leasing arrangements could

foster stronger bonds and support between farmers and non-farmers. Neighbouring practices adopted by farmers also enhance non-farmers' support for farming, and make farming acceptable to non-farmers. Finally, farmers' markets can be considered as a way to re-create a link between farmers and non-farmers through new relationships that go beyond commodity exchange.

Some of the adaptive strategies adopted by farmers in Wollondilly Shire to enhance their economic viability align, at the farm scale, with two of the three phenomena characterising the emergence of multi-functionality at the farm scale (deepening and broadening). Indeed, many of the farmers interviewed were deepening their farming activity by participating, for example, in farmers' markets, to reduce the number of steps between production and consumption and thereby improve the viability of their farms. A few farmers also broadened their farming activities by engaging in agritourism, protection of the natural environment, or the creation of a milk processing factory for example. Finally, because in a multifunctional landscape food production is no longer the dominant activity, farmers might engage in other activities, such as selling their produce at farmers' markets, introducing agritourism ventures or protecting the natural environment. These changes in activities often require a shift in the motivations and identities of farmers. Indeed, "different institutionalized forms of agricultural activity (diversification, pluriactivity, etc.) extend the boundaries beyond what is traditionally known as 'agriculture', and require the re-organization of skills and occupational identities within the farming community" (Renting et al., 2008) (Renting et al., 2009, p. 337). Agritourism or conservation work on the land require a new set of skills, as well as a need for farmers to change their conceptualisation of what it means to be a farmer. As described in Chapter 7, these changes in occupational identity were observed among a few of the farmers interviewed. They considered that marketing and selling produce, doing conservation work or managing a milk processing factory were part of their work as farmers. All these elements seem to point toward the creation of an emergent place identity, characterised by multi-functionality.

Despite the indications of a potential emergent place identity, several barriers seem to be preventing the creation of a multi-functional landscape. Moreover, certain limitations to the suitability of an emergent multifunctional place identity in Wollondilly Shire need to be addressed.

### **8.2.3 Barriers and limitations to the creation of a multifunctional emergent place identity**

We found that the main barrier to the creation of a multifunctional emergent place identity is that, contrary to its intention, the hegemonic place identity based on the city–country divide, in the way it is currently practised in Wollondilly Shire, does not protect farmlands. Indeed, the city–country divide seems to be used to justify housing development at the edge of towns and villages, while allowing space for a second hegemonic place identity promoting low density residential development to flourish. These hegemonic place identities define farming as a non-viable and unwanted activity, leading to conflicts between agricultural and residential uses. To create a multi-functional landscape, there is a need to create the conditions for a balanced development of housing or other uses and agriculture, and for the re-valorisation of agricultural uses. Otherwise, agricultural uses are likely to progressively disappear in the peri-urban. We argue that to protect peri-urban farmlands, the city–country divide and the hegemonic representation of farmlands as non-viable need to be rethought. We will attempt to identify how those concepts can be rethought in the following section.

In addition to this main barrier, we identified three potential limitations to a multi-functional project in Wollondilly Shire:

1. The first limitation is that peri-urban areas in general, and in Wollondilly Shire in particular, also witness a type of agricultural development which is at odds with the multifunctional project : the ongoing intensification of agriculture, and more particularly of poultry farms. Poultry farming, because of its nearly industrial nature, does not sit well with the idea of a multi-functional landscape, where the space is shared between various activities. For this reason, the emergence of a multifunctional landscape could potentially exclude some of the farmers of the area, creating an exclusionary emergent place identity.
2. The second limitation of the multi-functional project is that the emergence of a multifunctional landscape seems to coincide with an increasing commodification of the landscape (Laliberte, 2012) and a shift from a production landscape to a consumption landscape (Abrams and Gosnell, 2012; Cadieux et al., 2013; Laliberte, 2012; Tonts and Greive, 2002; Walker and Fortmann, 2003), which might threaten some farmers' sense of identity. When a landscape is commodified the village and its countryside, as well as the identities of communities, are sold as commodities

(Laliberte, 2012). It is often the aesthetics of rurality that attracts new residents, which emphasises the ecological and aesthetic functions of the landscape. These landscapes, therefore, become progressively multifunctional, as they are valued not only for their productive role, but also for their ecological and aesthetic dimensions, by a variety of stakeholders. Laliberte (2012) explains that landscapes which are promoted as multi-functional are thought of as "inclusive environment[s] where different types of connections to the land can be supported simultaneously" (p. 287). However, she later demonstrates, taking the example of Great Barrington in the United States, that the "sense of productivity" of farmers is undermined by the "aesthetic use of the landscape" (Laliberte, 2012, p. 284). The work of farmers progressively involves maintaining the beauty of the landscape for amenity migrants, rather than producing food and fibre. A participant in Laliberte (2012)'s study expresses this transition by saying that he changed from a 'real' farmer to an 'entertainment' farmer, losing progressively his productive ethos. This might be problematic because it has been argued by several authors (Burton, 2004; Burton and Wilson, 2006) that many farmers strongly value their productive ethos, and broadening and deepening their activities is not necessarily something they are willing to do. For example, in the present study one farmer who participated in farmers' markets explained that he knew farmers who did not consider the marketing and selling of produce as part of a farmer's work. Instead, they were fully focused on agricultural production. We can see here that a multifunctional landscape, where consumption values might progressively become dominant and farmers are expected to practise activities that go beyond food production, might be at odds with some farmers' productive ethos.

3. The third limitation is that, even though most of the farmers interviewed had adopted, at the farm scale, elements of multi-functionality (deepening and broadening), the results also suggest that only farmers with a combined place identity saw this deepening and broadening of their activities as part of a long-term strategy to keep the farm viable. Indeed, the farmers who developed a practice-based place-identity consider the adoption of deepening activities (i.e. farmers' markets) as only a short-term activity, and planned to retire and sell the farm. Our empirical findings challenge the idea that creating a multifunctional peri-urban environment will necessarily contribute to the long-term conservation of agricultural activities in the peri-urban and to the creation of an emergent and more inclusive place identity. Indeed, farmers who adopted elements of multi-functionality might still

exit farming (farmers with a practice-based place identity). In addition, farmers who plan to continue farming in the peri-urban (farmers with a combined place identity) might intensify their activity rather than go toward multi-functionality, as was the case for one farmer in our study. Finally, farmers often only adopt certain elements of multi-functionality. This means that some parts of their farming activities might still be focused on the intensive production of food, and this might be at odds with the rest of the peri-urban population. For example, farmers who go to farmers' markets do not necessarily have less intensive farming practices on their lands. Conflicts can therefore still emerge between farmers and non-farmers, diminishing the likelihood of the development of an emergent place identity in which farming would be fully included.

In this section we identified barriers and limitations to the emergence of a multi-functional landscape in Wollondilly Shire. In the next section, we discuss the potential ways to address those barriers and limitations.

### **8.3 Identifying ways forward**

In this section, we first identify ways to move beyond the city–country divide by renegotiating the notion of viability of peri-urban farmlands in the Sydney basin. We then identify ways to address the three limitations identified, through: 1) the creation of differentiated spaces; 2) the development of leasing agreements between older farmers exiting farming and younger farmers entering farming; and 3) the enhancement of the productive role of farmers and their acceptance by non-farming landowners, through various policies and mechanisms.

The inadequacy of a spatial development based on the city–country divide (or green-belt) to protect agricultural or environmental lands has been identified countless times in the literature (Gant et al., 2011; Kühn, 2003; Memon, 2003; Murdoch and Lowe, 2003; Paül and Tonts, 2005; Yokohari et al., 2000). Indeed, the concept of the city–country divide has already been challenged because of its inability to protect the land by creating artificial dichotomies which are always transgressed (Murdoch and Lowe, 2003), or because it describes negatively rather than positively what needs to be protected, meaning that peri-urban agricultural and natural landscapes are defined as a containment tool, rather than as providing various services, such as food production (Kühn, 2003). Several authors (Cadieux, 2008; Yokohari et al., 2000) explain that it might be more fruitful to think about the city–country boundary as "more of an interactive 'green edge' than an

inflexible 'urban fence'" (Cadieux, 2008, p. 191). Yokohari et al. (2000) develop this idea and explain that there is a need for a "controlled mixture of urban and rural landscapes" (p. 167).

To achieve this "controlled mixture of urban and rural landscapes" in Wollondilly Shire, and to move beyond the city–country divide, the way farming is taken into account and defined in the process of rezoning, but also more generally in planning documents, needs to be renegotiated (Yokohari et al., 2000, p. 167). Indeed, as seen in Chapter 4, farmlands are often defined as non-viable for agricultural purposes, the reasons often being the size of the land or its productive capabilities. Productive capabilities are often assessed based on a map of agricultural land capability, which is not adapted to small-scale peri-urban agriculture. The "viability" of the land seems to have been taken for granted in the rezoning proposals presented in Chapter 4. However, several planners and farmers challenged this often narrow and unjustified conceptualisation of viability. They explained that in reality, the notion of viability is very ill-defined in a changing peri-urban environment. Indeed, several participants in this study explained that assessing the viability of the land in the Shire was a problem because people conceptualised viability differently. According to some, this was because traditionally farming in Australia is often taken to mean broadacre farming, and broadacre farming becomes less and less viable in the peri-urban. Consequently, many people perceive farming as non-viable in the peri-urban. However, others highlighted a need to move from a conceptualisation of farming as broadacre farming, toward one of farming as being more intensive (e.g. hydroponics). Intensive farming can be viable on smaller lots in the peri-urban. Furthermore, a small plot of land may not be viable alone, but may be viable if used as an addition to an already existing operation, contributing therefore to ensure the viability of that operation, through leasing arrangements. The difficulty of defining what is viable and non-viable land has been discussed by Abrams and Gosnell (2012) in connection with a law (House Bill 3326) passed in Oregon, in the United States, to enable farmers to sell their marginal land, that is, lands that cannot be farmed productively any longer. In their study, the problem was to satisfactorily define marginal land. Farmers who wanted to sell their lands "emphasized the rocky, unproductive nature of their proposed nonfarm parcels" (Abrams and Gosnell, 2012, p. 34). However, the notion of unproductive and marginal was challenged by others who argued that in a country where the dominant land use is "extensive seasonal grazing on arid grasslands", those lands could be an "important component of an overall agricultural operation" (Abrams and Gosnell, 2012, p. 34). In Wollondilly Shire, a similar challenge exists, since farmers could potentially

use small plots of land that could be considered as non-viable in isolation, but which could make an important contribution to a larger operation.

One way to renegotiate the notion of viability could be through the co-development, by farmers and agronomists, of an indicator of viability that would be more relevant for Wollondilly Shire than current land capability categories. This could lead to the creation of maps emphasising the viability of farmlands in the Sydney area. As we saw in Chapter 4, housing forecasts seem to dominate decision-making when it comes to the development of housing and the preservation of farmlands, as there is no existing technique that considers farmlands' protection. We therefore argue that renegotiating the notion of viability and generating data that would contribute to putting farmlands and farming activities back into the planning debate could go a long way toward the protection of farmlands in peri-urban Sydney. It could also contribute to moving beyond the city–country divide, which defines farmlands negatively as a containment tool, rather than positively as a viable activity providing food and a great variety of services to the Sydney area.

When considering the identified limitations to the suitability of the development of a multifunctional emergent place identity in Wollondilly Shire, several ways forward have been identified.

Firstly, we saw that creating a multi-functional place identity could exclude intensive farming operations. We therefore argue that rather than promoting multi-functionality as the unique way forward, differentiated spaces should be created in the peri-urban, which could accommodate farmers willing to deepen, broaden and re-ground their farming activities, and farmers willing to intensify their activities. Indeed, we can already see that conflicts have increased between intensive farming use, like poultry farms, and residential inhabitants. One of the explanations behind this could be that intensive poultry farms have more commonalities with industrial land use than with agriculture, and consequently they are not liked by the residents expecting to enjoy the rural aesthetics. This point was raised by Friedland (2002) who argued that what we consider as agriculture and as rural should be redefined, as agriculture becomes more and more intensive. He explains that "growing grapes and making wine have historically been considered agriculture, but classifying the current manufacture of wine as 'agriculture' represents a considerable stretch of the imagination because massive wineries resembling petroleum tank farms have emerged" (p. 364). Following Friedland (2002)'s statement, we can argue that it might be appropriate to create spaces in the peri-urban to welcome intensive agricultural uses, on the model of industrial zones, and promote multi-functionality in

other areas, where lower intensity agriculture occurs. However, one hindrance to the creation of differentiated spaces could be that some farmers value the co-location of home and farm, and the lifestyle this offers. Therefore, having their farm in an area that would be similar in nature to an industrial area and their home in another location, may not be consistent with the farming lifestyle they aspire to.

Secondly, given that farmers with a practice-based place identity are more likely to adopt short-term adaptive strategies and leave the farm at the end of their careers, one way forward could be to encourage farmers with a practice-based place identity to lease their land to young farmers who also have a practice-based place identity, and who might be keen on leasing land in the peri-urban for an undefined period of time. This would ensure the continuity of the productive use of the land, at least in the foreseeable future.

Thirdly, given that the consumption landscape may often eclipse the production landscape in the peri-urban environment, and given that this is at odds with farmers' identity, we argue that placing an emphasis on the viability of the farming operations in the peri-urban when considering rezoning, but also more generally in planning decisions, could contribute to maintaining the focus on the landscape of production. However, we believe that redefining viability in planning is not sufficient, and that additional institutional support must be provided to farmers to enable them to enhance their economic viability. We also argue that assistance needs to be provided to farmers to improve their relationships with non-farmers and foster acceptance of their productive activities. We can think of several ways to do this: for example, encouraging the leasing of land; developing the use of by-products by farmers; and improving the social capital between farmers and non-farmers.

When considering leasing, a three-way contract between the state government, the lessee and the lesser or economic incentives (rate reductions for non-farming landowners who lease their land for agricultural purposes) could be developed to give the lessee more security of tenure and enable him/her to invest in the land. The state or the local government could also consider leasing public lands to farmers for relatively long periods of time. References to this possibility have been made in Metropolitan Strategies, and, for example, a few hectares of land were up for lease at the Western Sydney parklands trust, however it could be done more systematically and at a larger scale. Enabling farmers to lease land from the state or council for a relatively long period could enable existing operations to expand, and new operations to be created. This could be a valuable help for farmers since, as we saw in Chapter 6, farmers do not necessarily have long-term contracts when leasing lands from non-farming landowners or other farmers, meaning

that it is difficult to invest. Consequently, along with the better regulation of leasing contracts, the ability to lease public lands would add another, potentially safer option for farmers to expand or start an operation. The Sydney Agriculture Strategic Approaches (SASA) Working Group pointed out that many Crown lands could potentially be leased to farmers in the Sydney area (Sydney Agriculture Strategic Approach Working Group, 2017). Such a practice already exists in the Gothenburg municipality in Sweden (Wästfelt and Zhang, 2016). The municipality leases land as a priority to existing farmers and the cost is lower for farms producing food than it is for horse farms. This support provided by municipality to the farmers enables farmers to have low operating costs. A similar project in Wollondilly Shire could potentially be one more avenue to help farmers access land and consequently enhance their economic viability. One potential limitation of this strategy identified by Wästfelt and Zhang (2016) is that the leased lands are considered by the municipality to be land waiting to be urbanised. The municipality is therefore not investing in and maintaining the infrastructure necessary for farming activities. Moreover, the lack of long-term security may discourage farmers from investing. However, this was not the case in Wästfelt and Zhang (2016)'s study as farmers were investing lands leased by the municipality. Finally, a register of available farmlands could be created, in the form of an application on a website that would enable farmers to locate available land in their areas. This could be accompanied by the provision of standardised and simple legal documentation for the two parties.

When considering the use of by-products (feed, organic fertilisers, waste water), their use could be formalised in order to make it more systematic, and to enable more farmers to access cheap feed and fertilisers. However, by formalising these processes there is a risk for these by-products to progressively become commodities and to be sold at higher price. This would therefore decrease the capacity of by-products to contribute to the economic viability of farming operations.

When considering the development of social capital between farmers and non-farmers in the Shire, we saw that farmers were taking the responsibility to maintain and foster positive relationships with their neighbours. However, we argue that the council could also contribute to the creation of social capital, by organising social events for farmers and non-farmers. This has already been proposed by the Sydney Agriculture Strategic Approaches (SASA) Working Group who explains that a sense of community could be fostered through "local fairs, support groups, cultural activities, open days at farms, community supported agriculture, farm markets" (Sydney Agriculture Strategic Approach Working Group, 2017, p. 22).

Finally, actions could be taken by farmers to increase their economic viability and enhance their productive role. As seen in Chapter 6, farmers' markets are not accessible to all farmers, and supermarkets remain an important outlet for farmers. There is therefore a need for farmers to increase their bargaining power through the creation of cooperative marketing, which would enable them to negotiate better contracts with supermarkets. However, we saw that farmers do not tend to engage in collective actions. There is therefore a need to better understand the barriers preventing the collective organisation of farmers, and to identify way to address them, in order to foster an environment conducive to the creation of collective marketing arrangements. In addition, farmers (with the help of civil society) could explore other ways to sell their produce. They could, for example go through social enterprises delivering boxes of agricultural produce to consumers. These kinds of initiatives already exist in the Sydney area (Knowd, 2013). For example, OOOBY [Out of our own backyards] and Harvest Hub, which are respectively a for profit owned by a charitable trust and a social enterprise, collect agricultural produce from farms around Sydney and deliver boxes to customers in several areas of the city. One similar initiative exists on Wollondilly Shire, called Pheasants Nest produce. An increase in these types of initiatives could contribute to increasing the viability of farming operations in Wollondilly and in other areas of the Sydney basin. Additionally, farmers could also participate in a Farm Gate trail, which is an agritourism scheme, which enable farmers to sell their produce to tourists through visit at the farms or participation in various events (Knowd, 2013). This Farm Gate trail exists in Wollondilly Shire, however it has not taken the proportion that it has taken in the neighbouring shire of Hawkesbury, where the Hawkesbury Harvest Farm Gate trail contributes actively to the economic viability of farming operations (Knowd, 2013). They could also attempt to increase attendance at farmers' markets. For example, one farmer suggested that charities could give coupons that would be redeemable at farmers' markets. This could contribute to increasing the clientele of farmers' markets while making them more inclusive. Successful experiences of setting farmers' markets in low-income neighborhood exist in USA, such as the Crescent City Market in New Orleans and the Smoketown/Shelby Park market in Louisville (Markowitz, 2010). However, to be successful, these require the conjunction of "community-based efforts and government (local, state and/or federal) policy" in order to create an environment conducive to their creation (Markowitz, 2010, p.68).

In the first part of this discussion, we saw how our study of the politics of place identity in Wollondilly Shire enabled us to identify how farmlands and farming activities

are progressively marginalised in hegemonic place identities, and how farmers' resistant place identity does not renegotiate the role of farmers in the peri-urban. We also saw how current and emerging arrangements and strategies point toward the possibility of an emergent place identity centred on the idea of the creation of a multifunctional peri-urban landscape. However, we also identified the barriers and limitations to the emergence of this peri-urban landscape, and the need to address them through various types of actions, including: renegotiating the notion of viability to move beyond the city-country divide, creating differentiated spaces (intensive and multifunctional), leasing public lands to farmers, encouraging the use of by-products by farmers, and fostering the growth of social capital between farmers and non-farmers through the creation of a variety of events at the local scale. We also believe that farmers and civil society could contribute to enhancing the viability of farming activity through: collective marketing, exploring other channels to sell their produce, and increasing the number of people buying their produce in farmers' markets. In the next section we will see how the focus on place identity and the development of a politics of place/landscape identity framework was relevant to understand the challenges faced by farmers in peri-urban environments.

## **8.4 What did we learn about the role of identity in peri-urban areas?**

For this study, we chose to take identity as an entry point to understand the politics of place in peri-urban areas. We argue here that taking this entry point, via the development of a politics of place/landscape identity framework, was beneficial for several reasons. Firstly, we observed that place identities influence the types of developments which are preferred in the peri-urban. Secondly, our multi-dimensional appraisal of place identity (material landscape, practices, representations and identity) enabled us to obtain a holistic picture of how the logics of development are articulated between identity, representations, practices and the material landscape, and how hegemonic place identities are reproduced. Thirdly, we saw how the emergence of new practices (arrangements), which are currently not integrated into any representation of the peri-urban, can be perceived as indications of an emergent place identity. Fourthly, we saw how farmers' resistant place identity was linked to their intergroup relationships (distinctiveness) and how this has so far precluded collective action, whereas aspects of their place identity that have developed, at the farm scale, through their relationships to their farms do lead to the emergence of new practices (adaptive strategies) which can be

an indication of an emergent place identity. Finally, this study gives us new insights into farmers' decision-making.

### **8.4.1 Place identity for understanding the forces influencing development and the reproduction of hegemonic place identities in the peri-urban**

What we have learned from this study is that the politics of place/landscape identity framework can be a fruitful entry point for understanding the forces which influence development in the Shire, and the role given to agricultural landscapes in peri-urban areas. Indeed, decisions about the landscape appearance, and how it should be managed to retain its distinctiveness, seems to be instrumental in determining the future development of the peri-urban (city–country divide or hybridisation of peri-urban landscapes). We observed how the alleged desirability of maintaining a particular identity, based on the distinctiveness or uniqueness of Wollondilly Shire, was used as an argument by several groups to promote a type of development that suited them. The most obvious example is the concept of "rural living", which is used in different ways by a range of stakeholders. Planners use it to create an identity for the Shire that includes housing development and the protection of farmlands and the environment. Rezoning applicants use it to justify the development of housing at the edge of the city; whereas inhabitants in favour of the "hybridisation" of the landscape use it to promote the development of lower density housing in the countryside. We can therefore see that focusing on place identity helps us to grasp the forces which influence development in the Shire, and the role given to agriculture in representations and practices.

### **8.4.2 Representations and practices as a way to identify how hegemonic and resistant place identities are reproduced**

The use of our multi-dimensional framework of the politics of place/landscape identity, including the material landscape, practices, representations and identity enabled us to develop a fuller picture of the forces which influence development in the Shire, and a more nuanced and comprehensive understanding of the politics of place, particularly through the identification of the discrepancies and contradictions that sometimes exist between representations and practices. The literature focusing on peri-urban conflicts that was presented earlier focused mostly on stakeholders' competing represen-

#### 8.4. WHAT DID WE LEARN ABOUT THE ROLE OF IDENTITY IN PERI-URBAN AREAS?

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tations of the rural environment and overlooked practices. Our focus on the articulation of representations in conjunction with practices enabled us to understand that the first hegemonic place identity was based on the representation of a city–country divide which was meant to be inclusive and reconcile different uses, but which was in fact used by rezoning applicants to promote housing developments on aesthetic grounds. Therefore, taking into consideration the practices allowed us to see how some representations do not necessarily translate fully into practices, and are sometimes used for ends that can be contrary to the ends for which the representations were originally intended. This focus on practices enabled us to shed light on the specific processes of exclusion of agriculture in the peri-urban landscape through various practices (particularly planning practices), which have not been described comprehensively in the literature. Indeed, in the literature the focus is on the conflicts created by the opposition between consumption and production landscapes, leading to a diminution of the role of productive landscapes in the peri-urban. However, the mechanics of the exclusion of farming in planning practices (particularly rezoning proposals) and the "techniques" (housing forecasts for example) that accompany them, have often not been described. Articulating identity, representations, practices and the material landscape can therefore be considered as enabling a more encompassing and nuanced understanding of the politics of place in Wollondilly Shire by showing the contradictions that can exist between representations and practices.

The multi-dimensional nature of our framework also enabled us to identify which place identities could be considered as hegemonic and which ones could be considered as resistant. Indeed, to our knowledge, the literature on peri-urban conflicts seems to be mostly focused on competing discourses, and does not fully incorporate or scrutinise the associated planning practices and the changes occurring in the material landscape. By focusing on the practices and the changes occurring in the material landscape, we were able to identify which representations of the peri-urban were influencing the practices and the appearance of the physical landscape, and were therefore hegemonic, and which representations were not. We saw that the representation defended by the council was shaping (in a transgressed manner) the landscape of the Shire through rezoning proposals, whereas the representation of the landscape defended by inhabitants through submissions had been made possible by past and current planning ordinances, as well as by the pressures brought by individuals to rezone and develop large tracts of lands. The third place identity, defended by farmers, is defended only through the continuation of farming activities on farmers' land, and the critique of consumptive uses of the landscape.

It has not led to the organisation of collective action to renegotiate the role of farmers in the area. It has therefore had no impact on the development of the Shire. For this reason, the two co-existing hegemonic place identities can be considered as hegemonic whereas the third one can be considered as resistant. The determination of hegemonic and resistant place identities is also a singularity of this study, as other studies on conflicts over rural landscapes focus mostly on identifying the representations of rurality which characterise competing discourses on the landscape, without necessarily defining which ones are hegemonic (Foley and Scott, 2014; Scott, 2008).

Our politics of place/landscape identity framework enabled us to understand how hegemonic place identities determine practices and are reproduced and reinforced in practices (sometimes in a transgressed manner), which eventually impact the development of the landscape. We also saw how farmers' place identity was reproduced through (farming) practices without, however, managing to re-assert the legitimacy of their practices at the scale of the shire.

### **8.4.3 New practices as possibilities for an emergent place identity**

Another important aspect of our multi-dimensional politics of place/landscape identity framework is its emphasis on bi-directionality. In the framework, the idea is developed that a certain identity can define the type of representation individuals will have of the peri-urban, and consequently which practices they will judge acceptable or not in the physical landscape. But we also explained that social or physical pressures can push individuals or groups to modify their practices and consequently change their representations, and potentially their identities. This focus on bi-directionality enabled us to identify emergent practices in Wollondilly Shire, which do not belong to any established representation of the peri-urban, but could potentially contribute to an emergent place identity that would (positively) recast the role of productive landscapes in the peri-urban. Indeed, the various arrangements identified (sourcing by-products, leasing, neighbouring practices and farmers' markets) are emerging practices, which are the results of external economic and/or physical pressures that can point toward a different future where farming could potentially be reintegrated into the peri-urban landscape. This is consistent with our intent, expressed in the methodology chapter, to move beyond critical enquiry which is centred on the mechanisms of domination and oppression, and to look at possibilities, and at what is already there but is not the subject of a discourse

in the public space (Gibson-Graham, 2006, 2008, 2014). Focusing on emerging practices (arrangements) enabled us to focus on farmers' agency, inventiveness and resourcefulness, features that enable them to sustain themselves in an increasingly challenging environment. This focus on practices therefore avoids the common representation of the future of farming in peri-urban areas as doomed, and by contrast, to think in terms of how existing emergent practices could progressively result in the formation of emergent place identities.

#### **8.4.4 Farmers' place identity, new practices and emergent place identity**

Until now we have seen that the politics of place/landscape identity framework enabled us to better understand how hegemonic place identities, characterised by a specific representation of the peri-urban, were reproduced, reinforced (and sometimes transgressed) in practices, and how they consequently influenced the appearance of the material landscape of the Shire. We saw how farmers' resistant place identity based on their intergroup relationships (farmers' feelings of distinctiveness compared to non-farmers) did not lead to collective action, and therefore did not lead to the renegotiation of hegemonic representations and practices in the peri-urban. Then we saw how emerging practices, which are not yet integrated into a representation of the peri-urban, seem to have the potential to lead to the emergence of new representations of farming in the peri-urban and therefore the emergence of a new place identity. One last scenario observed in our results centres on how farmers' intragroup place identities (combined and practice-based) lead to the adoption of various practices (adaptive strategies), which may contribute to the creation of an emergent place identity, based on multi-functionality. This is different from the cases presented earlier because it illustrates how existing land-based and practice-based place identities can trigger changes in practices that allow this place identity to be maintained at the farm-scale. The desire to maintain farm-scale place identity through the adoption of adaptive strategies could contribute, along with arrangements, to the emergence of a new place identity.

#### **8.4.5 New insights into farmers' decision making**

The final benefit of taking identity as an entry point for an understanding of the politics of place in peri-urban areas is that it brought us new insights into farmers' decision-making. This was not the primary aim of our study, but it was an important out-

put that emerged along the way. The orthodox economic conception of farmers as rational profit maximisers has been criticised in the literature, and it has been acknowledged that other factors need to be taken into account to understand farmers' decision-making processes (Kuehne, 2009). We will first provide a short overview of the different factors considered as influencing farmers' decision making in the literature, and various typologies that contribute to better understand farmers' decision-making (for an in-depth discussion of values, attitudes, goal and typologies of farmers, see Kuehne (2009)). Then, we will explain how a focus on place identity brings new insights into farmers' decision making.

Numerous factors likely to influence farmers' decision-making have been identified in the literature. For example, Seabrook and Higgins (1988) found that farmers' self-concepts (e.g. traditional versus progressive) play a role in their decisions to adopt some technologies, meaning that if a new development is at odds with a farmer's self-concept, he/she might decide not to take part in this new development. Other authors (Farmar-Bowers and Lane, 2009; Gasson, 1973; Vanclay et al., 1998, 2007) have offered more encompassing views of farmers' decision-making by identifying a variety of objectives farmers have, and how the interactions of these different objectives influence behaviour. Gasson (1973) identified instrumental, intrinsic, personal and social goals; Vanclay et al. (2007) identified different goals related to styles of farming, which are a set of norms held by the farmer about how farming should be done, a cultural repertoire of practices and the external context (structural forces); Perkin and Rehman (1994) identified three dimensions influencing decision-making: monetary, lifestyle and independence, and finally Farmar-Bowers and Lane (2009) identified three different decision-making systems based on the family, the business and the landownership. These authors argue that business decisions are always mixed up with non-business elements, such as family, lifestyle, a desire for independence, self-concept, intrinsic and social goals.

In order to better understand how business and non-business elements impact farmers' decision-making, several authors (Burton and Wilson, 2006; Fairweather and Keating, 1994; McGuire et al., 2015; Salamon, 1995; Sulemana and James, 2014) have created typologies of farmers which identify dichotomies like the following: business goals versus personal or moral goals, traditional family-oriented farmers versus entrepreneurs, and productivist farmers versus conservationist farmers. These typologies always articulate some of the elements identified earlier, which relate to personal (personal goals, moral principles, and conservation values) or family aspirations (importance of the family in decision-making). For example, Fairweather and Keating (1994) identified three different

#### 8.4. WHAT DID WE LEARN ABOUT THE ROLE OF IDENTITY IN PERI-URBAN AREAS?

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farmer types: the dedicated producer (focus on quality produce); the flexible strategist (marketer) and the environmentalist. Salamon (1995) identified yeoman farmers who are traditional family-oriented farmers, and entrepreneurs who are profit-oriented farmers. McGuire et al. (2015) identified productivist, conservationist, naturalist and civic-minded farmers, whereas (Sulemana and James, 2014) identified only productivist and conservationist farmers. Those typologies are often used when examining whether farmers are likely to adopt a policy or a technology. They are particularly used for investigating whether farmers are likely to adopt more environmentally friendly practices, and respond positively to policies promoting environmental practices.

Our study brings new insights to the question of farmers' decision-making on several levels. First of all, we see how the different elements identified in the literature, such as family, independence and lifestyle, contribute to determining the types of relationships farmers develop with their farms, through the prism of place identity. For example, we saw how environmental practices are part of farmers' conceptualisations of themselves as good farmers and are integrated with their self-esteem, how independence and lifestyle are integrated into farmers' self-efficacy, and how family is related to the question of continuity. We then saw how all these elements contribute to determining the type of relationship farmers have with their land (combined or practice-based place identity).

The second insight from our study is that we connected farmers' relationships to their land (combined or practice-based place identity) and the adaptive strategies they adopt to keep their farms viable in the peri-urban environment. This approach differs significantly from other studies where the focus is often on determining the probability of farmers adopting environmental practices. Therefore, it brings new insights on farmers' decision-making by focusing on the adoption of adaptive strategies in a pressured environment rather than on the adoption of environmental practices. Finally, in the context of our politics of place identity framework, the way farmers' place identity influences their adoption of adaptive strategies is related to the broader question of the emergence of a new place identity in the peri-urban, and how understanding farmers' place identity can help us to create a more inclusive place identity in the peri-urban. Therefore, we make a link between farmers' decision-making at the farm scale, and the potential meaning of their action at the local level.

In the second part of this discussion chapter, we saw how our framework of the politics of place/landscape identity enabled us to understand how hegemonic and resistant place identities are reproduced through practices, and also how hegemonic place identities have a direct impact on the development of the landscape that resistant place identities

do not have. We also saw how new practices (arrangements), which are not integrated into existing representations of the peri-urban, have the potential to create new representations of the role of farming in the peri-urban, potentially leading to the creation of an emergent place identity. We then saw how farmers' existing place identities can also influence farmers' views of the future of their farms, and the adoption of adaptive strategies at the farm scale, which can contribute to the creation of an emergent place identity at the local scale. The framework therefore enabled us to understand how place identity plays a role in determining the future of farming in the peri-urban, and also the variety of ways in which the different dimensions that shape place identities can be articulated, leading to very different outcomes (hegemonic, resistant or emergent place identities).

## **8.5 Limitations**

Our study makes several contributions to the understanding of the politics of place/landscape identity in a peri-urban context; however, it has limitations that need to be considered.

The first main limitation of the study is that it focuses on one case study, and can therefore not lead to immediate generalisations. Wollondilly Shire was selected as a case study because it is undergoing urbanisation while still maintaining important farming activities. It might therefore be worthwhile to replicate this study in peri-urban areas with the same characteristics to see if similar results are obtained. In addition, it might also be appropriate to replicate this study in areas which are at different stages of peri-urbanisation in order to examine whether the question of the role of farmlands in the politics of place/landscape identity is posed differently at these different stages. If this is the case, then different actions may be called for at different stages. It would also be useful to replicate this study in an area with a different social, political and economic context, such as stronger protection of farmlands through planning, a protected agricultural sector, or a collectively organised farming community, in order to see how those factors influence the politics of place/landscape identity. Replicating this study in other areas would make it possible to start generalising the results. Moreover, it would also be useful to test the validity of the politics of place/landscape identity framework in various contexts.

The second main limitation of this research is that it mostly engaged with planners, farmers and planning documents. As a consequence, non-farming landowners were

mostly described as they are seen through farmers' eyes, and their voices were only heard through their submissions to rezoning proposals. We can assume that the inhabitants sending submissions to rezoning proposals are the most vocal inhabitants and they are the most likely to influence planning. However, they probably do not represent the views of the whole non-farming population in the Shire. As a consequence, our study provided a relatively monolithic and potentially oversimplified understanding of non-farming landowners' representations of the peri-urban landscape. As shown in Chapter 5, farmers often describe non-farming landowners as seeing the landscape as a landscape of consumption rather than as a landscape of production. However, this conceptualisation of non-farming landowners has been challenged in the literature, as several authors (Davis and Carter, 2014; Gill et al., 2010) argue that some non-farming landowners also see the landscape as a landscape of production. In further studies, it would be appropriate to include more of the views of non-farming landowners in order to have a more nuanced view of their representations of the peri-urban landscape, and to move beyond a monolithic understanding of non-farming landowners.

The third main limitation of this research is that the number of farmers interviewed was relatively small, and therefore the sample cannot be considered as representative. It would therefore be useful to do a study which involved more farmers in order to confirm or refine our understanding of farmers' resistant identity, and perhaps more importantly, this would increase our understanding of how farmers' place identity influences their visions of the future of their farms and their adoption of adaptive strategies.



## CONCLUSION

**P**eri-urban agricultural lands have the potential to play an increasingly important role in enhancing the resilience, sustainability and food security of cities and the health and well-being of its population. However, all over the world, cities are encroaching on their peri-urban agricultural lands, thereby reducing the ability of local agricultural production areas to provide for the food requirements of the urban population. This problem is pressing in the Australian context, where the population is concentrated in five major cities located in two coastal regions (Sinclair, 1999). With the increasing size of cities, adjacent farmlands, which produce food for those cities, are being progressively replaced by residential developments (James, 2008, 2009; Millar and Fyfe, 2012; Parker, 2007).

Despite this situation, planning policies in Australia, and in Sydney more particularly, often prioritise housing development over the preservation of agricultural lands, leading to residential developments on fertile farmland (Cordell et al., 2016; James, 2009; McFarland, 2014). In addition, the impact of neoliberal economic policy on agriculture in Australia has undermined the economic viability of farming operations in the peri-urban (Alston, 2004; Dibden and Cocklin, 2005; Lawrence, 1999; Pritchard, 2005a,b; Vanclay, 2003). Peri-urban farmlands are therefore put under the dual pressures of residential development and a lack of economic viability. Furthermore, social and cultural elements of change, such as the arrival of non-farming landowners who complain about agricultural activities, and the perception in the general population that farming is having negative environmental impacts, put additional strains on farmers (Alston, 2004; Argent et al.,

2011; Saltzman et al., 2011; Tonts and Greive, 2002; Willis, 2007).

For all those reasons, peri-urban areas are environments in limbo, not fully rural, not fully urban. As a consequence, they often do not have a stable identity, and competing discourses are created about the nature of peri-urban identity, leading to conflicts. Various groups exercise claims over what the landscape should look like, what practices should be considered as legitimate, and eventually who belongs and who is excluded from the landscape (Abrams and Gosnell, 2012; Foley and Scott, 2014; Frouws, 1998; Masuda and Garvin, 2008; Scott, 2008; Trudeau, 2006; Walker and Fortmann, 2003). Our aim in this study was to understand the roles ascribed to productive landscapes and farming activities in conflicts over the identity of the peri-urban. To do so we studied Wollondilly Shire, a peri-urban shire in the metropolitan area of Sydney, through the lens of a politics of place/landscape identity framework that we developed. This framework focused on three moments of the politics of place/landscape identity: hegemony, resistance, and emergence (Larsen, 2004). We selected Wollondilly Shire as our case study because it is a local government area that is being subjected to the pressure of urbanisation while maintaining important agricultural activity, and also because questions about productive lands and agricultural activities are at the centre of the debate on the identity of the Shire.

The development of the framework led us to ask the following research questions:

What are the hegemonic and resistant place identities in Wollondilly Shire? The following question was embedded within the main question: What is the role given to productive landscapes in these dominant and resistant place identities?

A second research question was:

How much "leeway" do farmers have to make changes leading to an emergent place identity that recasts the role of productive landscapes?

We addressed these research questions in four results chapters (Chapter 4-7), focusing on the three moments of the politics of place/landscape identity framework, and more particularly on the role of farming and farmlands within the politics of place/landscape identity.

We first focused on the hegemonic place identities in the peri-urban. We identified two such place identities that affect different parts of the Shire. The first hegemonic place identity defends a vision of the Shire based on its distinctiveness (rural living). This distinctiveness is reflected in a representation of the Shire in which city and country are two distinct entities. This representation of the Shire aims to create an inclusive

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countryside where both housing development and the preservation of farmlands and farming activities can be accommodated in the landscape. However, in planning practices (such as the preparation and assessment of rezoning proposals that we analysed) agricultural lands are depicted as ‘out of place’ and housing development as ‘in place’, favouring therefore the continuation of housing development at the fringes of towns and villages at the expense of the preservation of agricultural areas. This means that housing development continues while farmlands and farming operations are progressively marginalised.

The second hegemonic place identity is also based on distinctiveness (rural living), but this distinctiveness is of a different nature. It is based on a representation of rurality as composed of low density developments throughout the countryside. This representation came into existence in the physical landscape inadvertently, through authorised planning practices: family excision, community titles, permissive zoning ordinances (housing and horses). These practices are enacted in the physical landscape by the creation of low density housing throughout the countryside. This hegemonic place identity also contributes to the marginalisation of farming practices as it does not integrate farming, particularly intensive farming, in its representation of rurality. This marginalisation has led to the emergence of practices such as the filing of complaints and lobbying against farmers. These two hegemonic place identities have in common that they contribute to the progressive marginalisation of farmlands in Wollondilly Shire, based on a certain vision of the distinct characteristics of the peri-urban landscape (known as *genius loci*).

In response to these two hegemonic place identities farmers developed a resistant place identity based on the principles of continuity (or rather lack thereof) and distinctiveness. Farmers referred to the feelings of threats to their survival and of erosion of the farming community in Wollondilly Shire. They counterbalanced the threats to group continuity by highlighting that they were different to non-farming landowners. The difference which they believed set them apart from other residents was based on a representation of the peri-urban landscape as a landscape of production rather than a landscape of consumption. Farmers considered their productive use of the landscape as legitimate, they describe the consumptive use non-farming landowners make of the landscape (residential, leisure, aesthetics) as illegitimate. By doing this, they reasserted the legitimacy of challenged farming practices in the peri-urban landscape, while depicting non-farming landowners’ use of the land as illegitimate and potentially harmful. This view of non-farming landowners is supported in the literature to some extent (Klepeis et al., 2009). However, there is also evidence that this distinction between farmers and

non-farmers is sometimes artificially maintained, and that these two groups may actually share many similar production goals (Davis and Carter, 2014; Gill et al., 2010). We believe that farmers differentiated themselves strongly from non-farmers in order to reassert their legitimacy in the landscape; that is, legitimacy that was called into question by the two hegemonic place identities which progressively marginalised farmlands and farming activities in the peri-urban. This resistant place identity, like that described by Larsen (2004), did not lead to the organisation of collective action in order to reintegrate farmlands and farming operations into place identities in Wollondilly Shire. This lack of collective organisation may be explained by the lack of bonding and bridging capital among farmers in Wollondilly Shire (Woolcock, 2000).

These results enable us to answer the first research question by showing: (1) how productive landscapes are progressively marginalised under hegemonic place identities in Wollondilly Shire; and (2) how farmers have created a resistant place identity which reasserts the legitimacy of farmlands and farming activities in Wollondilly Shire, without resulting in farmers' collective organisation and the renegotiation of their role at the local scale.

Chapters 6 and 7 addressed our second research question regarding the options farmers have to make changes that could potentially lead to the creation of an emergent place identity in which the role of farmers would be re-cast positively in Wollondilly Shire. In Larsen (2004)'s case study, the emergent place identity develops from the two others, and is therefore situated chronologically, after the hegemonic and resistant place identities. Moreover, the emergent place identity described in Larsen (2004)'s case study appears to be a collective response to the hegemonic and resistant place identities. In our case study, we identified indications of an emergent place identity in the arrangements and adaptive strategies adopted by farmers. However, these indicators are visible at the scale of individual actions or bilateral relationships between two stakeholders or group of stakeholders rather than collectively among Wollondilly farmers. In addition, they occur concurrently with the hegemonic and resistant place identities.

Arrangements can be seen as indicative of an emergent (multi-functional) place identity, as they contribute to the creation of win-win relationships between spaces, activities and stakeholders. The various arrangements identified (including sourcing by-products, leasing land, adopting neighbouring practices and selling at farmers' markets) may contribute to a renegotiation of the city–country and farmer–non-farmer relationships. Our findings indicate that arrangements may also help farmers to gain access to land in the peri-urban landscape, as well as enhancing their economic viability. This could lead

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to the development of a new representation of the peri-urban in which agricultural uses interact positively with other activities. The range of adaptive strategies implemented by farmers in Wollondilly (deepening and broadening activities) might ultimately contribute to an emergent (multi-functional) place identity by enabling farmers to develop activities that go beyond a mere productive function and ensure the economic viability of their operations in the short or long term.

We therefore demonstrated that farmers can make changes which can be indications of an emergent place identity. However, contrary to Larsen (2004)'s case study, these signs of an emergent place identity do not manifest in the form of a collective renegotiation of geographic designs, but rather through the multiplicity of actions taken at the individual scale by farmers.

In Chapter 8 we saw that the development of arrangements and adaptive strategies pointed toward the creation of an emergent multifunctional place identity in Wollondilly Shire. For such an identity to be formed, several barriers and limitations would need to be overcome. They include: (1) the inadequacy of the city–country divide as a spatial development tool for developing the mix of land uses necessary to the development of a multi-functional peri-urban landscape; (2) the exclusion of certain types of farming (e.g. intensive poultry farming) from the multi-functional project which prevents the creation of an inclusive emergent place identity; (3) the exclusion of farmers with a productive ethos from an increasingly commodified multi-functional landscape; and (4) the temporary character of multi-functionality in Wollondilly Shire, as farmers with a practice-based place identity consider broadening and deepening activities as a short-term solution and plan eventually to exit farming.

We identified different ways to address these barriers and limitations in order to create the conditions for the development of an inclusive and durable emergent place identity.

Firstly, we argued that in order to move beyond the traditional city–country divide, the notion of viability needs to be renegotiated. Indeed, one of the reasons for the failure of the traditional city–country divide as a spatial planning concept seems to be that agricultural lands are systematically defined as non-viable, leading to a potentially endless development of the city on previously agricultural land. The arguments used to define the lands as non-viable are often based on a map of agricultural capabilities of the land that has been developed for broadacre farming. One way forward to redefine viability could be to formulate an improved definition of viability of peri-urban lands, co-developed by scientists and farmers. Redefining the meaning of viability is therefore

considered as a first step to re-value agricultural uses in the peri-urban.

Secondly, we argued that to reconcile intensive agricultural activities in the Shire with the multi-functional project, differentiated spaces could be created to separate the multi-functional landscape from intensive agriculture, which has more in common with industrial uses than with conventional agricultural production. This could enable farmers who pursue intensive agriculture to farm in a zone reserved for that purpose, while the multi-functional landscape would accommodate various uses and may be more compatible with a renegotiated concept of "rural living".

Thirdly, we argue that in order to prevent the undermining of the productive dimension of peri-urban landscapes through its increasing commodification, it is, as explained above, necessary to renegotiate the notion of viability in the Shire context in order to enable productive activities to continue in the landscape. To this end it is necessary that stronger support be provided that could enable farmers to enhance their economic viability through a range of policy and financial mechanisms. We saw that through self-organised arrangements and adaptive strategies, farmers are able to continue farming in the area and to contribute to renegotiating their roles. However, we believe that they need additional institutional support so that real opportunities can be provided for all farmers:

Firstly, novel types of leasing arrangements could be provided by establishing three-way contracts between state government, lessee and lessor, or by developing incentives for non-farming landowners (through rate reduction) to lease their land for agricultural purposes. This could ensure greater security of tenure for the lessors, making it possible for them to invest in the land. Furthermore, the state and local government could also contribute by leasing Crown lands to farmers. Finally, as we saw in Chapter 7, there are two types of farmers with practice-based place identities : older farmers who plan to exit farming, and younger farmers who are keen on leasing lands in the peri-urban for an indefinite period. Local government could therefore develop a strategy to connect farmers who plan to get out of farming with young farmers willing to start an operation on leased land. This could be done through the creation of a register of available farmlands in the form of an application or a website displaying lands available for a given area. This could be accompanied by the provision of templates for simple legal agreements between the two parties.

Secondly, the use of by-products (feed, organic fertilisers, waste water) could be formalised, in order to make it more systematic. This would potentially enable a larger number of farmers to obtain cheap by-products, which could contribute to the economic

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viability of many operations.

Thirdly, local government could sponsor local events to enhance farmers' existing neighbouring practices. This could improve relationships between farmers and non-farmers and increase social capital. This may also reduce the costs to local government from noise and odour complaints.

Finally, other actions could be taken by farmers and civil society to increase farmers' economic viability through : the creation of marketing cooperatives, the identification of other ways for them to sell their produce (food cooperatives, or the direct delivery of agricultural produce to urban consumers). The expansion of the services offered by farmers' markets (for example through charities giving coupons to their members that are redeemable at farmers' markets) could increase demand for fresh produce, with positive outcomes for community health.

These actions could contribute to the development of an emergent place identity in the peri-urban that would reintegrate farming as a viable activity. We believe that various factors could contribute to triggering these changes, one in particular being climate change. Indeed, climate change might reinforce the importance of farmlands in peri-urban Sydney, as significant areas of food production in Australia (e.g. Murray-Darling Basin) are expected to experience greater climate variability (increased incidence or severity of droughts and floods), while the Sydney Basin is more likely to maintain higher rainfall and therefore become more important for food production (Cordell et al., 2016). This could contribute to recasting the Sydney Basin as an area to preserve for agricultural production, encouraging the measures described above to be taken.

The last contribution of this study has been to demonstrate the importance of identity in the politics of place in peri-urban areas. We have seen that: (1) hegemonic place identities determine practices, which in turn reinforce hegemonic place identities; (2) resistant place identities also reinforce existing but threatened practices, but do not encourage the development of collective organisation to protect those practices; (3) changes in practices, in the form of arrangements, could potentially influence representations and lead to an emergent place identity; and finally (4) farmers' place identities (combined and practice-based), at the farm scale, could influence their view of the future of their farms and their adoption of adaptive strategies. The framework was therefore a useful tool for understanding the complex articulation of competing place identities in Wollondilly Shire, and how they impact the development of the area. It also provided an empirical understanding of the bi-directional nature of place identities, that is, how place identities can be reinforced through certain practices and impact the physical landscape, but also

how some changes in practices, triggered by external pressures in the landscape, can lead to the emergence of new representations that could lead to an emergent place identity.

The framework has also the potential to generate new areas of research in locations other than the Sydney Basin. This could enable the compilation of comparable case studies of the peri-urban that could reinforce or refine our findings. This research also has the potential to be used in other contexts where land use conflicts are present, such as in urban regeneration projects (Lees, 2014). Indeed, the discourse of urban regeneration, which is dominant in the neoliberal planning of global cities, presents urban regeneration as a politically neutral project, aimed at reintegrating decayed neighbourhoods and marginalised populations into the city through the development (in practice) of regeneration planning, which will change the physical landscape through the development of new services such as retail and cafes. To justify claims about the need for regeneration, politicians and planners describe such neighbourhoods as being in decay, and being crime ridden. However, the creation of this hegemonic place identity is contested by the residents of those areas who claim that urban regeneration has a hidden political agenda of gentrification which will lead to their displacement. Through various practices (individual and collective actions etc.) residents develop another representation of the area based on its positive aspects, and defend a place identity based on the identity principle of continuity between themselves, their neighbourhood and the other residents. They also develop another view of what the changes in the physical landscape should be, by calling for the refurbishment of the neighbourhood's residences, rather than the regeneration of the neighbourhood. The politics of place/landscape identity framework could therefore potentially be used in this context.

Other future research could focus on the development of quantitative measures and tools based on this study. These could enable us to assess the types of place identities (identities developed in relation to out-groups, but also identities developed at the farm scale) held by farmers, as well as the types of arrangements and adaptation strategies they implement at a larger scale. This could inform an understanding of: how farmers see themselves in rural society, the nature of their relationships with other groups, how they see the futures of their farms, and what practices and strategies they adopt to keep farming. This could provide a better understanding of the situation of farmers in the peri-urban, and help in the development of appropriate policy instruments.

In addition, further applied research could be undertaken on some of the arrangements made by farmers in order to determine how those arrangements could be enhanced and supported. For example, consultation which focuses on identifying the best lease

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conditions for both lessees and lessors could help improve these arrangements in Wollondilly Shire and elsewhere. Research could also be done on how scientists and farmers could co-develop a new definition of viability in peri-urban areas. Finally, we saw that farmers do not engage in collective action because of their lack of social capital. However, we also saw that collective organisation (e.g. collective marketing) could be one way to enhance their economic viability. Research could therefore be pursued to better identify the barriers and enablers to farmers' collective organisation.



## **APPENDIX A**

### **Description**

The table below shows the rezoning applications examined in this study:

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| Number of the application | Name of the application                                | Nature of the document   | Date       | Name of the document                    |
|---------------------------|--|--|------------|---|
| Application 3             | Rezoning of Clearview site <u>Thirlmere Way Picton</u> | Planning proposal amendment X to <u>Wollondilly LEP 2011. Residential rezoning Clearview Site Thirlmere Way, Picton</u>  | 14/06/2011 | Attachment-14                           |
|                           |  | Gateway determination  | 8/08/2011  | 6.01                                    |
| Application 5             | Rezoning of land between <u>Tahmoor and Thirlmere</u>  | Planning proposal. PTTAG study area. <u>Tahmoor and Thirlmere</u>  | no date    | Attachment 'C' Part 2 Planning Proposal |
|                           |  | Attachment 2. LES Specialist studies   | no date    | Attachment 'G' Proposed studies         |
|                           |  | Gateway determination  | 16/09/2011 | G_Policy-30                             |
| Application 7             | <u>Macquariedale Road Appin</u>                        | Planning proposal - rezoning application. <u>Macquariedale road, Appin</u>   | Apr-11     | Tag-50                                  |
|                           |  | Report of <u>Wollondilly Shire</u> and its Planning and Economy to the Ordinary Meeting of Council held on Monday 15 August 2011. PE2 Draft Planning Proposal - <u>Macquariedale Road, Appin</u> | 15/08/2011 | Tag-51                                  |
|                           |  | Planning team report   | 16/09/2011 | G_Policy-28                             |
|                           |  | Panel recommendation   | 27/09/2011 | G_Policy-29                             |

|                |  |  |            |                   |
|----------------|--|--|------------|-------------------|
|                |  | Revised Gateway determination  | 9/04/2014  | <u>C_ Revised</u> |
| Application 9  | <u>Wollondilly</u><br>Local<br>Environmental<br>Plan 2011<br>Amendment No<br>3 Maldon<br>Employment<br>Lands                             | Planning proposal amendment X to <u>Wollondilly</u> LEP 2011. Rezoning of land fronting <u>Picton</u> road in the locality of Maldon to allow for employment generating uses and environmental conservation                              | 29/11/2011 | G__SSW_6-25       |
|                |  | Appendix 1 (to planning proposal)  |            | G__SSW_6-26       |
|                |  | Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of <u>Wollondilly</u> Shire Council held in the Council Chamber, 62-64 <u>Menangle</u> Street, <u>Picton</u> , on Monday 17 March 2008, commencing at 6.32pm. PE6 Maldon Industrial Lands Investigations | 17/03/2008 | G__SSW_6-27       |
| Application 10 | <u>Wollondilly</u><br>Local<br>Environmental<br>Plan 2011<br>Amendment No<br>3 JR Stud Site<br>Nos165 185<br>River Road<br><u>Picton</u> | Planning proposal 165-185 River road, <u>Tahmoor</u> (part 1)  | Sep-11     | <u>Tag 'A'</u>    |
|                |  | Planning proposal 165-185 River road, <u>Tahmoor</u> (part 2)  | Sep-11     | <u>Tag 'A'</u>    |
|                |  | Report of <u>Wollondilly</u> Shire and its Planning and Economy to the Ordinary Meeting of Council held on Monday 21 November 2011   | 21/11/2011 | Council_report-1  |
|                |  | Planning team report   | 16/01/2012 | G__Policy-2       |
|                |  | Panel recommendation   | 1/02/2012  | G__Policy-1       |

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|                |  |  |            |                            |
|----------------|--|--|------------|----------------------------|
|                |  | Gateway determination  | 4/03/2012  | <u>G_Policy</u>            |
| Application 11 | <u>Wollondilly LEP 2011 Rezoning of land at 1 Abbotsford Road Picton</u> | Gateway determination  | 24/04/2012 | 13.01                      |
|                |  | Panel recommendation   | 29/03/2012 | 13.02                      |
|                |  | Gateway determination (2)  | 24/04/2012 | 13.03                      |
|                |  | Planning proposal to amend <u>Wollondilly LEP 2011</u> . "Abbotsford", Fairley and Abbotsford Road, <u>Picton</u>  | Sep-15     | Revised                    |
| Application 13 | Rezoning of part of 136 154 <u>Menangle Street Picton</u>                | Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of <u>Wollondilly Shire Council</u> held in the Council Chamber, 62-64 <u>Menangle street, Picton</u> , on Monday 20 February 2012, commencing at 6:30pm | 20/02/2012 | Council_report-1           |
|                |  | Gateway determination  | 24/05/2012 | G_Policy-14                |
|                |  | Panel recommendation   | 5/04/2012  | G_Policy-16                |
|                |  | Planning team report   | 23/03/2012 | G_Policy-17                |
|                |  | Planning proposal to amend <u>Wollondilly LEP 2011</u> . Residential rezoning at ' <u>Menangle street</u> ' site in <u>Picton</u>  | no date    | Planning_proposal_-_Part_1 |
|                |  | Appendix (to planning proposal)  | no date    | Planning_proposal_-_Part_2 |
| Application 14 | <u>Silverdale St Heliers Roads Silverdale</u>                            | Planning proposal to amend <u>Wollondilly Local Environmental Plan 2011</u> . Silverdale & <u>St Heliers Roads, Silverdale</u>   | no date    | C_SILVERDALE-1             |

|                |                                  |   |            |                 |
|----------------|----------------------------------|---|------------|-----------------|
|                |                                  | Report of <u>Wollondilly Shire</u> and its Planning and Economy to the Ordinary Meeting of Council held on Monday 21 <u>may</u> 2012. PE3 Draft planning proposal - ' <u>Silverdale and St Heliers Roads</u> '                              | 21/05/2012 | C__SILVERDALE-2 |
|                |                                  | Gateway determination   | 6/08/2012  | G__Policy-11    |
|                |                                  | Panel recommendation  | 1/08/2012  | G__Policy-12    |
|                |                                  | Planning team report  | 20/07/2012 | G__Policy-13    |
| Application 16 | <u>Bronzewing Street Tahmoor</u> | Planning proposal to amend <u>Wollondilly Local Environmental Plan 2011. Bronzewing street</u>  | 17/12/2012 | C_BRONZEWING    |
|                |                                  | Gateway determination   | 14/02/2013 | C_Documents-50  |
|                |                                  | Panel recommendation  | 5/02/2013  | C_Documents-51  |
|                |                                  | Planning team report  | 10/01/2013 | C_Documents-52  |
| Application 17 | <u>Kader Street Bargo</u>        | Gateway determination   | 9/02/2013  | C_Documents-46  |
|                |                                  | Panel recommendation  | 24/01/2013 | C_Documents-47  |
|                |                                  | Planning team report  | 11/01/2013 | C_Documents-48  |
|                |                                  | Planning proposal to amend <u>Wollondilly Local Environmental Plan 2011. Local Environmental Plan Amendment to allow low density and large lot residential development at land adjoining <u>Bargo Sportsground, Kader street, Bargo</u></u> | 20/12/2012 | C_KADER         |

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|                   |  |   |                |                    |
|-------------------|--|---|----------------|--------------------|
| Application<br>18 | <u>Eltons and<br/>Taylors Roads<br/>Silverdale</u>                       | Gateway<br>determination  | 16/04/201<br>3 | C_Documents-<br>44 |
|                   |  | Panel<br>recommendation   | 1/03/2013      | C_Documents-<br>45 |
|                   |  | Planning proposal -<br>rezone subject site<br>from ru2 – rural<br>landscape to r5 –<br>large lot residential -<br><u>Eltons Rd/ Taylors<br/>Rd in Silverdale</u>  | 20/02/201<br>2 | C_ELTONS-1         |
|                   |  | Report of<br><u>Wollondilly Shire</u><br>and its Planning and<br>Economy to the<br>Ordinary Meeting of<br>Council held on<br>Monday 19<br>November 2012 -<br>PE4 Planning<br>Proposal – <u>Eltons &amp;<br/>Taylors Roads,<br/>Silverdale</u> | 19/11/201<br>2 | C_ELTONS-2         |
| Application<br>20 | <u>Menangle Street<br/>and<br/>Remembrance<br/>Drive Picton<br/>East</u> | Gateway<br>determination  | 28/03/201<br>3 | C_Documents-<br>38 |
|                   |  | Panel<br>recommendation   | 26/03/201<br>3 | C_Documents-<br>39 |
|                   |  | Planning team report  | 15/03/201<br>3 | C_Documents-<br>40 |
|                   |  | Planning Proposal to<br>amend <u>Wollondilly</u><br>Local Environmental<br>Plan 2011. <u>Picton<br/>East</u>  | no date        | C_PICTON-1         |
|                   |  | Report of<br><u>Wollondilly Shire</u><br>and its Planning and<br>Economy to the<br>Ordinary Meeting of<br>Council held on<br>Monday 17<br>December 2012. PE6<br>Draft Planning<br>Proposal - <u>Picton<br/>East - Remembrance</u>             | 17/12/201<br>2 | C_PICTON-2         |

|                |                                    |   |            |                 |
|----------------|------------------------------------|---|------------|-----------------|
|                |                                    | Drive and <u>Menangle</u> Street  |            |                 |
| Application 22 | North Silverdale                   | Planning team report  | 18/04/2013 | C__Documents-11 |
|                |                                    | Planning recommendation   | 29/04/2013 | C__Documents-12 |
|                |                                    | Gateway determination   | 1/05/2013  | C__Documents-13 |
|                |                                    | Report of <u>Wollondilly</u> Shire and its Planning and Economy to the Ordinary Meeting of Council held on Monday 19 November 2012. PE5 Planning Proposal – North Silverdale Commercial, Industrial & Residential Lands | 19/11/2012 | C__NTH-43       |
|                |                                    | North Silverdale Landowner Group Planning Proposal ‘The Village’ Project No. 11105  | Mar-12     | C__NTH-44       |
| Application 25 | Montpelier Drive Residential Lands | Gateway determination   | 3/07/2013  | C__Documents-12 |
|                |                                    | Panel recommendation  | 2/07/2013  | C__Documents-14 |
|                |                                    | Planning team report  | 21/06/2013 | C__Documents-16 |
|                |                                    | Planning Proposal to amend <u>Wollondilly</u> Local Environmental Plan 2011. Montpelier Drive Residential Lands   | no date    | C__MONTPELIER-1 |

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|                |  |  |            |   |
|----------------|--|--|------------|---|
|                |  | Report of <u>Wollondilly Shire</u> and its Planning and Economy to the Ordinary Meeting of Council held on Monday 15 April 2013. PE2 Planning Proposal - Montpelier Drive Residential Land | 15/04/2013 | C_ <u>MONTPELIER-2</u>                          |
|                |  | Report of Planning and Economy to the Ordinary Meeting of Council held on Monday 15 June 2015. PE3 Planning Proposal - Montpelier Drive Residential Land                                   | 15/06/2015 | C_ <u>Users_gballantine.DEC_Desktop_Council</u> |
| Application 26 | Expansion of <u>Picton Commercial Precinct</u> <u>Stonequarry Commercial</u> | Gateway determination  | 9/08/2013  | C_ <u>STONEQUARRY Gateway determination</u>     |
|                |  | Report of <u>Wollondilly Shire</u> and its Planning and Economy to the Ordinary Meeting of Council held on Monday 18 February 2013   | 21/06/2013 | C_ <u>STONEQUARRY Planning Proposal</u>         |
|                |  | Stone quarry commercial planning proposal — expansion of <u>Picton commercial precinct</u>   | 21/06/2013 | C_ <u>STONEQUARRY Planning Proposal</u>         |
|                | <u>No 12 Bulli Appin Road, Appin</u>   | Report of Planning and Economy to the Ordinary Meeting of Council held on Monday 16 September 2013   | 7/11/2013  | C_ <u>BULLI-APPIN</u>                           |

|                   |   |  |            |                    |
|-------------------|---|--|------------|--------------------|
| Application<br>28 |   | amended submission to <u>Wollondilly Shire Council</u> – planning proposal<br>Land Situated at Lot 78 in DP 752012 No 12 <u>Bulli-Appin Road, Appin</u> , including Department of Lands property | 7/11/2013  | C_BULLI-APPIN      |
|                   |   | Gateway determination  | 24/01/2014 | C_BULLI-APPIN-2    |
| Application<br>29 | <u>Burratorang and Steveys Forest Roads Oakdale</u>     | Planning proposal to amend <u>Wollondilly Local Environmental Plan 2011. Burratorang &amp; Steveys Forest Roads, Oakdale</u>   | no date    | C_Burratorang-1    |
|                   |   | Report of Planning and Economy to the Ordinary Meeting of Council held on Monday 16 September 2013   | 16/09/2013 | C_Burratorang-4    |
|                   |   | Gateway determination  | 23/02/2014 | C_Documents-3      |
|                   |   | Panel recommendation   | 20/02/2014 | C_Documents-4      |
|                   |   | Planning team report   | 7/02/2014  | C_Documents-5      |
| Application<br>30 | <u>South Tahmoor and East Tahmoor Revised Precincts</u> | Gateway determination  | 30/04/2014 | <u>C_Documents</u> |
|                   |   | Panel recommendation   | 18/03/2014 | C_Documents-1      |
|                   |   | Planning team report   | 28/02/2014 | C_Documents-2      |
|                   |   | Planning Proposal to Amend <u>Wollondilly Local Environmental Plan 2011. South Tahmoor &amp; East Tahmoor Revised Precincts</u>  | no date    | C_SOUTH            |
| Application<br>31 | Cross street  | Gateway determination  | 17/07/2014 | Gateway            |

APPENDIX A

|                |   |  |                                     |                      |
|----------------|---|--|-------------------------------------|----------------------|
|                |   | Planning proposal to amend <u>Wollondilly Local Environmental Plan 2011. Cross Street, Tahmoor</u>   | no date                             | Tag-3                |
|                |   | Report of Planning and Economy to the Ordinary Meeting of Council held on Tuesday 22 April 2014  | 22/04/2014                          | Tag-5                |
| Application 33 | Rezoning of 95 Great Southern Road, <u>Bargo</u> , for residential purposes         | Gateway determination  | 2/10/2013                           | Gateway-3            |
|                |   | Planning proposal. Proposed residential rezoning. 95 Great southern road <u>Bargo</u>  | Jul-13                              | Tag-24               |
|                |   | Report of Planning and Economy to the Ordinary Meeting of Council held on Monday 21 July 2014. PE3 – Draft Planning Proposal – Great Southern Road, <u>Bargo</u> . | 21/07/2014                          | Tag-26               |
| Application 34 | 55 Government road  | Gateway determination  | 26/11/2014                          | Gateway-2            |
|                |   | Planning proposal to amend <u>Wollondilly LEP 2011</u>   | May 2013, amended September 2014    | Tag-17               |
|                |   | Report of Planning and Economy to the Ordinary Meeting of Council held on Monday 15 September 2014   | 15/09/2014                          | Tag-19               |
| Application 35 | Rezoning of No 45 <u>Noongah Street</u> and No 25 <u>Gwynn Hughes Street, Bargo</u> | PLANNING PROPOSAL No 45 <u>Noongah Street Bargo</u> No 25 <u>Gwynn Hughes Street Bargo</u>   | January 2013 Amended September 2014 | Noongah-2            |
|                |   | Gateway determination  | 19/01/2015                          | PP_2014_WOLLY_007_00 |

|                |   |  |            |          |
|----------------|---|--|------------|----------|
|                |   | Gateway determination  | 25/03/2015 | Gateway  |
| Application 36 | Rezoning of land adjacent to the 'Mushroom Tunnel', <u>Picton</u> | Planning Proposal to Amend <u>Wollondilly Local Environmental Plan 2011</u> . Land Adjacent to Mushroom Tunnel, <u>Picton</u>  | Jan-15     | Tag-9    |
|                |   | Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of <u>Wollondilly Shire Council</u> held in the Council Chamber, 62-64 <u>Menangle Street, Picton</u> , on Monday 13 October 2014, commencing at 6.35pm. PE4 Draft Planning Proposal on Land Adjacent to the Mushroom Tunnel | 13/10/2014 | Tag-10   |
| Application 37 | Rezoning of 600 West Parade, Buxton - RU1 to E3 and R5            | Report of Planning and Economy to the Ordinary Meeting of Council held on Monday 20 June 2016. PE5 – Maximum Building Height: 600 West Parade Buxton   | 20/06/2016 | 2        |
|                |   | Planning Proposal to Amend <u>Wollondilly Local Environmental Plan 2011</u> . Land located West Parade, Buxton   | Jul-16     | 4        |
|                |   | Planning team report   | 5/08/2016  | Planning |
|                |   | Gateway determination  | 9/08/2016  | Signed   |



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